



**economic development
& tourism**

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Building Number 4, No. 7 Government Boulevard,
Riverside Park Extension 2, Nelspruit, 1201
Private Bag X 11215, Nelspruit, 1200
Tel. 013 766 4271/4132/4148

MEDIA STATEMENT

Date: 27 March 2015

Attention: Editors/ Executive Producers/ Journalists

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KHOLWANE ENCOURAGES TOURISM PRODUCT OWNERS TO ENTER THE 2015 LILIZELA TOURISM AWARDS

Mbombela – MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr Sikhumbuzo Eric Kholwane is encouraging tourism product owners to enter for the 2015 Provincial ***Lilizela Tourism Awards***, which seek to recognize excellence in various categories. This follows the announcement by the South African Tourism that Provincial entries for 2015 have been opened. Winners will represent their respective Provinces at the ***National Lilizela Tourism Awards*** to be held in September this year.

“Following the highly successful 2014 Lilizela Tourism Awards, I urge local tourism product owners and businesses to enter the 2015 provincial leg of the Lilizela Tourism Awards in large numbers. This would be the third annual Awards which are aimed at recognizing and celebrating tourism businesses for tourism excellence, for their contribution to South Africa’s global competitiveness, and for growing tourism’s contribution towards the GDP and job creation” said MEC Kholwane.

MEC Kholwane has also acknowledged the role played by local tourism product owners and business for their participation in the previous legs of the Lilizela Tourism Awards, indicating that their efforts continue to fly the flag of Mpumalanga very high.



"I once more want to extend my appreciation to last year's participants in the Lilizela Tourism Awards, for continuing to fly our tourism flag very high. Please continue to profile our Province as the tourist destination of choice. We are on record by indicating that we have more to offer to the prospective tourists. Mpumalanga – *The Place of the Rising Sun* awaits you", said the proud MEC.

The 2013 when compared to the 2012 tourism statistics indicate that Mpumalanga has experienced an increase in the Average nights per domestic trip. In 2012, the Province received about 1 406 000 domestic tourists who spent about 3.8 nights as compared to 2013 where they spent an average of 4.3 nights in the Province.

"These figures are a clear indication that there is something right the tourist product owners and businesses in the Province are doing, for the tourists to want to spend more nights in the Province. We have to keep and even improve this relationship with our tourism customers. This can only be a sign of excellent customer experience", added Mr Kholwane.

The MEC further encouraged all tourism role players in the Province to work together in an effort to create opportunities for the previously disadvantaged individuals to join the industry and share in the economic benefits produced by the industry.

Dubbed South Africa's premier travel and tourism awards, the Lilizela Tourism Awards were launched by the Minister of Tourism in 2013.

Entries are opened for the following categories:

- 1. Focus Area and Category –The Minister's Award**
- 2. Focus area and Category: Service Excellence**
- 3. Focus Area and Category: Entrepreneurship**
- 4. Focus Area: Sustainable Development**

Entries for the competition closes on **15 May 2015**, and persons who are interested in participating in the competition, can visit the Lilizela Tourism Awards website www.lilizela.co.za. For more details about the Provincial Awards, please contact **Anthony Ngomane on 013 766 4335 or by e-mailing to anthony@mpg.gov.za**



#END#

Issued by the Communication Directorate

Department of Economic Development and Tourism

For enquiries, contact: Mohau Ramodibe on 082 771 9950/ 013 766 4148

