



**Letter of Support to Observatory Civic Association (OCA)
Re: Challenging River Club Development Plans**

Friday 4th June 2021

The Claremont Main Road Mosque (CMRM) advocates the view that conscientious Muslims should live in reverence and harmony with nature. Nature and the environment are indispensable guides and intimate companions of faith in Islam. Environmental Justice is one of the key dimensions of the Claremont Main Road Mosque's (CMRM) mission.

CMRM was established in 1854 and is one of the oldest buildings in the Claremont/Newlands area. It is situated in Main Road Claremont, an area now denuded of a surrounding Muslim community who were forcibly removed, as a result of the Group Areas Act in the 1960s. Nevertheless, our congregants travel from all areas of the City to the mosque since the mosque serves as a reminder and connection to their former home or ancestor's home, and thus a part of their cultural and spiritual heritage.

Consonant with the history and mission of the CMRM we herewith fully support the Observatory Civic Association in its campaign to oppose the River Club Development Plans along the Liesbeeck River. The River Club site is a unique heritage and environmentally sensitive riverine area and holds special heritage significance as the least untransformed wetland in the area and an important site for Khoi history. This is a history of Khoi resistance that has rendered the land sacred with deep cultural and spiritual significance for the indigenous Khoi people and their ancestors in the area. We know too well the injustice on people's culture and heritage when displaced from their land. Moreover, any development on this land will aggravate flooding by infill of the flood valley and destroy the ability of the site to support the recharge of the aquifer, critically needed to render Cape Town more resilient in the face of Climate Change and drought.

We therefore believe it is an injustice to the history and heritage of the Khoi people and our City, as well as being destructive to the environment, for any further development to take place on the River Club site. We fully support the OCA in its planned court action to challenge development plans along the Liesbeeck River alongside the the River Club site.

ISSUED BY

Dr. A. Rashied Omar (Imam)

Jaamia Galant (Secretary)

ON BEHALF OF THE CLAREMONT MAIN ROAD MOSQUE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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