

Harsher restrictions could quell tourism, hospitality recovery efforts - Fedhasa

Statistics released by Statistics South Africa this week has revealed that the third wave and further lockdown restrictions are likely to hamper recovery efforts for the tourism and hospitality sectors and be the death knell for many in the industry.

The only sustainable solutions, says Fedhasa, remain strict compliance to health and safety, the responsible trade and consumption of alcohol and urgent mass vaccinations to avoid South Africa falling behind as other tourism destinations begin to recover



Source: Supplied

The government is now faced with the impossible task of preventing significant collateral damage through stricter Covid-19 regulation, including the loss of jobs and livelihoods. While there have been calls for stricter lockdown regulations including an outright ban on alcohol, Fedhasa welcomes the Gauteng government's indication that it would oppose such actions because this could be detrimental to the economy of the province.

Responsible trade within the tourism and hospitality sectors, as well as the general public's adherence to health and safety protocols as set out by government, remain key to the sector's survival.

Survival amidst third wave threat

With a focus on accommodation and food and beverages sectors for the month April 2021, the recent statistics have shown income from accommodation decreased by 32,2% in the three months ended April 2021 compared with the three months ended April 2020.

The negative contributors to this decrease were: hotels (-40,4% and contributing -27,3 percentage points); and 'other' accommodation (-18,6% and contributing -5,2 percentage points).

These statistics indicate how financially damaged the sector was and it does not bode well for the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry if there are further and harsher restrictions imposed.

"The efforts taken to secure vaccines and speed-up the vaccination programme is a welcome development. However, mass vaccination of South African residents is the only solution in the industry's fight against Covid-19 – and we still believe it to be the way forward," says Rosemary Anderson, Fedhasa national chairperson.

"As such our whole industry's survival depends on our government being able to ensure the majority of our adult population can be offered the vaccine as a matter of urgency."

"Fedhasa has designed a robust set of health and safety protocols for Covid-19, and our members are acutely aware of the importance of adhering to these standards in order to safeguard the public and be able to continue trading.

"Although we are in the grip of the third wave, there is no sector as cognisant of the direct relationship between adherence to protocols and the recovery of the sector than the hospitality and tourism industry," concludes Anderson.

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