

# Western Cape tourism businesses initiate water saving campaign, enhances efforts

CapeNature, Airbnb, Cape Town and the Western Cape's official Tourism, Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Wesgro), and the Western Cape Government have partnered to distribute 2,300 low-flow shower heads that save both water (by 70%) and electricity (by 30%) to guesthouses, B&B's and Airbnb hosts across the province. It is estimated that the contribution will help save at least 70 million litres of water a year.

This forms part of the campaign to help tourists and small accommodation establishments make a measurable difference in the midst of the worst drought in recorded history by helping save water directly.



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The campaign includes the distribution of mirror decals that will be used in these tourism establishment bathrooms, ensuring that tourists are provided with information on how they can save water in the very location where the behaviour change is needed most.

**The campaign was designed after conducting a research study with 540 smaller tourism establishments across the province. In summary, the research showed that:**

- Only 25% have installed water saving shower heads
- 67% want water saving shower heads
- 90% are happy to collect from a central point
- 71% want mirror decals as well

Minister of economic opportunities, Alan Winde said the campaign was part of the Western Cape's peak season drive to share the water savings message with tourists.

## Water-saving best practice

At the start of December, the Western Cape Government, local municipalities and tourism officers will host awareness events along the N2, N1 and N7. "We'll be distributing around 20,000 hand sanitizers, branded with water savings tips. Through this event, we will be welcoming tourists into our province and making sure they are aware of the water crisis.

“There will also be knock-and-drops to petrol stations and guest houses across the province. The province’s tourist guides will also spread the message. “In early December, we will launch our radio campaign to raise awareness among local businesses. As we head into the new year, it is important that businesses include action plans on how to deal with the crisis. Our campaign will also commend businesses who are reducing and recycling their own water usage,” added Winde.

Winde said the Western Cape Government was completing case studies of best practice on water-savings in each sector, to share with businesses.

## Facing the new normal

“Cape Town and the Western Cape now faces a “new normal” and water scarcity is going to be a long-term problem. We, therefore, realised that a long-term solution was also needed. These shower heads will go a small, but measurable way, in contributing to the province’s water-saving efforts,” said Tim Harris, Wesgro CEO.

“Tourism is essential to the Western Cape economy. According to our calculations, international tourists only add 1% to the Western Cape population of the summer peak season, but contributed over R38bn to the Cape economy in 2016, supporting 319,227 jobs. Tourism is an important contributor to economic growth and job creation, at a time when the drought may hurt key sectors. Wesgro is, therefore, saying to tourists: come to our beautiful province, but please save water. We hope this campaign will help make this easier,” added Harris.

“The tourism sector in the Western Cape is not only responsible for creating jobs, but also boost our local economy. Fresh potable water is the lifeblood of this economy, and it is for this reason that CapeNature sees value in supporting the Water Saving Tourism Industry Campaign.



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To enhance the eco-tourism facilities at CapeNature we have taken a number of steps to be proactive in the years preceding the current drought by focusing on sustainability practices at our nature reserves by installing solar devices, low

flow showers, eco/waterless-toilets, initiating rainwater harvesting and promoting water-saving practices to our guests," says Razeena Omar, CapeNature CEO.

Velma Corcoran, Airbnb's regional market consultant for sub-Saharan Africa said: "Making travel more sustainable is at the core of what Airbnb does.

The company is committed to going further and doing everything they can to help address the water crisis that is affecting Cape Town. Airbnb is reaching out to guests travelling this festive season to raise awareness, we have organized meet-ups for our community to discuss their water-saving best practice and we continue to look for additional ways to support through our partnership with Wesgro which includes this initiative to distribute water saving shower heads to the host community. Airbnb supports responsible hosting - and water saving is a critical part of that for the Cape Town community."

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