

Unaffordable public transport hampers domestic tourism in WC

Transport to key tourist destinations in the Western Cape is unaffordable for many South Africans - while buses are available around the city, many citizens find heritage destinations such as Cape Point and the Winelands out of reach. Martin Bo Nielsen, co-founder of Cape Comoot says: "Due to the lack of public transportation to key tourist locations outside of the city centre, a large portion of local travellers is unable to afford private transport expenses when touring."



Cape Comoot founders

Accessibility to affordable transport is a real issue: approximately 5.8m people reside in the Western Cape and 3.756m in and around Cape Town City, most of them probably cannot afford to get to key tourist locations within their own province."

He also explains that with an increase of 14% on domestic travel to Cape Town within the past year, this situation will only drive up demand for affordable transport. Domestic tourists come to the region to visit family, vacation or on business. For most of these individuals, private transport would seriously dent their budgets, citing students and pensioners as an example.

The issue of affordability

While there are a number of initiatives to grow domestic tourism, such as South African Tourism's latest 'I Do Tourism' Campaign (IDT), which aims to further stimulate the market, these plans continue to fail when it comes to providing affordable methods of transport despite heavy promotion on the affordability of domestic tourism. A staunch believer in the #TourismForAll initiative, Nielsen believes that the transport industry is dragging their feet when it comes to providing a concrete solution in the near future.

Nielsen reports that MyCiti, Cape Town's bus service, recently announced plans to extend the bus service to the northern suburbs and deep south, but nothing is on the cards yet extending to outlying tourist spots such as Cape Point and the Winelands.

"The issue of affordability is one of the main reasons we started Cape Comoot, which we believe is an 'alternative public transport' service. We are passionate about making a difference to communities," says Nielsen. He explains that a normal ride from Cape Town city centre to Franschhoek or Cape Point would break the bank for most citizens. Currently, a single visitor to Cape Town cannot get to and from Cape Point or Franschhoek for under R550, and that requires joining a tour of up to 50 people.

"To get to these destinations, visitors need to join a tour group, hire a car, take a hotel shuttle facility, a taxi service such as Uber or hire a private operator. These are expensive options, a taxi would cost around R600 one-way and a shuttle service from a hotel is typically around R700 to R800," he says.

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