



Campaign to boost tourism in the Western Cape

By Niemah Davids

While South Africa's current tourism growth rate exceeds the international rate, city tourism officials are driving a campaign to boost tourism even further in the Western Cape.

According to Simon Grindrod, mayoral committee member for economic, social development and tourism, most travellers to the city wanted a more "ethical and responsible" tourism industry, and were willing to pay more for this authentic experience.

In his speech at the AGM for the Association of South African Travel Agents, Grindrod said South Africa's current tourism growth rate was believed to be about 8,3 percent and exceeded the international rate of 6,3 percent.

He said the responsible development and marketing of the Mother City was a "fundamental principle" for the City of Cape Town.

He said to compete with the world's best, Capetonians needed to develop a clear understanding of the tourism market and market each destination in a focused manner with a strong message.

Grindrod said the city was driving a Responsible Tourism programme in order for Cape Town to be recognised globally as a Responsible Tourism Destination.

"We want to stay on top, and through responsible tourism we will," he said.

Speaking to the Cape Argus on Wednesday night, Grindrod explained that an ethical and responsible tourism industry referred to a range of factors.

"It focuses on how we do business in the city, on how companies treat their staff and on being environmentally friendly at all times," he said.

When doing research, travellers did not always consider the city's natural beauty, rich culture, tradition and history, but instead weighed up how well bosses treated their workers and most importantly looked at whether the city was environmentally friendly.

"Whether we conserve water is very important and they (travellers) also look at whether the shuttle service vehicles they will use when they arrive are using unleaded petrol," he said.

Grindrod said because tourism was a main "economic driver" a drop in tourist arrivals would have "serious employment impacts".

It was for this reason that responsible and ethical tourism would be used as a foundation, he added.

niemah.davids@inl.co.za

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