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## **Northern Cape is safe and ready to offer travellers an authentic experience**

**SOUTH AFRICA, Johannesburg – Friday, 24 December 2021:** The Northern Cape might not have the highest density of tourists compared to other provinces, but it calls for travellers to participate in it. From the desert landscapes of the Karoo and Kgalagadi to the rugged 320 kilometre Atlantic coastline, the Northern Cape promises an authentic experience of the sublime.

This was the sentiment shared by the Northern Cape Tourism Authority (NCTA) at the penultimate edition of the Provincial Showcase on Thursday, 23 December. The showcase is being held at the South African Pavilion during the Expo 2020 Dubai. It promotes the business and leisure tourism opportunities that exist in each of the nine provinces.

The pavilion calls on investors around the world to “Think South Africa, Think Opportunity,” when looking for a new destination in which to do business.

### **Northern Cape promises authentic experiences**

According to the NCTA’s General Manager for Marketing and Promotion, Dianna Martin, tourism trends show that travellers are avoiding city centres and are heading to remote locations. This makes Northern Cape’s expansive natural environment all the more alluring.

The province’s authenticity is its drawcard. It is home to six national parks including Augrabies and the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park with which they share with Botswana. The Tankwa Karoo plays host to the annual AfrikaBurn. Hakskeenpan was the location for the Bloodhound land speed record set in 2019. And Sutherland is the home of the stargazing Southern African Large Telescope, the largest optical telescope in the southern hemisphere.

Martin said they have punted mountain biking, hiking and glamping in recent months, primarily to the domestic tourist segment. “We have attracted the new visitor,” said Martin.

“We have been encouraging municipalities to look at increasing caravan sites and the like because that is what people want. For instance, we have seen an increase in 4x4 visitors who are looking for those glamping experiences and the outdoors.”

She said the province has been encouraging travellers and sports organisers to look at hosting individual sporting events in the Northern Cape as an alternative to the large super spreader gatherings. “We have been hosting an increased number of these individual sporting events and there has been good growth.

The NCTA’s CEO, Sharron Lewis, said the Northern Cape is quickly establishing itself as a viable sports destination, having hosted the internationally recognised 2021 Billabong Namakwa Surf Challenge in August and the Kalahari Rally pre-qualifier for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Dakar Rally. “Organisers of these activities came into the Northern Cape and discovered that this is the place where you can do things differently and they have stayed. So we have seen an increase of different sporting organisers coming here.”

### **Northern Cape ensures traveller confidence**

According to Lewis, the NCTA has forged partnerships that ensure the safety of its tourists amidst the pandemic. “Tourism is a serious business, which is why there are government campaigns around safe travel.”

She said that the NCTA has been constantly engaging with product owners and government on how to improve safety and instil confidence in travellers. “With the Covid restrictions, we paused and you absorbed but did not go dormant. This is a very resilient sector. This pandemic has brought the industry closer because we need each other. Tourism is everybody’s business. We have developed material to create awareness and keep tourism alive because it is about saving jobs and saving tourism.”

Keep up with the South African Pavilion Team on Twitter using the handle TeamSA\_Expo2020. Follow the events at the pavilion using #ThinkOpportunity #Expo2020SA #ShareSouthAfrica.

