

Miranda Minerals helps breathe life into Dundee's Kwakunje cultural village

Bringing life to the Zulu culture through a commitment to the development and promotion of the Kwakunje cultural village in Dundee will help ensure that age-old traditions and customs of the Zulu's come to the attention of local and international tourists.

So says Ron Nel, CEO of Miranda Minerals, the JSE listed exploration and mining company, which has invested in the future of the KwaZulu Natal coalfields in the region, and begun open cast mining operations at the Sesikhona colliery near Dannhauser.

"The entire coalfields region is rich in cultural history. Dundee is the town where the cultures of the Zulu, Boer, British, and German settlers meet and mingle. These cultures and the history of the rise and demise of the coalfields are commemorated at the Talana Museum, which also made provision for the construction of Kwakunje village on its premises.

"It is entirely appropriate that as the latest entrant to the coalfields Miranda Minerals should concern itself with preserving the heritage of the area. By participating in the operations and management of Kwakunje Cultural Village, we are also helping to ensure that the local people never forget their roots or the cultural activities that are the hallmarks of their Zulu heritage.

"From a practical point of view, the development of the village has also created much-needed employment and given women in the Dundee area a much needed outlet for their handmade crafts and beadwork.

"We are confident that international and out of town tour operators will place Kwakunje on their 'must-see' list while touring the KZN battlefields and gain fascinating insights into the way life was lived by the Zulu. It is our privilege to support this project, which also promises to become a favourite venue for functions for the people of Dundee," Nel said.

Kwakunje or "it was like this" is a living monument to the Zulu's, said Pam McFadden curatrix of the Talana museum on whose extensive grounds the Kwakunje village was built.

"The village not only celebrates Zulu culture of yesteryear, but places it in context with the 21st century. Created using local craftsmen, who built the village over a nine-month period, Kwakunje is inhabited by Zulu's who act as guides and cultural interpreters.

"Visitors will not only have opportunities to inspect traditional huts and enjoy traditional cuisine, but also be able to listen to skilled Zulu orators recounting the proud achievements of their people.

"The village will also provide a vital link to the past for the local people and offer local children the opportunity to relive the past-thereby preserving a heritage which could otherwise have been lost through urbanization and migration."

"The much-needed support of Miranda Minerals is to be welcomed as the company is playing a vital role in preserving traditions that set this area of the country apart from all the others.

"By operating Kwakunje, Miranda Coal is materially contributing to the welfare and dignity of the people of the region," Nel concluded.

ENDS