
Western Cape in a good space when it comes to traveller safety

SOUTH AFRICA, Johannesburg – Wednesday, 22 December 2021: Table Mountain, the Cape Winelands, the Karoo and the Overberg are just some of the Western Cape’s most sought-after tourist destinations. But more than a just visual feast, Wesgro – the province’s tourism, trade and investment promotion agency – says these sites, and others, are now Covid-safe and accessible to travellers. This is due to Wesgro’s tireless collaborative efforts with partners to ensure traveller safety.

The South African Pavilion took the global travel trade to the Western Cape on Wednesday, 22 December for the seventh instalment of its Provincial Showcase. The showcase gives audiences a taste of each of South Africa’s nine provinces with a focus on their business and leisure tourism opportunities. Potential investors are called to “Think South Africa, Think Opportunity,” when looking for their next business destination.

According to the CEO of Wesgro, Wrenelle Stander, the Western Cape is perfectly positioned for travel in the new world. This was a nod to Wesgro’s “Pretty Convincing” remote work campaign launched in November, which calls on travellers to live and work in the Mother City or anywhere else in the Western Cape.

She assured visitors that their safety in this Covid-19 era is of utmost importance to both the Western Cape government and the province’s tourism industry. She added that such measures put the traveller’s mind at ease and encourages them to book a stay in the Western Cape with confidence. “Putting visitor safety first is of top priority. Our local travel and hospitality sectors comply with global Covid-19 health and safety protocols.”

Western Cape a Covid-safe destination

Julia Louw, the Head of Leisure Tourism at Wesgro said that the pandemic and its ensuing lockdowns had prompted the industry to adapt to new norms. Wesgro, in particular, pivoted its focus to the domestic market, introduced the Safe Travels online information portal and worked towards receiving the Safe Travel Stamp from the World Travel and Tourism Council.

Wesgro also collaborated with South African Tourism, the Tourism Business Council of South Africa and other related bodies to keep the province top of mind. “If you have a collective tourism industry, we will be pretty much unstoppable. We have come out stronger as a collective,” said Louw.

She added that crafting the right vaccination messaging has been important for getting the Western Cape ready to welcome tourists again. Currently, the Western Cape has 2.6-million individuals vaccinated. “We have Jabs4Tourism and Save Your Summer, both of which are incredibly important narratives to show that we want a vaccinated front. There is a platform for businesses to register themselves to show they are a fully vaccinated establishment.”

She said that the Western Cape has the world class hospitals and medical facilities to manage travellers’ needs. This all goes to show that the province is a safe destination. “We want to show the tourism trade that it is safe to get back to business and show the world that closing borders and locking ourselves up is no longer working. We need to push the messaging to partners around the world and have governments communicate with each other that we cannot have any more lockdowns.”

Unique ways of seeing the hidden gems of the Cape

According to Zintle Mtsi, Wesgro’s Experience and Product Specialist, some of the Western Cape’s tourism products got a facelift during lockdown, allowing travellers to take in the Fairest Cape in unique ways. “Lockdown gave everyone time to repackage themselves. So a lot of new experiences are on offer.”

These include the Cape Cycle Route, whereby travellers can choose to cycle along one of five routes in the region, and the Cradle of Human Culture trail, which takes travellers across 20 towns to discover mankind’s first forays into the arts. “The Cradle of Human Culture traces the origins and

development of human culture. Visitors will discover some of humanity's earliest use of symbols, art and technological innovation – one of which is the first evidence of drawing [that is 73,000 years old].”

Because of the myriad of activities in the province, travellers with little time should draw up an itinerary that takes them to the outdoors, said Mtsi. Wesgro's tagline, “Get in a Good Space” refers to the wide open spaces in the province. “You want to go outdoors and experience the nature we have out here. We have so much adventure activities such as the longest over-ocean zip line in Mossel Bay. You can also do a cycle tour in Khayelitsha to experience the outdoors and interact with its people.”

Cape Winelands a key economic pillar

The ever-popular Cape Winelands, which produce some of the world's coveted wines, is also geared up for visitors, said Mtsi. The Franschhoek Valley, in particular, is the most vaccinated town in South Africa with 85% of its inhabitants jabbed at the last official count.

The Western Cape has 529 wineries that stretch from the picturesque Franschhoek Valley to Calitzdorp in the Little Karoo. The industry is the seventh biggest on the planet, producing up to 898-million litres and exporting R18-billion worth of the beverage.

According to South African Wine Industry and Systems, the sector contributes R55-billion, or 1.1%, to the national GDP. Wine Tourism in particular contributes R7.2-billion and has 36 406 employment opportunities. “Cape Town and the Cape Winelands is part of the Great Wine Capitals,” said Mtsi. “It is a network of major global cities in both the northern and southern hemispheres, which share a key economic and cultural asset: internationally renowned wine regions.”

Tomorrow will feature the final two provinces in the showcase – Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal at 16:00 and 18:00 Gulf Standard Time respectively. Register on the pavilion's [online portal](#) to catch these events.

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.
