



Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Vuyani Dayimani led an Eastern Cape delegation to the 7th Meetings Africa, at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg from the 27-28 February 2023.

ECPTA MEETS THE WORLD AT MEETINGS AFRICA

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Through this platform, the Agency aims to aggressively showcase the Eastern Cape's MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events) products to the local and international MICE travel buyers, create a platform for Eastern Cape SMME (Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises) to promote their establishments and educate the national & international MICE travel buyers about the Eastern Cape's MICE offerings and the ability to host meetings and conferences.

Acting Chief Convention Bureau Officer at the South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB) Zinhle Nzama said, the show's new theme Africa's success built on quality connections is about connecting people and ideas that will drive Africa forward.

"Expanding African representation means that we are looking to bring in fresh ideas and to show our partners that this platform is serious about boosting Africa's economic development, continent and ultimately contributes towards its economic growth," said Nzama.

According to ECPTA's CEO, Vuyani Dayimani, the MICE industry of the country has enjoyed impressive growth in the past few years and there has been efforts made by the government to take advantage of the growth by expanding the opportunities that the industry has to offer.

"Business Travel is growing with people from other African countries coming to do business in South Africa, the impact of having exhibition centres, exhibition facilities or conference facilities is thus very critical for our economy and as the Eastern Cape we attend Meetings Africa as a means to learn, network, lobby and grow the province in this regard," said Dayimani.

The agency, through Tourism Development Unit identified and enabled six tourism SMME's to participate on Meetings Africa and were offered an opportunity to present tourism experiences that they offer through meeting potential participants. Those SMME's included Premier Hotels & Resort, Cosy Posy Hotel & Conferencing, Lilitha Hotel & Conferencing, Poni Boutique Guesthouse & Conferencing, The Kelway Hotel and Overall Events & Communication.

The show ended with two post tours where ECPTA in collaboration with the Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism hosted delegates from various countries. The delegates were treated to a three-day trip in Nelson Mandela Bay and four days in the Buffalo City area where they explored the different leisure and MICE establishments.



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Eastern Cape PARKS & TOURISM AGENCY

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:



ECPTA DIVERSIFIES
THE LOCAL TOURISM
OFFERING AND
EXPERIENCE

Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) in collaboration with Elahleni Food and Braai, kicked off the first of its kind Sunday Lunch Experience at Elahleni Braai and Food in East London on the 26th of February 2023.



The event aimed at facilitating collaborations between the

passionate worlds of music and food, by supporting local tourism products who package unique lunch experiences with live musical entertainment. ECPTA Senior Manager: Tourism Development, Fezeka Mlungu, said she hopes that these collaborations bring life to the Metro's tourism, arts, and hospitality industries. "ECPTA supports the initiative as part of product diversification and enhancement of the experience. The idea to merge the two relates to a similar initiative established by the Agency in Mdantsane back in 2021," said Mlungu. Mlungu continued that they started matching local crafters with accommodation in Mdantsane to showcase their wares and they wanted to do the same with the arts, cuisine and tourism.

"We want visitors to experience good vibes in a relaxed manner. We are also trying to showcase how well tourism works with the entertainment and hospitality industries," added Mlungu. East London was first on the list which was graced by soulful performances, by locals Mali Soul and Betusile Mcinga. Guests also enjoyed Mdantsane FM streaming live from Elarheni. Also on display were examples of colourful fashion by the local designer, Sinesipho Nkqwiliso, the owner of Sino NKQ.

Elahleni Food and Braai owner Lwandy Ngebe said the event created a great opportunity to mitigate the ongoing after effect of COVID-19 in the hospitality industry.

"Women in tourism and hospitality are struggling to recover from th COVID-19 pandemic, so instead of a normal event we wanted to raise awareness through art.

We are collaborating with ECPTA to get activities going again in East London," said Ngebe.







Happy Easter

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EASTER CAPE TOURISM GOES VIRAL



To harness the power of virtual reality technologies and capitalise on digital marketing trends, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) developed interactive virtual tourism platforms of unique Eastern Cape Province experiences.

These interactive tours afford users the opportunity to immerse themselves in the experience through taking a virtual tour of the various attraction from the comfort of their own homes and are compatible and accessible from most digital devices. These

experiences are even further enhanced when paired with virtual reality goggles and controllers, and users can experience a full 360 degree immersive and interactive tour.

These interactive virtual tourism platforms are a powerful marketing tools where users or potential visitors can now experience first-hand what is on offer in the Province in an entertaining and interactive manner. These tours can be accessed from anywhere in the world where there is internet connectivity and are an exciting tool that can also be used for educational purposes and help those with disabilities to immerse themselves in various experiences that would not be normally accessible. Potential visitors who were hesitant to travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic can now experience some of the best experiences the Eastern Cape Province has to offer in the safety of their home and from any location.

SOME OF THE EXPERIENCES AND PLATFORMS DEVELOPED FOR THE TOURS INCLUDE:

- The Segway Tour;
- A Kayak & Lilo excursion;
- · Sandboarding in Sundays River;
- An Ocean Safari;
- The Donkin Reserve;
- · Addo Elephant National Park;
- Giraffe Safari;
- · Valley of Desolation;
- · Nelson Mandela Museum;
- · Steve Biko Museum;
- · Hole in the Wall;
- Hluleka Provincial Nature Reserve;
- Madonna and Child Waterfall;
- · Baviaanskloof World Heritage Site; and
- The Owl House





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These attractions and locations were strategically chosen to offer a mix of adventure, nature, marine and historic experiences with a wide geographical spread to be representative of most of the Eastern Cape's tourism regions.

The ECPTA is currently working on more virtual tours of various experiences of the Eastern Cape Province and will primarily focus on hidden gems and less visited or lesser-known attractions.

Currently, there are 17 virtual tours from different regions of the Province featuring a variety of attractions and activities and to date over 1 800 virtual tours have been undertaken according to ECPTA's analytics data. The key driver of these platforms are not primarily to drive bookings, but to create awareness and spark interest. A potential tourist might encounter and experience enticing tour today, but the conversion might only happen much later in the buying funnel/cycle. Some bookings are also made directly at the product or through various booking engines, so one is unable to conclude how many bookings are made as a result of experiencing an interactive virtual tourism platform.

The tours are to be showcased at trade events and marketed through various online channels including online advertising, social media marketing and other suitable and available platforms. Eastern Cape Tourism stakeholders can also use these tours as a tool to market attractions and tourism offerings within the province.

ENTICE PEOPLE TO TRAVEL MORE WITH EXCITING TRAVEL DEALS.

The ECPTA has developed a central deals platform, where Eastern Cape travel deals can be accessed by consumers throughout the year. The ECPTA encourages Eastern Cape tourism businesses to utilise this free platform to their benefit to showcase and promote their exciting Eastern Cape travel deals.



https://visiteasterncape.co.za/virtualtours/

To use this free platform register your profile at https://ectraveldeals.co.za/account/register

The ECPTA looks forward to partnering with local tourism trade on this great initiative in its aim to reignite Eastern Cape travel.

For more information contact:

jean.theron@ecpta.co.za

#ECTravelDeals #ECYours2Explore

Link to virtual tours:





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THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPANDING NEW TOURISM PRODUCTS IN SOUTH AFRICA



South Africa is a diverse and dynamic country, with a rich cultural heritage and stunning natural beauty. However, in recent years, the South African tourism industry has faced numerous challenges, including economic slowdown, global competition and a decline in international visitor numbers. To overcome these challenges and maintain its position as a leading tourist destination, it is essential for South Africa to expand and diversify its tourism

One of the key ways to achieve this is by developing new and innovative tourism products that showcase the unique cultural and natural heritage of the country. These products can range from cultural and heritage tours, eco-tourism experiences and adventure sports to culinary and wine tourism. By providing a wider range of options, South Africa can attract a more diverse range of visitors, including those who are looking for new and exciting experiences.

In addition to attracting new visitors, expanding the range of tourism products can also bring benefits to the local economy. By supporting local businesses, entrepreneurs, and communities, the development of new tourism products can create jobs and stimulate economic growth. This will not only benefit the tourism industry but also help to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living for local communities.

The government and private sector also have an important role to play in expanding new tourism products in South Africa. The government can provide financial and regulatory support for new and innovative tourism initiatives, while the private sector can invest in research and development, product development as well as marketing. By working together, the government and private sector can help to create new tourism products that are sustainable, socially responsible, and culturally sensitive.

The expansion of new tourism products is vital for the long-term success and growth of the South African tourism industry. By offering a wider range of experiences and attractions, South Africa can continue to attract visitors, support local communities, and promote economic growth





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EASTERN CAPE TO SHOWCASE ITS OFFERINGS AT AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA 2023



The Agency is excited to showcase unique Eastern Cape (EC) offerings at Africa's Travel Indaba. This year's Indaba will take place from the 09th-11th May 2023 at the Albert Luthuli Convention Centre in Durban.

Africa's Travel Indaba is a 3-day trade show preceded by a dedicated Business Opportunity Networking Day (BONDay) which seeks to create a platform for thought-leadership, knowledge sharing and obtaining the latest in global trends and local insights.

The trade show exists to provide the ideal platform for African tourism exhibitors to showcase their offerings to international and local buyers, destination marketing companies and leisure tourism services partners. It is the most formidable platform on the continent for you to meet face-to-face with the most influential buyers in the world, and to gain access to Africa's excellence and its endless possibilities. These are the business opportunities and quality connections that will shape Africa's tomorrow.

The agency identifies Indaba as a key international trade show where the destination can be marketed collectively at a fraction of the cost of taking the number of Indaba exhibitors to an international show outside of South Africa. The agency will create a platform at Indaba for Eastern Cape product owners to be able to market their experiences / tourism offerings directly to international travel trade partners. This is key to the international tourism recovery process. It presents an opportunity to demonstrate that we are a safe destination with a lot to offer to a broad spectrum of travellers.

Through its Tourism Development Unit, ECPTA is planning to assist SMMEs to participate in the 'Hidden Gem' zone as part of its transformational agenda.





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INFLUENCER CAMPAIGNS FOR PROVINCIAL NATURE RESERVES



As part of profiling Eastern Cape provincial nature reserves, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) recently hosted two social media influencers at Hluleka and Silaka Nature Reserve towards the end of February and early March, respectively.

This campaign aimed to circumvent the challenge of building an audience online by encouraging established industry figures to share the destination offerings and experiences with their existing followers. The influencers could bring along a sibling, life partner or friend in order to ensure an organic, free flowing and unconfining environment for them to explore, travel and create content without hindrance.

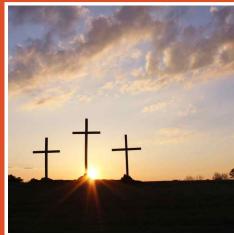
Influencers have become an important part of doing business - especially for tourism business. Working with the right fit of individuals adds tremendous value to any brand by exponentially boosting brand awareness and provoking brand loyalty, especially in the youth demographic. There are a multitude of influencers out there, and with careful

research, ECPTA has unearthed influencers and writers who best suit the destination and its objectives. The groups are dynamic and different with varied skills and tastes that all speak to ECPTA marketing objectives.

Xolelwa Smith visited Hluleka Nature Reserve and she boasts **158 000 followers on Instagram and 119 297 followers on Facebook. Thobeka Dlamini** visited Silaka Nature Reserve and she has over **42.9k followers on Instagram.**

In addition to spending time at Silaka Nature Reserve, Dlamini also went sightseeing around the Port St Johns Airstrip. Some of the activities that she partook in included kayaking, hiking, visits to the Isinuka and blowhole.





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BREAK AWAY WITH INCREDIBLE EASTERN CAPE EASTER TRAVEL DEALS



SET YOUR TABLE ANYWHERE IS THE EASTERN CAPE THIS EASTER!

Come together with nature in spectacular settings and bask in the joys of outdoor living.

Whether in the bounty of natural wonders at the Baviaanskloof World Heritage Site or tucked away in the secluded Hluleka Nature Reserve (with the lovely local zebras for company), the Eastern Cape is a beautiful and inexpensive travel destination.

Reserve your picnic spot for an unforgettable escape and get incredible deals @

www.ectraveldeals.co.za #ECYours2Explore

#EasternCape #deals #TravelInspiration







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SATOVITO MEMBERS APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN



The South African
Township and Village
Tourism Organisation
(SATOVITO) has announced
that membership
applications are now open.
SATOVITO is a non-profit
organisation dedicated to
promoting and supporting
the development of
township and village
tourism in South Africa.

By becoming a member of SATOVITO, individuals and organisations will have the opportunity to connect with other tourism industry professionals and gain access to a range of benefits, including:

- Networking opportunities with other members and industry leaders.
- Access to industry-specific training and professional development programmes.
- Opportunities to participate in SATOVITO-sponsored events and promotions.
- Access to SATOVITO's resources and research on the township and village tourism sector.
- Opportunities to collaborate with other members on joint projects and initiatives.

To apply for membership, interested individuals and organisations can visit SATOVITO's website (www.satovito.org) and complete the online application form. The membership fee will be determined based on the type of organisation and the size of the business.

SATOVITO is committed to promoting and supporting the growth of township and village tourism in South Africa and provides a platform for members to connect, collaborate and contribute to the development of this important sector.

Individuals and organisations who are passionate about township and village tourism are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity and become members of SATOVITO. By joining this organisation, members can receive help to support the growth and development of this exciting industry as well as play a key role in promoting the rich cultural heritage of South Africa's townships and villages.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION DOWNLOAD HERE





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LOCATION:

Update the GPS App on your mobile device to accurately navigate through our country

CLIMATE: South Africa's climate can get extremely hot and dry.

Wear sunscreen and a hat

Wear the appropriate clothing and footwear for outdoor activities

Carry enough water to stay hydrated

Avoid drinking water from rivers and streams

BE WATER WISE: Most of our beaches carry a Blue Flag Status.

Only swim in designated areas

Lifeguards are on call to ensure your safety

Read and follow the signs to ensure an enjoyable experience at the beach.

Take care when swimming as rip currents can pull you out to sea

PERSONAL SAFETY: We care about your safety

Ensure your personal possessions are with you at all times

Keep passports and important documents in a safe at your hotel, and carry a copy whilst out and about.

Do not share your banking details or pin code with anyone

Alert your hotel before going for a walk alone or an excursion.





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