
Joint Media Statement



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For immediate release

To : All media

Attention : News Editors/Leisure Reporters

BUMPER CROWD FOR VODACOM DURBAN JULY 2018 EXPECTED

Durban, South Africa, July 3, 2018: A bumper crowd of 50 000 people are expected to attend this year's Vodacom Durban July (VDJ) bringing with them an additional R150 million-rand cash injection into the local economy making this event Africa's greatest horse race.

The Zulu Kingdom is pulling out all the stops to ensure that international, national and regional guests experience Durban at its best.

The Mayor of Durban, Cllr Zandile Gumede, said the City has pulled all stops to ensure that this year's event surpasses all expectations. "In terms of readiness, it is all systems go and we are confident that we will deliver a sterling show. We are also optimistic about the economic prospects of staging what has become one of Africa's major events. This year we are anticipating that all our hotels and hospitality will be packed and this is expected to make a contribution of no less than R75 million in direct spend alone,"

"What makes us even happier is that most of the side events have been scheduled for our townships and this will enable to give practical expression to the ideals of radical economic transformation, as it directly benefits our people in their communities," added Gumede.

Acting Chief Executive Officer of Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN), Phindile Makwakwa, said “The VDJ has become a major flagship event for KZN and we are excited to welcome the throngs of visitors who will descend to our shores for this weekend. Over the years, we have seen that a lot of people come a little earlier for the VDJ so they can also bask in the warm weather and enjoy the number of events leading up to the main event on Saturday and then stay a bit longer for some of the post events.”

TKZN recently announced the introduction of the new Durban direct flight from London by British Airways, which will further grow the UK arrivals which is currently the number one key international source market for the province.

“Visitors from Europe can now partake in the lifestyle events in the same way they enjoy the Royal Ascot and the Cheltenham Festival in England – with patrons flying direct in less than 10 hours,” said Makwakwa, anticipating an influx of visitors when direct flights start in October.

Ultimately, TKZN wants to position the VDJ on the same level as other top racing events from all over the world like the Kentucky Derby in the USA, the Melbourne Cup in Australia and the Dubai Cup.

“We will be able to achieve this by attracting international patrons. When we add good tourism spots to visit, good weather and the first world facilities, we are confident that the province can become the playground for tourists from across the globe,” said Makwakwa.

“The Durban July is an institution that has grown from strength to strength and it is not only Durban that benefits, but the province as a whole,” said Makwakwa.

According to Ken Tweddell, Event Marketing Manager for Gold Circle, on race day visitors were expected to spend a projected R75 million.

“Betting adds another R100 million – on and at off course totes around the country,” Tweddell said.

Forecasts are that the total contribution made to the province’s economy will be around R159 million added with the creation of 320 jobs. While international tourist visitor arrivals for July and August last year was 112 000, this year the province is anticipating 125 000 of international arrivals for the same period. Add to this an average spend of R5 877 per visit expected to rise to R7 700 and that translates into just over R962 million rand into the economy.

So, while the domestic market might have shown signs of a slight decline all indicators are that this year the province will welcome more international visitors than before.

In an initiative to grow the Southern African regional market, TKZN has partnered with airline partners such as Air Namibia and South African Express to bring in 16 tour

operators agents and media from SADC countries like Namibia and Botswana to experience everything the province has to offer and ultimately create business linkages for tourists. This will happen during the week leading up to the VDJ.

A workshop tour of the province and a chance to experience the VDJ has been arranged to showcase the province's products and to provide the platform for reciprocal growth in the regional market.

Blending together this year's theme "*It is Time*", the VDJ is very much about fashion. TKZN has promised that all visitors – international, regional and local - will have a fashionably great time during their visit to KZN.

Makwakwa said while many fashionistas travel around the globe to find inspiration TKZN offers a runway to show off your fashion and the assurance of an enjoyable stay in Durban.

"Tourism is not only about going to see beautiful sites, but it also acts as a trigger for inspiration for creative thinkers, designers, and artists. That is why TKZN encourages trend-setters and designers to visit the different destinations and experience our rich culture. This allows creative minds to explore new ideas which in turn will influence their designs," said Makwakwa.

The Tourism KZN Marquee will be a hive of activity with fashion showcases from up and coming KZN designers mentored by the KZN Fashion Council.

The VDJ provides a platform to celebrate everything that is great about the sport of horse racing and fashion.

The spotlight now turns to African fashion and showcases the best as Tweddell put it: "The VDJ shows off Durban in all its finery. Its glitzy, sophisticated, social and sporting event that allows Durban to bask in the limelight, using the mild winter weather married with a variety of other major events it attracts visitors to the region and drives the region's tourism economy."

ENDS

Notes to editors

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal is responsible for the development, promotion and marketing of tourism into and within the province, both domestically and internationally. The organisation is an entity that reports to the provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

For updated information go to:

Website: Tourism KZN: www.zulu.org.za

Facebook: Page: Tourism Kwazulu-Natal

Twitter: @TourismKZN

Hashtags: #VDJ2018 #DoKZN

For media interviews, please contact

Nhlanhla Ngwenya - Communications Coordinator

Tourism KZN – 063 698 7455 (mobile)

Email: Nhlanhla@zulu.org.za