



*Zulu Kingdom. **Exceptional***

January 23 2023
For immediate release

To: All media
Attention: News Editors and Journalists

HOLIDAY MAKERS GIVE THE KWAZULU-NATAL ECONOMY A R2,4 BILLION BOOST FOR THE FESTIVE PERIOD

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) welcomes the announcement by Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs MEC Mr. Siboniso Duma that some 520 000 domestic tourists and 51 000 international tourists visited KwaZulu-Natal for the festive period, providing a R2,4billion injection to the provincial economy.

Preliminary figures show that KZN's occupancy rate from 26 December 2022 to 1 January 2023 soared to an average of 81% across the province against an early forecast for an average provincial occupancy rate of 69% at the peak of the holiday season.

TKZN Acting Chief Executive Mr. Nhlanhla Khumalo said: "It is pleasing that the province's districts beat festive season expectations as this indicates that holidaymakers took time to explore other experiences offered across the region."

"The closure of some Durban beaches due to the pollution, saw TKZN implement a strong summer season media campaign telling holiday makers that only some of eThekweni's beaches were closed, and that KZN had 600km of coastline with many beaches including blue flag beaches on the south and north coasts. Moreover, the province has an array of other excellent tourist destinations from the Drakensberg to big-five safaris.

"The sharp increase in occupancies in the week from Christmas to New Year particularly in the northern and southern KZN districts suggests that our message hit home. The opening

of popular beaches during December and Umhlanga beach on December 23 may also have encouraged last minute holiday bookings,” said Mr. Khumalo.

The tourism trade in the KZN hinterland also reported doing well. South Africa’s fastest growing hotel group, Anew Hotel has accommodation in Kokstad, Newcastle, Hilton as well coastal said it experienced an 80% plus festive season, which was a far better performance than 2021 and slightly better than 2019. Moreover 90% of the tourists were domestic, as people clearly wanted to “just get away.” It was also reported that there was an improvement in international tour groups coming to experience KZN’s big five safaris, however, this was not yet at 2019 levels.

Preliminary actual weekly occupancies from 19 December 2022 – 1 January 2022 vs a similar period in 2019

District Municipality	Week 19th to 25th December 2022	Similar period 2019	Week 26th December 2022 to 1st January 2023	Similar period 2019
Ugu- South Coast	64%	57%	97%	74%
iLembe- Ballito	70%	59%	89%	79%
uMkhanyakude – North Coast	69%	39%	87%	45%
eThekweni -Durban	49%	54%	77%	71%
uThukela - Ladysmith/Drakensberg	57%	41%	75%	55%
Harry Gwala- Kokstad/ Underberg	56%	35%	72%	50%
uMgungundlovu -PMB	52%	34%	67%	50%
Zululand	32%	18%	63%	24%
King Cetshwayo – Richards Bay	34%	38%	60%	55%
Amajuba – Newcastle/Vryheid	13%	15%	44%	28%
Umzinyathi – Greytown - Dundee	12%	23%	29%	23%
KZN Overall Occupancy	57%	52 %	81%	69%

The above hotel occupancy table indicates KZN’s district tourism preliminary performance. The 2019 occupancy figures provided are used as a comparison and a broad overview of the festive season performance.

In line with South African Tourism, we are using 2019 as a base line, however, a lot has changed because of the Covid pandemic, including travel patterns and available accommodation and length of stay.

Post Covid we have noticed that the holiday season has become a lot shorter starting on 16 December 2022, peaking over the week from Christmas to New Year and then dropping sharply in the first two weeks of January 2023 to 40% and 15% respectively, as holiday makers headed home. It must be noted that the provinces festive season figures reflect performance for the December period only and bode well for the final tally when the summer season draws to a close at the end of March 2023.

“Over the next two months we will welcome visitors for the popular Midmar Mile on February 11 and the Dusi Canoe marathon from February 16 to 18 and an array of business tourism events. We are also confident that we will achieve our projected economic impact for the summer season of R4.1 billion, based on a projected final occupancy rate of 70% by the end of the financial year,” concluded Khumalo.

ENDS

For media enquiries contact

Nhlanhla Ngwenya

Communications Coordinator

Tourism KZN – 0636987455 (mobile)

Email: Nhlanhla@zulu.org.za
