



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Tourism Minister engages Northern Cape tourism operators

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Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom has urged Northern Cape tourism business owners to join hands with the three spheres of government to grow tourism in the province.

Speaking at an engagement with tourism industry stakeholders during an outreach visit to the Northern Cape this week, Minister Hanekom praised the province for its efforts to promote tourism.

The outreach is part of a series of provincial visits being undertaken by Minister Hanekom to interact with private and public sector tourism stakeholders.

“The value of these outreach engagements lies in finding out first-hand what challenges and opportunities the industry faces,” said Minister Hanekom. “This helps us in government to direct the limited resources we have wisely, and to create inclusive growth for the tourism industry.”

“This province has unique attributes which sets it apart from other regions as a tourist destination, and has special offerings which enhances the region’s competitiveness,” said Minister Hanekom.

The Northern Cape has three deserts, six national parks including the Richtersveld World heritage Site, a rich and varied cultural heritage, and is home to the world’s most powerful telescope, the Square Kilometre Array. Kimberley’s historical heritage as South Africa’s first diamond mining town and the Big Hole provide a unique tourism attraction.

The province is positioning itself as a destination which offers tourists extreme nature, adventure and cultural experiences.

The Northern Cape this week hosted the Kimberley Diamond Cup, an international event on the World Skateboarding Grand Prix circuit. Plans are afoot for further investment in the Kumba Skate Park, where the championship is taking place, to transform it into an Extreme Sport Precinct capable of hosting a variety of extreme sport codes and attracting additional tourists.

Northern Cape MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Mr John Block, who accompanied the Minister on his outreach, assured tourism businesses that the provincial tourism department was stepping up efforts to develop tourism in municipalities.

“All stakeholders in the private and public sector need to make bold decisions to overcome our challenges and stimulate growth,” said Mr Block.

Minister Hanekom also attended the graduation of Tourism Buddies, following their 12 month learnership programme which equipped 41 local learners with theoretical and practical knowledge of the hospitality sector.

Minister Hanekom experienced some of the tourism products on offer in Kimberley, and participated in a cooking demonstration at the Butler’s Hospitality School, where students on the National Young Chefs Training Programme learn culinary skills.

The provincial outreach ended with a visit to the Kimberley Diamond Cup skateboarding competition, where the Minister interacted with local youth and international visitors attending the event.

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