
MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release

Date: 02 March 2024

HLOPHE WELCOMES AND CONGRATULATES ‘OUPA’ PILANE AS MPUMALANGA’S FIRST EVER REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SA TOURISM BOARD

Mbombela - MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe, has welcomed the appointment of Mr. Ikaneng Pilane, popularly known as Oupa Pilane, to the new Board of South African Tourism (SAT) announced by Cabinet on Thursday, 29 February 2024.

Mr. Pilane is the first ever person to represent Mpumalanga in the SAT Board since the dawn of democracy almost 30 years ago.

“As a Province, we are delighted and honoured that we will, for the first time, have a person who will represent our interests, pertaining to tourism, at the national level. We believe Mr. Pilane, who is a strong player in the tourism industry in our Province, will become our tourism ambassador at the national level. He will push hard for the funding of tourism projects and initiatives by South African Tourism in our Province. We congratulate him on his appointment, and wish him well on the job ahead.

“His illustrious history in the tourism industry speaks for himself; hence we believe he is the appropriate person for the job. He will be our link with the tourism industry at national, and hope his appointment to the SAT Board will benefit our Province immensely”, said MEC Hlophe.

With experience spanning over 18 years in the tourism industry, Mr. Pilane is a self-made entrepreneur, tourism development consultant, local government specialist, business coach, and a preacher. He started his career as a spokesperson of the first Premier of Mpumalanga, Dr Mathews Phosa.

Pilane is the co-founder of the Graskop Gorge Lift Attraction, a world-class attraction which drew 130 000 visitors in its first year of operation. The lift has a custom-designed passenger-viewing elevator that drops you off from the grassy cliff top plateau, into the cool mountain forest below.

He is currently the national deputy chairperson of the Southern African Tourism Services Association (SATSA) and former chairperson of the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism, amongst others.

ENDS

Issued by the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

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