

First full-capacity sports event - A win for tourism, local economy, and sector recovery in Gauteng

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Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA), the official destination marketing agency for the Gauteng City Region is elated by the successful hosting of the first full-stadia sports event attended by the fans in the country following the Covid-19 pandemic that caused devastation and harm to the industry and the economy at large. More than 51,000 sports-starved fans packed the Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Pretoria to witness a thrilling Castle Lager Incoming Test Series match between the hosts Springboks and visiting Wales.

The tourism, hospitality, entertainment, and sports sectors suffered the most in the past 24 months with little to no income, increased job losses and closure of some of the venues and supporting infrastructure. "As a responsible destination, we pivoted at the height of the pandemic to the hosting of safe events with the successful piloting and perfecting of the bio-bubble sports events set-up. This weekend (2 and 3 July 2022) marks the culmination of the sector's tenacity and patience as we welcomed the fans back into our stadiums. Quality, full capacity, safe sports and lifestyle events drive increased visitation, improves the destination's profile, and builds a solid industry that creates sustainable jobs and most importantly secures livelihoods. We extend our congratulations to SA Rugby, Gauteng Sports, local authorities, and the Blue-Bulls for the job well done," explains GTA CEO Sthembiso Dlamini.

With full attendance at the stadiums, the hospitality and tourism sector together with transportation, local informal traders, food and beverages, security, broadcast, and merchandise sub-sectors benefitted immensely. For the first time after many months of limited work, these sectors were able to deploy full-capacity staff thus boosting local economic development and job creation efforts by the city region.

In the coming days, the GTA will intensify its destination marketing efforts as we join the world in celebrating the Nelson Mandela Month. We remain Africa's preferred destination for business, lifestyle, and sporting events. From 7 to 9 July 2022, the capital city will play host to the **AERO 2022 General Aviation Exhibition** event at Wonderboom National Airport. The exhibition is Africa's largest general aviation trade show and covers the full spectrum of services and products for the aviation industry and over 4200 visitors are expected to interface with the more than 100 exhibitors showcasing the industry's latest innovation.

On Saturday, 9 July 2022, the Pretoria National Botanical Gardens will welcome thousands of Afro-Tech Dance Music enthusiasts as the much-loved **Kunye Music Experience** returns to its spiritual home Gauteng.

As the GTA, we are excited by the prospects of the sector opening and returning to full service with the staging of quality events forming an integral part of our destination offerings. We will once again together with our local communities roll out the red carpet for our visitors, revellers and fans this coming week as we appreciate and affirm the role of the visitor economy in speeding up South Africa's economic recovery, emphasised Dlamini.

For more information on the Gauteng Events Calendar, pre- and post-events tours opportunities and varied accommodation in the province visit www.gauteng.net, follow us on [@visitgauteng](#) on Twitter and Instagram and I love Gauteng on Facebook.

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