

Alcohol industry backs festive season road safety campaign

The Association of Alcohol Responsibility and Education, Aware.org, and the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) have launched a joint initiative, called the Industry National Festive Road Safety & Social Norms Campaign, to encourage responsible drinking over the festive season.



Source: Supplied

The event on Wednesday was addressed by Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula, RTMC board chair Zola Majavu and South African Liquor Brandowners Association (Salba) spokesperson Sibani Mngadi, who spoke on behalf of the chair of Aware.org.

The collaboration between Aware.org and RTMC has been working to reduce the misuse of alcohol, helped with an investment of R59m by Aware.org into this initiative since 2017.

“ Mzansi, let's reconcile our actions with their consequences, by being [#ResponsibleForMore](#) . If you have a few cold ones today, [#NeverDrinkAndDrive](#). Your drinking and driving doesn't only affect you. [#DrinkResponsibly](#) [#AwareOfTomorrow](#)[#NoToHarmfulDrinking](#) pic.twitter.com/0RrxHMuMjk— aware.org.za (@AwareOrg) [December 16, 2021](#) ”

Reviving tourism and hospitality

Mngadi said the alcohol industry plays an integral part in the revival of the tourism and hospitality sector, which were the hardest hit by the Covid-19 restrictions.

“From Vilakazi street in Soweto or Max Lifestyle in Durban to the most high-end restaurants of Cape Town, it is evident that alcohol is an integral part of tourism and hospitality sector,” Mngadi told the audience. “The operations of restaurants and hospitality establishments become financially unviable when you remove alcohol from the menu.

“Our economy simply cannot afford restrictions on domestic travel during this festive season. The decision by more than 90 countries to impose a travel ban to southern Africa following the discovery of the Omicron variant is a major blow to our struggling economy. Domestic tourism during this festive season is the only hope for many establishments that have had cancellations due to the international travel bans.”



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PwC estimated that the travel bans would result in a R6.5bn loss in foreign revenue for our country in the fourth quarter of this year, which comes on the back of a 1.5% decline in third-quarter GDP, according to Stats SA.

The past 629 days of the National State of Disaster had been difficult for the alcohol industry. The four total bans of alcohol sales resulted in R36bn in lost sales revenue and a R29bn loss to the government in tax revenue, according to Salba.

Despite this, the leadership of the alcohol sector did not hold back on the social investment it makes through Aware.org. This included donations of pure alcohol for sanitiser production in the early part of the pandemic, providing PPEs to major hospitals in GP, KZN, Eastern and Western Cape and setting up vaccination centres for our employees and communities at large.

R6m contribution

The purpose of this year’s deployment involves further collaboration between the National Traffic Police working with provincial liquor enforcement and focusing on the five provinces that contribute to 80% of the most road fatalities (Limpopo, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Eastern Cape, Gauteng, and Mpumalanga).

The key messaging – promoted by the President and the Minister is – “together we can!” In the Free State and North West, law enforcement will tackle specific hazardous locations and high-risk routes such as the N8 and N3 (Free State), N4, N12, R510, R511 and R512 (North West). The deployment will cover both day and night periods to mitigate against the identified risks and fatal crashes occurring at night from 13 December 2021 to 15 January 2022.

Mngadi said that 750 community patrollers had been appointed and were instrumental in encouraging compliance with Covid-19 regulations at an outlet level. They would continue to promote pedestrian safety as far as it relates to drinking and walking.

In addition, the nine mobile Alcohol Evidence Centres (AECs) and the 200 breathalysers handed over at the launch would empower the traffic officers to screen and collate necessary evidence to deal with the problem of drinking and driving successfully. The total value of the contribution – AECs with PPE, consumables and equipment – is roughly R6m.

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Mngadi said the industry and the government should continue to encourage people to travel safely during this festive season through this initiative and promote similar collaborations that target crime prevention and the education of young people about the dangers of underage drinking.

“Our economy has shown that we can bounce back, despite the disastrous impact of Covid-19,” he said. “We are committed to helping rebuild our economy, but we can only achieve this by allowing the tourism and hospitality industry to remain in business.

“The government has the full commitment of the alcohol sector to support measures to contain the spread and impact of Covid-19 by expanding the vaccination programme, and imposing common-sense limits to unsafe gatherings and encouraging all outlets to follow the basic health protocols of wearing face masks in public, social distancing, and basic hygiene.”

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