

Tourism safety monitors deployed for peak summer holiday period

To fortify safety measures for the upcoming peak summer holiday season, Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, in collaboration with Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela, Mpumalanga Police Commissioner Lieutenant General Semakaleng Manamela, CEO of the Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency Mr. Mduduzi Vilikazi, and various tourism stakeholders, unveiled the deployment of Tourism Monitors in Hazyview, Mpumalanga.



Source: Archive

Minister De Lille emphasised the significance of the Tourism Monitors Programme, stating, "The safety of all tourists is paramount, and we are determined to do all we can to ensure that all tourists have a safe and memorable experience in South Africa."

The initiative, aligned with the National Tourism Safety Strategy, aims to augment safety and security measures in collaboration with the South African Police Service (SAPS), specifically designed to enhance tourism safety.

Minister De Lille highlighted the collaborative nature of the program: "While it is the mandate of the police to provide safety and security services, the Department of Tourism, all three spheres of government, and the private sector have come together to do our part with additional measures to enhance tourist safety."

The Tourism Monitors Programme, a pivotal element of the broader National Tourism Safety Strategy, was launched in

Hazyview, Mpumalanga, as the first batch of over 100 Tourism Monitors was deployed. The monitors will play a crucial role in ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for tourists visiting various attractions in the region.

The Minister underscored the government's commitment to proactively address safety concerns: "The Tourism Monitors Programme is part of the broader government intervention that involves training, mentorship, and deployment of unemployed youth in identified tourism attractions and sites."

The tourism monitors, equipped with skills from accredited General Security Practices training, will be strategically positioned at key attractions, national parks, and other tourist hubs across the country. **They are tasked with:**

- Patrolling: Within identified attractions and sites/areas.
- Tourism awareness: Raising awareness and providing information to tourists about attractions and the country.
- Crime reporting: Reporting any crime incidents to SAPS and other relevant enforcement agencies.
- Victim support: Assisting in tourist victim support, with provinces like Mpumalanga having successful aftercare services.

Highlighting the comprehensive strategy, Minister De Lille stated: "The Department has set aside R174.5m from this year's budget to deploy just over 2,300 Tourism Monitors at key tourist attractions across the country."

The Minister encouraged tourists to utilize safety apps, stating, "The Tourism Monitors will be equipped with the MySAPS app, which includes a tourist safety guide, and the Secura Traveller app, allowing them to assist tourists in need."

The collaborative efforts extend beyond government entities, with private sector initiatives such as the Secura Traveller tourism safety app and operations center offering a range of services to tourists in case of incidents.

As the Tourism Monitors Programme unfolds, Minister De Lille emphasised: "We have deployed the first batch of just over 100 young men and women, who will assist in enhancing our tourists' visitor experience and ensure that South Africa remains a destination of choice this festive season and beyond."

In conclusion, the Minister urged South Africans to contribute to the nation's hospitality: "As we head into our peak summer tourism period, we also call on all South Africans to showcase our warm and friendly South African hospitality so that we remain a top tourist destination that will keep tourists coming back."

The success and growth of the tourism sector, she noted, are pivotal to economic growth and job creation.