

Ref: ESKOM Thyspunt Power line

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**PROPOSED ESKOM THYSPUNT TRANSMISSION LINES INTEGRATION ROUTE REVISED DEIR REPORT COMMENTS**

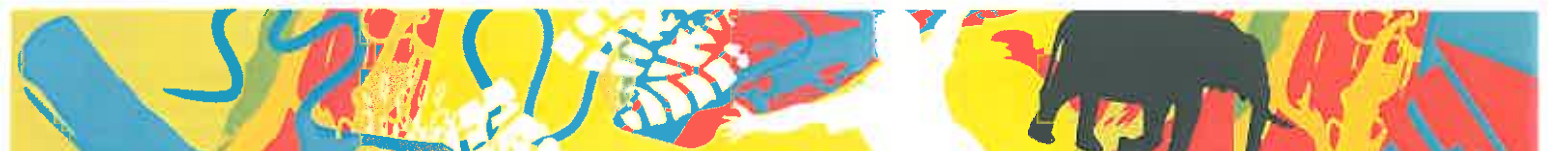
Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the above mentioned project. ECPTA previously submitted comments dated 30 June 2009 and 29 January 2010.

As the designated management authority for the Baviaanskloof World Heritage Site, the ECPTA welcomes the realignment away from the Groendal Wilderness area and Stinkhoutberg Nature Reserve along the northern corridor as recommended. However we have noted that a portion of the Southern Corridor crosses a reserve within Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (NMBMM) that extends between Perseverance and the Motherwell canal, namely the Swartkops River Valley Nature Reserve, that is in advanced stages of a biodiversity stewardship agreement with ECPTA and NMBMM. This is of concern to us due to the possible environmental and tourism impacts that can ensue from the transmission power lines. It is important to note that the biodiversity stewardship agreement will contribute towards Protected Area Expansion Targets, as approved by Cabinet.

According to the Integrated Management Plan for the Swartkops Estuary, Swartkops River Valley and Aloes Nature Reserves, the area has been identified as an important focus area for biodiversity

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conservation in the Metro and forms part of the Nelson Mandela Metro Open Space System (NM MOSS). ECPTA therefore recommends that the portion of the southern corridor crossing over Swartkops Valley Nature Reserve be realigned to move away from the reserve as the area is a designated Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) which needs to be protected. Although this reserve is small and in an urban setting it has high biodiversity value in that it serves as an important buffer zone between the urban area and the Swartkops River.

Yours sincerely



**Dr. Dave Balfour**

Executive Director: Biodiversity Conservation

