

## Toyota increases support for anti-rhino poaching

Toyota South Africa Motors (TSAM) has continued its support in the fight against rhino poaching by refurbishing six vehicles belonging to South African National Parks (SANParks) and extending their service plans.

The value of the donation is estimated at R450,000. TSAM recently donated a brand new Toyota Hilux Double Cab 4x4, also to be used by SANParks, in the fight against rhino poaching and other wildlife crime

Rhino poaching is reaching unprecedented levels in South Africa, and TSAM believes it is the collective responsibility of both the public and private sectors to extend their resources to the anti-poaching units working in the national parks and reserves across the country.

With this approach in preventing and apprehending the culprits behind the deaths of rhinos, TSAM has committed itself through a new initiative that will see it service and maintain the vehicles of the anti-poaching unit that is active within the Pilanesberg National Park in the North West province.



Image supplied by [motorpress.co.za](http://motorpress.co.za)

The initiative to assist in vehicle repair and in turn, sponsor six extended service plans for the Toyota Land Cruiser that operate in the park, was driven by TSAM's John Thomson, vice president of service, customer service and Future Toyota).

Thomson's commitment to the natural environment, and his subsequent rally for support of the anti-poaching unit, was sparked a few months prior during a visit to the Pilanesberg National Park where he met staff and witnessed first-hand the vehicle issues they were experiencing.

While maintaining and servicing any vehicle is a relatively straightforward task, explains Thomson, the unit simply did not have the funds to get it done. "After speaking to the anti-poaching unit operating in Pilanesberg National Park, I immediately knew how we at Toyota could make a difference."

"First off, we sent the six Toyota Land Cruisers in their possession to our workshop in Northam for a thorough service, repairing the damage any vehicle would inevitably garner working in wild terrain, but we wanted to see how we could do more," furthers Thomson.

To this end, the extended service plans sponsored to the unit were handed over in a ceremony hosted at Ivory Lodge in the Pilanesberg National Park. The dealer principals and TSAM staff in attendance were not only surprised by the handover, but also the opportunity to experience a day in the life of a parks ranger. Being taken along on a morning of rhino notching, a means to identify each rhino in the park, was a momentous opportunity for everybody involved.

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