

# CPT Tourism: Despite a tough year, industry players optimistic tourism can bounce back

Cape Town Tourism's recent annual AGM, themed *Back to the Future*, which took place on Wednesday, 21 October, was hosted against the backdrop of Covid-19, the lockdown and its effects on the local tourism industry.



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With social distancing in place and adhering to event regulations under lockdown Level 1, this year's AGM took on a new shape and was hosted in three different locations - the Century City Convention Centre, Jonkershuis at Groot Constantia and 4Roomed eKasi Culture in Khayelitsha, with the event being live-streamed to a broader industry audience.

## A strange year for all

In his address, chairman of the board Brett Hendricks noted that when he was sworn in a year ago, tackling a global pandemic that would throw the industry into such turbulent times was not what he thought he would be doing.

"It's been a long and tough year," said Hendricks. "Numbers were looking strong and positive prior to Covid-19 and lockdown, but even though the industry is struggling, there is a sense of hope as we work with the City of Cape Town and other industry partners to reimagine tourism and go 'back to the future' about the way forward."

Alderman James Vos, MEC for economic opportunities, asset management and tourism at the City of Cape Town, addressed attendees and sowed seeds of hope as he spoke about what the City and Cape Town Tourism are doing to ensure that the industry will bounce back better after Covid-19. "We will continue with initiatives that we had started at the beginning of lockdown.

"The tourism task team that we set up is hard at work on ensuring that we have tourism routes and hubs in all of our communities and that we can continue to grow our cruise and aviation sectors - sectors that even now during these trying times are showing strong signals of growth with the 2021/2022 cruise season showing promising growth and commitment from international airlines for more direct routes to Cape Town," noted Vos.

Vos also noted that the city and Cape Town Tourism will continue to lobby for a full re-opening of the tourism sector. "We have measures in place to manage and contain Covid-19 in Cape Town. We need to completely open the sector to ensure that the industry can thrive once again."

## **Collaboration has been key**

Steering the ship through this storm and onto the "next normal" way of doing things.

"When we started our new year, we were feeling optimistic as pre-lockdown arrivals looked to be better than 2019 - we were finally recovering from the drought," said Duminy. "Then Covid-19 took us all by surprise and turned the industry on its head with some businesses closing, some being forced to let staff go, and others having to implement salary reductions among staff," said Enver Duminy, CEO of Cape Town Tourism.

"However, thanks to collaboration - which has really been the key ingredient throughout this crisis - we have managed to partner with companies from the private sector to give hospitality staff the opportunity to still earn a living."

"This not only helped the individuals and their families with income but also provided them with other skills that they could use going forward," said Duminy.

## **New board members**

Of course, the AGM would not be complete without the announcement of new board members and the recipients of the Board Development Fund - something that could really assist small businesses from the tourism industry at this time.

Wahida Parker, the managing director of Table Mountain Aerial Cableway, was re-elected to the board, while Alison Coughlan of Go See Do Cape Town was introduced as a new member.

## **The Board Development Fund**

In October 2013, Cape Town Tourism's Board of Directors took a collective decision to forfeit their monthly board remuneration in favour of the Board Development Fund (BDF) that assists Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) with support to develop their tourism businesses. Now in 2020, this fund is perhaps more needed than ever before.

**The recipients of the fund this year are** Jeep Tours Cape Town and iKunjani Authentic Cultural Adventures.

When lockdown hit, Jeep Tours Cape Town was able to secure essential services permit and they pivoted their business to provide transport for essential service workers as well as to drop off donations to charities who needed it the most. When asked about this award, Lizanne Gomes said that she was thrilled to be recognised.

"This award has given me hope that we can still grow and establish our business in 2021 even with all the challenges in 2020. I am excited to soak up all the advice and guidance from the board. Our focus for the money will be getting more staff accredited with THETA, upgrading our equipment and skills sets, marketing material and branding elements."

Nicolene Mhlanganyeli of iKunjani Authentic Cultural Adventures, a company that specialises in cultural tours that are customised to the travellers' needs, said that winning this award means that she will be able to better market her business.

"This award will enable us to aggressively market our business and the services we provide so as to be continuously at the top of our prospective client's minds," said Mhlanganyeli. "I would like to thank Cape Town Tourism for the opportunity and support they have given iKunjani Travel & Tours. As a business, we realise the importance of establishing and maintaining fruitful strategic alliances with various stakeholders.

"It seems clear that despite the turbulent year that has been, tourism businesses and industry players are hopeful that the Cape Town tourism industry will prevail and bounce back from this crisis - just as it has from many before."

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