

**NEW REINS FOR THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

**Pretoria, 24 February 2015.** The managing Director of the Voortrekker Monument, Ms Sonja Lombard, has just been appointed as MD of the Heritage Foundation as well. She has been the MD of the monument since 2011 but will with immediate effect take over the reins of the Heritage Foundation because the Board of Directors feel that the two companies should be managed in conjunction with each other. She is the first woman to be the head of both organisations.

Since she has taken over the reins in 2011 the monument has excelled as both a national and international tourism destination. As a result, the monument won the *Golden Achiever Award* at the China Outbound Travel and Tourist Market show in Beijing, China in 2013, the overall winner at the show. There were five categories with a bronze, silver and gold award in each category. The VTM had already won the bronze award for Media & Internet marketing in 2009 and by rights could not be considered for another award but the organisers felt that the Monument deserved it and was an excellent tourism destination.

Locally the monument has won the Professional Management Review's award for Leaders and Achievers annually since 2012. The award in 2014 was the highest yet and the monument earned a performance review of a 4.8 out of a possible 5 (the highest out of all the competitors). Since its inception, the monument has also won the Best Monument category in the Best of Pretoria awards by the Record newspaper. Winners in these categories are chosen by the readers. Last year, the monument was also a finalist in the Lilizela SA Tourism awards.

The past four years have been characterised by several innovative ideas of Ms Lombard launched at the monument. One of them was the e-tag for smart phones in four different languages which enables tourists to move through the monument without a guide and read descriptions on their smart phone. She also had the Covenant Panels erected in Afrikaans, English and Dutch outside the monument and the Reconciliation Bridge at Blood River, which has been dragging for many years, was finally opened by President Zuma on 16 December 2014.

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