

SA hospitality anticipates positive industry growth for 2019

The Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA) event, which took place on Thursday, 17 January revealed that its members are positive about the upcoming year, despite a challenging festive season. Members were addressed by the Western Cape Minister of Economic Opportunities (responsible for Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism), Beverley Schäfer, at the Peninsula All Suite Hotel. The interactive session saw members of FEDHASA Cape share anecdotal reports of the festive season and discuss opportunities that would continue to grow the industry.



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Most members felt that this festive season had brought lower occupancy rates, explains Joep Schoof, chairman of the FEDHASA Cape Hotels segment, but many still experienced a growth in revenue based on increases in room rates, the anecdotal reports indicated.

Along with the setbacks of the drought, members also experienced challenges in terms of a shorter season and bookings being made closer to the time of travel. They also listed issues of land reform and visa regulations as having a negative impact on international travel.

In her address, Schäfer said the industry as a whole had expected a quiet season for the 2018/2019 holiday period, due to international media coverage of the drought affecting the province and financial pressure on the local economy. However, efforts by tourism role-players have seen more positive results than initially expected, Schäfer said.

Schäfer quoted figures supplied by the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA), indicating that there had been an increase in international traffic through Cape Town International Airport for the year, as well as over December.

In addition, reports from tourism offices and attractions have been "largely positive", said Schäfer.

Responsible tourism focus, engagement

Ruth Kamau, FEDHASA Cape small accommodation segment chairperson said the season experienced by smaller accommodation properties appears to have mirrored the experience of the larger hotels. "Normally there is a discrepancy between the bigger hotels and our segment, but this year both experienced shorted seasons and found bookings had shorter lead times."

The hotel sector also highlighted the upcoming election as having an effect on bookings, but many have already experienced an upswing in bookings for 2019, Schoof explained.

Schäfer urged FEDHASA Cape members to continue to focus on responsible tourism and to position themselves to lead the way in developing environmentally-friendly practices. "We are now uniquely positioned as a responsible tourism destination, that has led the way on developing eco-friendly practices."

Schäfer also highlighted the *Nowhere Does it Better* Campaign, which aims to remind visitors of Cape Town's most well-loved offerings.

The *Nowhere Does it Better* campaign is a collaborative industry initiative driven by Wesgro, Western Cape Government, City of Cape Town, South African Tourism (SAT), Cape Town Tourism, Southern Africa Tourism Services Association (SATSA), FEDHASA, South African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI).

Tourism stakeholders can download the complimentary marketing assets for use of individual company marketing initiatives from the trade website. The collateral has been specifically designed to include a white space at the bottom for individual companies to insert their own branding.

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