



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Private Rhino Owners Association (PROA), based in South Africa, is proud to announce the launch of Rhino Horn Trade Africa (RHTA), a groundbreaking initiative that will facilitate the legal trade of rhino horn. RHTA today unveils its newly established online trade desk, which aims to provide a managed, efficient platform from which genuine buyers and sellers can trade in 'clean', humanely acquired rhino horn.

RHTA will facilitate trade via its website, www.rhta.co.za, and will assist both buyers and sellers of legal horn when it comes to matters of compliance, including Finance Intelligence Centre Act (FICA) requirements and the verification of permits. The initiative is intended to prevent illegal horns from entering the market.

“The decision to form RHTA was taken at last year’s PROA AGM – PROA members voted unanimously for the creation of a trade desk to facilitate sales and bring much-needed conservation revenue to mitigate rhino management and security costs,” says PROA chairman Pelham Jones. Private rhino owners currently own in excess of 7 000 black and white rhino – more than the rest of Africa combined (about 37% of the national herd).

“When this resolution was taken the moratorium on rhino-horn trade was still in place, but the Constitutional Court subsequently confirmed the High Court’s previous decision to set the moratorium aside. PROA then appointed service provider Dreadnought Capital to manage the trade desk.

“Since the moratorium was lifted, PROA and RHTA have focused on how to meet the substantial demand for rhino horn in a way that is legal, transparent and will undermine illegal trade,” says Jones.

RHTA is working closely with the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory (VGL), University of Pretoria at Onderstepoort, to ensure that all rhino horn sold through RHTA, is first recorded on the Rhino DNA Index System, or RhODIS® database. Every rhino horn offered for sale through RHTA must possess a DNA certificate. Genetic profiling is the key control in establishing the provenance of every rhino horn on offer. By this mechanism no ‘blood’ horn is able to enter the market.



RhODIS works in partnership with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and various provincial wildlife enforcement authorities at the DEA to ensure successful prosecutions in rhino-poaching cases.

All PROA members and all other persons or entities that own or possess rhino and/or legally acquired rhino-horn are invited and encouraged to contact RHTA in order to obtain assistance and guidance to certify their rhinos and/or horns in line with DEA laws and regulations, including the Norms and Standards, the Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) Regulations and the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act No. 10 of 2004 (NEMBA), as well as CITES. The process is transparent and accountable, guaranteeing 100% traceability. “We have gone to enormous lengths to ensure full compliance with TOPS, NEMBA and other regulations,” says Jones.

Says RHTA’s Chairman, Allan Thomson, “RHTA has as its primary objective the long-term survival of the rhino. The sale of rhino horn will enable those entrusted with custody and protection of the rhino to utilise the funds thereby acquired, to better protect and safeguard the lives of the existing, and future rhino populations.”

Jones says the revenue generated from sales will be viewed as conservation revenue that will assist rhino owners to continue protecting and caring for their animals, which they currently do at great personal expense, with no incentives or outside funding. “Between 2009 and 2017, the private sector has spent approximately R2bn on rhino security and management – costs that we have largely been unable to recoup,” says Jones. “We believe that RHTA will prove to be a game-changer in the market,” he says. “Importantly, a percentage of sales can be ploughed back into rhino conservation and associated community projects.”

Interested media can contact Allan Thomson to arrange for a demonstration of how the trade desk will function: info@rhta.co.za.

For more information, visit www.rhta.co.za.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pelham Jones".

Pelham Jones

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PROA is a Chamber of Wildlife Ranching South Africa

