



TOURISM • ECONOMIC GROWTH • COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

APRIL & MAY 2026 EDITION

# STREET LEGACY

## MAGAZINE

# REIMAGINING MPUMALANGA

Positioning the Panorama Route  
as the World's Capital of Adventure

### COVER STORY

## *Oupa Pilane*

Driving Vision, Investment &  
Tourism Transformation  
in Mpumalanga



### HOTEL 247

Elevates Panorama  
Route Tourism  
Experience



# Table of Contents



- 03** **Message From The Editor:  
Awethu Magobongo**
- 02** **Oupa Pilane: The Man Behind Mpumalanga’s Tourism  
Momentum**
- 04** **Mpumalanga’s Tourism Economy: Turning Natural  
Assets into Real Economic Value**
- 06** **Unlocking Opportunity Through Tourism: The  
Story of Graskop Gorge Lift Company**
- 09** **AWARD-WINNING WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR KHOSI  
MTHALANE: TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**
- 12** **Hotel 247 Hotel @White River: Your Gateway to the Panorama  
Route, the Kruger National Park, and the Best of Mpumalanga.**
- 14** **Reimagining Mpumalanga: Positioning the Panorama  
Route as the World’s Capital of Adventure**
- 17** **From Heritage to Healing: How Busisiwe Nkambule  
Turned Impepho into a Thriving Indigenous Brand**
- 20** **Nkomazi Tourism Indaba Advances Sustainable  
Tourism Agenda**
- 21** **MEGA Drives SMME Growth Through Provincial  
Roadshow Workshops**
- 23** **Standard Bank Champions Inclusive Entrepreneurship  
at 2026 Excellence Awards**
- 25** **Vusi Thembekwayo to Ignite Charged Up Africa’s 3rd  
Entrepreneurship Gathering**

# MESSAGE FROM EDITOR

When many people think about tourism, they often picture beautiful landscapes, wildlife experiences, and holiday destinations. While these are certainly part of the story, this edition seeks to explore something much deeper. Tourism is not merely about places it is about people, opportunities, livelihoods, and economic transformation. Mpumalanga is blessed with some of the world's most remarkable natural assets. From the iconic Kruger National Park and the breathtaking Panorama Route to the Graskop Gorge Lift Company and countless hidden gems across our province, we possess a tourism offering that many destinations around the world can only dream of. Yet the true value of these assets lies not only in their beauty, but in their ability to create opportunities for communities, entrepreneurs, and future generations.



*Awethu Magobongo*  
*Editor*  
*Street Legacy Magazine*

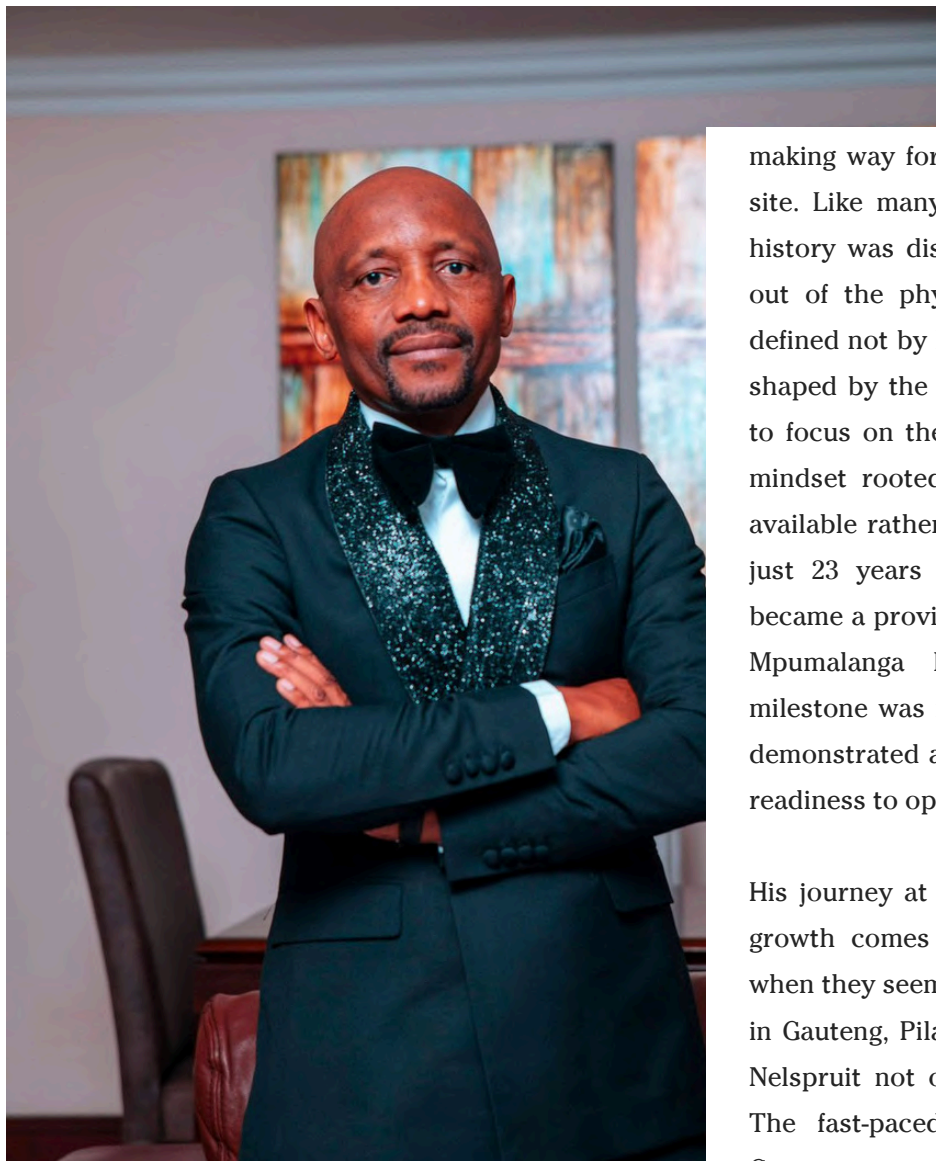
Throughout this edition, we showcase individuals and organisations that are helping to transform tourism into a vehicle for inclusive growth. We highlight visionary leaders who continue to position Mpumalanga on the global tourism map, entrepreneurs who are building businesses that serve visitors while creating employment, and innovators who are finding ways to preserve our heritage and natural environment while generating economic value. What becomes clear in every story is that tourism is interconnected. A visitor who books accommodation supports jobs. A tourist who purchases a handcrafted product supports a local entrepreneur. A traveller who visits an attraction contributes to the livelihoods of guides, transport providers, restaurants, and countless small businesses. Tourism creates a chain of opportunities that extends far beyond the visitor experience.

This edition also reminds us of an important responsibility. The landscapes, biodiversity, culture, and heritage that attract visitors today must be protected for tomorrow. Sustainable tourism is not an option it is a necessity. As we pursue growth, we must continue to balance economic development with environmental stewardship, ensuring that future generations inherit a province that is as beautiful and vibrant as the one we enjoy today. At Street Legacy, we believe that economic development is most powerful when it is inclusive. Tourism provides one of the greatest opportunities to achieve this by opening doors for youth, women, township entrepreneurs, rural communities, and emerging businesses to participate meaningfully in the economy.

As you journey through this edition, I invite you to look beyond the destinations and discover the people, ideas, and opportunities that make Mpumalanga extraordinary. Together, let us celebrate a province that is not only rich in natural beauty, but rich in potential.

# Oupa Pilane: The Man Behind Mpumalanga's Tourism

## Momentum



Oupa Pilane

**F**rom the township landscapes of apartheid-era Mpumalanga to the forefront of tourism development, Oupa Pilane's journey reflects

more than personal success it represents the steady rise of a leader shaping the economic direction of a province rich in potential. He was born in Mpumalanga in Nelspruit in a township known as Mbombela, located next to the CBD of what is now Mbombela. The name "Mbombela" referred to a settlement designated for Black communities spaces shaped by exclusion and control. That very township, filled with childhood memories and a sense of belonging was later erased through forced removals,

making way for what is now a Mercedes-Benz industrial site. Like many communities affected by apartheid, its history was disrupted, and its existence almost written out of the physical landscape. Yet, Pilane's journey is defined not by loss, but by perspective. He refused to be shaped by the limitations of his past and instead chose to focus on the possibilities ahead. His story reflects a mindset rooted in resilience the ability to use what is available rather than be confined by what was taken. At just 23 years old, he entered the public sector and became a provincial spokesperson, serving under former Mpumalanga Premier Mathews Phosa. This early milestone was more than a professional achievement; it demonstrated a rare level of leadership, confidence, and readiness to operate at a high level from a young age.

His journey at that stage already sent a clear message: growth comes from stepping into opportunities, even when they seem bigger than you. During his time working in Gauteng, Pilane found himself frequently returning to Nelspruit not out of obligation, but out of connection. The fast-paced, often overwhelming environment of Gauteng contrasted sharply with the calm, green landscapes of Mpumalanga. He was drawn back to the province's natural beauty, describing it as something deeply therapeutic. These regular returns were more than just visits; they reflected a personal attachment to the land and its environment.





This connection would later shape his vision. His passion for tourism development in Mpumalanga is not accidental it is rooted in lived experience. It comes from understanding the value of the province's natural assets, not just as scenic landscapes, but as powerful economic resources. For Pilane, tourism is not just an industry; it is something personal, something worth building, protecting, and sharing with the world. This sense of purpose carried into his leadership roles within the business community, including serving as President of the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism. Through this platform, he championed local economic development, advocating for stronger collaboration between businesses, government, and communities.



His influence extends further through his involvement with South African Tourism Services Association (SATSA) and his ongoing efforts to support key destinations such as Panorama route and Kruger National Park rehabilitation. He has consistently advocated for innovative approaches to tourism development, including greater private-sector participation in public tourism assets through models like the District Development Model. His work reflects a deep understanding that sustainable tourism requires both strategic vision and practical implementation. At its core, Pilane's journey carries a message that resonates strongly with young entrepreneurs: your environment may shape you, but it does not have to limit you.

What matters is how you respond how you position yourself, and how you turn opportunity into impact. This vision is ultimately embodied in his role as co-founder of the Graskop Gorge Lift Company, one of the most iconic tourism developments along the Panorama Route. The project stands as a powerful example of how tourism infrastructure can transform local economies creating jobs, supporting small businesses, and positioning Mpumalanga as a globally competitive destination. It is not just a development, but a legacy of turning passion into economic progress.



# Mpumalanga's Tourism Economy: Turning Natural Assets into Real Economic Value



tourists

**I**n Mpumalanga, tourism is far more than a leisure industry it is a core pillar of the provincial economy, driving revenue, employment, and opportunities across both urban and rural communities.

Known for its rich natural landscapes and world-class attractions, the province has positioned itself as one of South Africa's most competitive tourism destinations, with economic impact that continues to grow year after year. Tourism contributes approximately R11.9 billion annually to Mpumalanga's economy, accounting for around 3% of the province's GDP.

This places the sector among the leading contributors to regional economic activity, outperforming several traditional industries. More importantly, this revenue is not concentrated in a single area it flows across a wide network of businesses, communities, and service providers, creating a dynamic and inclusive economic ecosystem. One of the most significant contributions of tourism is employment. The sector supports between 64,000 and 76,000 jobs, representing roughly 5% to 7% of total employment in the province. These jobs span a diverse range of activities, including accommodation, food services, transport, guiding, and entertainment. For many young people and semi-skilled workers, tourism provides a critical entry point into the economy, offering both income and opportunities for growth.

Beyond direct employment, tourism stimulates a powerful multiplier effect. When visitors spend money in the province, that income circulates through multiple layers of the local economy. A tourist paying for accommodation contributes not only to the lodge owner, but also to employees, suppliers, local shops, and service providers. This continuous flow of money strengthens small businesses, supports informal traders, and enhances overall economic resilience within communities.



Kruger National Park





**Sudwala Caves**

## Scale of Tourism Assets in Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga is globally recognised as one of South Africa's top tourism destinations, largely due to its concentration of natural and adventure assets.

The province is home to:

- **Kruger National Park** – One of Africa's largest and most visited game reserves, attracting millions of visitors annually
- **Blyde River Canyon** – The third-largest canyon in the world and one of the largest green canyons globally
- **The Panorama Route** – A key tourism corridor linking multiple attractions

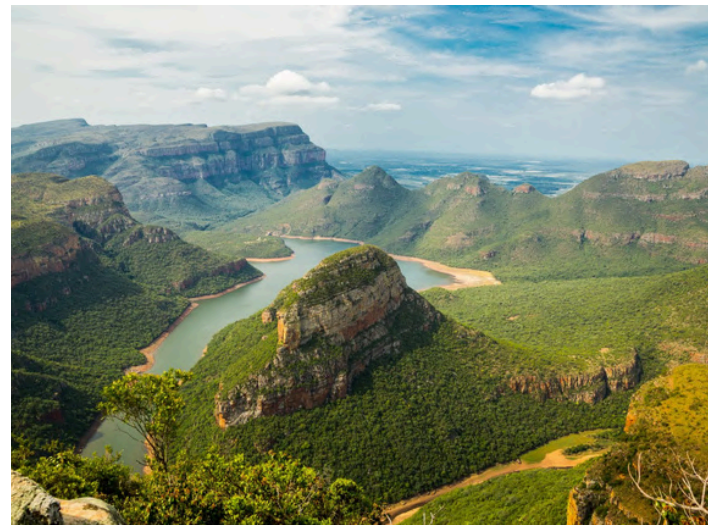
Adventure and scenic sites include:

- **God's Window**
- **Bourke's Luck Potholes**
- **Graskop Gorge Lift Company**
- **Three Rondavels**
- **Sudwala Caves** (one of the oldest caves in the world, over 240 million years old)

These attractions position Mpumalanga as a high-value eco-tourism and adventure destination, drawing both domestic and international tourists.

What makes tourism particularly powerful in Mpumalanga is its ability to drive inclusive economic growth. Unlike many capital-intensive industries, tourism allows for broad participation. Local entrepreneurs can enter the market through small-scale ventures such as food stalls, craft markets, guiding services, transport solutions, and accommodation offerings. This creates a pathway for township and rural communities to actively participate in the formal economy, transforming local culture and everyday experiences into income-generating opportunities.

At the same time, tourism encourages sustainable development by turning natural resources into long-term economic assets. The preservation of landscapes, wildlife, and heritage sites becomes directly linked to economic benefit, ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of the environment. Instead, conservation and development work hand in hand to secure the future of the province's tourism economy.



**God's Window**

Ultimately, the role of tourism in Mpumalanga extends beyond numbers. It represents a system of opportunity that connects people, places, and businesses into a functioning economic network. With over R11 billion in annual revenue, more than 70,000 jobs, and a growing base of entrepreneurs, tourism continues to prove that when natural assets are strategically developed, they can become powerful engines of economic transformation. For a province rich in beauty and potential, the challenge now is not whether tourism can drive growth but how far that growth can reach when more people are empowered to participate in it.

# Unlocking Opportunity Through Tourism: The Story of Graskop Gorge Lift Company

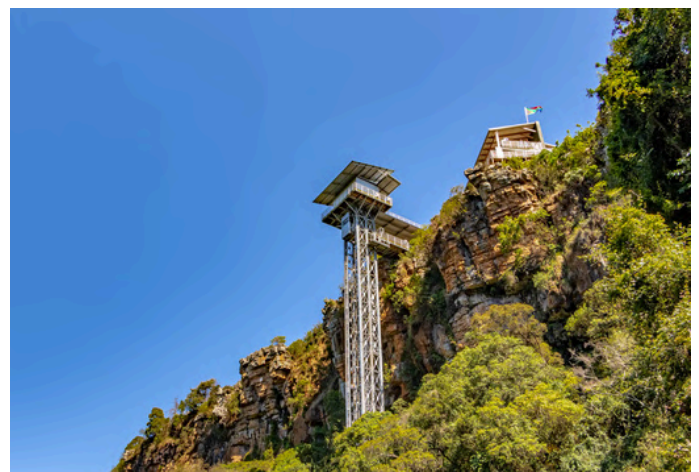


Graskop Gorge Lift Company

Situated along the iconic Panorama Route, the Graskop Gorge Lift Company has rapidly emerged as one of Mpumalanga's most dynamic tourism destinations seamlessly blending adventure, natural beauty, and economic development. Strategically located en route to the world-renowned Kruger National Park, the Gorge serves as both a destination and a gateway, attracting a growing stream of local and international visitors.

Today, the Gorge welcomes **over 200,000 visitors annually**, a figure that continues to rise as demand for immersive outdoor experiences grows. In response, the company has signalled plans for expansion, reinforcing its position as a key player in the province's tourism economy and a catalyst for regional growth.

What sets the Gorge apart is its ability to transform the natural landscape into a multi-layered adventure experience. At the heart of the attraction is the Viewing Lift, a first-of-its-kind in Africa, descending 51 metres down the cliff face into a lush Afromontane forest. This engineering marvel offers visitors a smooth, panoramic journey into one of Mpumalanga's most scenic environments.



Gorge Lift



52-metre Suspension Bridge



Next-Level Walk

The experience is further enhanced by the 52-metre Suspension Bridge, offering sweeping views of the Motitsi Waterfall and surrounding escarpment, as well as the Next-Level Walk, a carefully designed elevated pathway that reveals previously inaccessible perspectives of the landscape. At the forest floor, a 600-metre elevated boardwalk allows visitors to explore the ecosystem up close, crossing suspension bridges over the river and immersing themselves in the tranquillity of nature.

### Blending Leisure with Lifestyle

Beyond adventure, the Gorge offers a well-rounded visitor experience through its hospitality offerings. The Lift Café and Swing Café provide guests with a space to relax and enjoy a diverse menu, from wood-fired pizzas to locally crafted beverages, all while overlooking the dramatic scenery of the gorge. Whether basking in the Lowveld sun or enjoying the warmth of indoor seating, visitors are able to combine culinary enjoyment with scenic immersion.

Family-friendly features, including a dedicated children's play area and comfortable viewing spaces, ensure that the destination caters to a broad demographic reinforcing its appeal as a holistic tourism hub.



Lift Café and Swing Café

### Driving Inclusive Local Economic Development

While the Gorge's tourism offering is impressive, its true impact lies in its contribution to local economic development and community empowerment. A standout feature of the initiative is the Community Craft Centre, where 14 local artisans previously operating in informal roadside settings have been integrated into a formal trading environment within the Gorge. These traders are provided with:

- Free trading space
- Sheltered, purpose-built infrastructure
- Skills development and product diversification training

This intervention not only enhances the quality and marketability of their products but also connects them directly to a high-value tourist market. Visitors are able to purchase authentic, handcrafted items ranging from woven baskets and pottery to beadwork and wood sculptures each piece reflecting the rich cultural heritage of Mpumalanga. This model represents a practical and scalable approach to integrating the informal sector into the mainstream economy, ensuring that tourism benefits are shared more equitably.



Community Craft Centre



### Employment Creation and Youth Opportunities

The Gorge has also become a significant source of employment, particularly for young people in the region. Through its operations, it creates:

- Permanent employment opportunities across hospitality, maintenance, operations, and management
- Seasonal jobs during peak tourism periods, providing income opportunities when demand is highest

This contribution is especially important in a province where youth unemployment remains a pressing challenge. By linking employment directly to tourism growth, the Gorge demonstrates how the sector can serve as a vehicle for inclusive economic participation.

### A Model for Sustainable Tourism Growth

The continued success and expansion of the Graskop Gorge Lift Company highlights the broader role of tourism in regional development.

It is not merely an attraction, but a multi-dimensional development platform combining infrastructure investment, environmental appreciation, enterprise development, and job creation. As Mpumalanga continues to position itself as a leading tourism destination, the Gorge stands as a benchmark for how tourism can be leveraged to drive both economic growth and social impact.





Khosi Mthalane

# AWARD-WINNING WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR KHOSI MTHALANE: TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

**A**ward-winning woman entrepreneur Khosi Mthalane is a remarkable example of resilience, vision, and purpose-driven leadership in South Africa’s tourism and hospitality industry.

Born and raised in Delmas KwaNdebele, Mpumalanga, an area rich in African culture, heritage, and artistic diversity, Khosi’s upbringing played a significant role in shaping her appreciation for tourism, people, and the beauty of African identity. Today, she is not only recognized as a successful businesswoman and hotel owner, but also as a devoted wife, a mother of two boys, and a woman of strong faith whose journey continues to inspire many young women across the country.

Khosi began her educational journey at Vukuzenzele High School before furthering her studies at Isidingo College. Determined to build a successful future, she entered the corporate world through a learnership opportunity at African Rugs, where she worked as a rug designer and marketing assistant. Her passion for communication and marketing later led her to Relyant Retail, where she worked as an Assistant Marketer responsible for proofreading, designing promotional posters, and conducting interviews. She continued growing professionally by working for major companies such as Tiger Brands and Ruto Mills, now known as RCL Foods, where she started as a salesperson and eventually rose to the position of Regional Sales Manager.

Alongside her professional career, Khosi also invested in education and self-development. She obtained a Higher Certificate in Archives and Records and further studied Public Relations. She later enrolled for a BCom in Marketing, although family responsibilities eventually forced her to discontinue her studies. Despite this, her desire to grow, learn, and build something meaningful never faded.

Towards the end of 2018, Khosi resigned from her corporate position due to family commitments and the responsibility of raising her children. Throughout 2019, she remained at home, but as a hardworking woman who believes in creating opportunities rather than waiting for them, she started baking and selling scones and wedding cakes from home. What started as a small hustle soon became the foundation of a much bigger dream.





Khosi Mthlane

In 2020, while still operating her baking business, Khosi and her husband came across an opportunity to purchase a hotel in White River. At a time when many people feared investing due to uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, they chose to take a bold step. Using their salaries, savings, and the strong credit profile Khosi had built over the years, they successfully approached the bank and secured financing to purchase the property. In December 2020, the hotel was officially handed over to them, and the hotel started to operate in March 2021.

Their entry into the hospitality industry, however, came during one of the most difficult periods for global tourism. COVID-19 restrictions had severely affected travel, accommodation, and tourism operations across the world. Hotels struggled to attract guests, movement was restricted, and the future of the hospitality industry seemed uncertain. Khosi also entered the tourism sector with no prior experience in operating a hotel. Although she came from a marketing background, tourism required a completely different level of understanding and experience. The journey became even more difficult when some individuals around her who had industry experience withheld valuable information instead of helping her grow.

discourage her, Khosi used them as motivation to become more independent and knowledgeable. She began investing in herself, learning about the tourism industry, seeking knowledge, and believing in her own capabilities. What others intended as gatekeeping became part of the process that strengthened her confidence and leadership. As COVID-19 restrictions gradually eased in 2021, the hotel began to stabilize and grow. Support from Mpumalanga Tourism Parks and Agency (MTPA) played a major role in exposing Khosi to greater opportunities within the industry.

Through her dedication and commitment, she eventually earned opportunities to represent both Mpumalanga and South Africa internationally, travelling to countries such as London, the Netherlands, and Berlin to showcase South African tourism on global platforms. Today, Hotel 247 stands proudly at the center of the Panorama tourism route and continues to grow into a recognized hospitality establishment. The hotel is currently undergoing renovations and has experienced significant growth over the years.



Tourism Exhibition



Africa Investment Summit

For 2026, the hotel has already secured a significant number of international group and bookings, reflecting the remarkable success of the vision Khosi and her husband built together. The hotel has officially earned a 3-star rating, and support from Booking.com has helped it grow and increase its visibility in the tourism market. Beyond business success, Khosi's leadership philosophy is what truly makes her exceptional. She believes leadership is about responsibility, impact, and people. She constantly reminds her employees that the success of the hotel affects not only management but also the families of every staff member working there. She believes the manner in which they operate the hotel determines whether many households will have food on the table.

This mindset has helped build a culture of teamwork, responsibility, and intentional service within the business. For Khosi, success is not measured only by money, but by the ability to do what you love while positively impacting others. She believes that placing money above purpose can become dangerous because difficult seasons are part of life. Instead, she encourages people to become emotionally strong enough to survive every condition while remaining committed to their purpose. Her vision for women in business and leadership remains powerful and clear.

She wants young women to understand that they are capable of leading major businesses, building industries, and creating lasting legacies. More importantly, she wants her impact to remain visible long after she is gone. She believes true leadership is not about forcing people to recognize your presence, but about creating such meaningful impact that your absence is deeply felt. Khosi's dedication and excellence continue to earn national recognition. In 2024, she won both the Leading Entrepreneur of the Year and Entrepreneur of the Year Medium Business awards at the Sunrise Excellence Awards.

In 2025, she further served as a judge for Mrs Cultural Tourism South Africa, reflecting her growing influence and contribution within the tourism and hospitality sector. From selling scones at home to owning a 3-star hotel and representing South Africa internationally, Khosi Mthlane's story is a powerful reminder that faith, resilience, discipline, and vision can transform ordinary beginnings into extraordinary success.



## Hotel 247 @ White River : Your Gateway to the Panorama Route, the Kruger National Park, and the Best of Mpumalanga.



Hotel 247

**N**estled in the scenic town of White River, Mpumalanga, Hotel 247 @ White River offers exceptional accommodation and world-class hospitality in one of South Africa's most sought-after tourism destinations. Ideally positioned as a gateway to the renowned Panorama Route and the Kruger National Park, the hotel serves as a central hub for both leisure and business travellers exploring the province.



Guests can enjoy comfortable air-conditioned rooms equipped with modern amenities, including complimentary Wi-Fi, flat-screen televisions, workspaces, private bathrooms, and in-room safety features. The hotel also boasts a restaurant, bar, outdoor swimming pool, beautiful garden spaces, conference facilities, and 24-hour guest services designed to ensure a memorable stay. What sets Hotel 247 apart is its commitment to ensuring that visitors experience the very best of Mpumalanga.

Through partnerships with trusted shuttle and transport service providers, the hotel assists guests with convenient travel arrangements to some of the province's most iconic attractions, including the Kruger National Park, God's Window, Bourke's Luck Potholes, Graskop Gorge Lift Company, and other tourism hotspots. By providing access to reliable transport solutions, the hotel ensures that tourists have every opportunity to explore and discover the beauty of Mpumalanga without limitations.

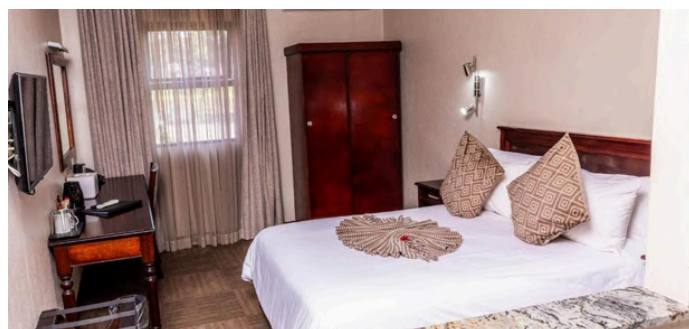
Conveniently located near attractions such as Casterbridge Lifestyle Centre, The Barnyard Theatre, Longmere Dam, and just a short drive from Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport, Hotel 247 provides easy access to some of the province's most celebrated destinations. Beyond hospitality, Hotel 247 is committed to responsible tourism and environmental sustainability. The hotel has embraced renewable energy through the use of solar power systems, reducing its dependence on conventional energy sources.

This commitment is driven by an understanding that excessive reliance on non-renewable energy contributes to climate change, which threatens the natural landscapes, biodiversity, and environmental assets that make Mpumalanga a world-class tourism destination. By investing in cleaner energy solutions and environmentally responsible operations, Hotel 247 contributes to the preservation of the province's natural beauty for future generations. The hotel's eco-friendly approach demonstrates that hospitality and environmental stewardship can work hand in hand, creating a tourism experience that is both comfortable and sustainable.

Recognised for delivering top-notch hospitality services, Hotel 247 @ White River combines comfort, convenience, sustainability, and warm South African hospitality. Whether visiting for business, tourism, conferences, or family getaways, guests are assured of a welcoming experience in the heart of Mpumalanga's thriving tourism corridor.



Reception



Standard Room



Conference



Restaurant



Swimming Pool



Safari Tours

# Reimagining Mpumalanga: Positioning the Panorama Route as the World's Capital of Adventure



Graskop Gorge Lift Company

Mpumalanga is stepping boldly into a new era of tourism development, driven by a clear and ambitious vision: to reposition the Panorama Route as the World's Capital of Adventure. This vision reflects a strong commitment to unlocking the province's full tourism potential while ensuring that growth is inclusive, sustainable, and economically impactful. At the heart of this transformation is a strategic focus on five key pillars: world-class beautification, enhanced safety and security, meaningful job creation, rural integration, and bold global marketing.

These priorities are not just aspirational; they represent practical actions aimed at reshaping the tourism landscape into one that is globally competitive and locally beneficial. The Panorama Route is already recognised as one of South Africa's most iconic tourism corridors.

Stretching along the escarpment and anchored by the magnificent Blyde River Canyon, the route offers visitors an extraordinary combination of natural beauty, geological wonders, and immersive experiences. Among its standout attractions are Bourke's Luck Potholes, where centuries of water erosion have carved striking formations into the rock; God's Window, known for its sweeping views across the Lowveld; and the Three Rondavels, whose towering shapes resemble traditional African homesteads. These sites, alongside the Graskop Gorge Lift Company, Lisbon Falls, and Berlin Falls, create a diverse and compelling tourism offering that appeals to both local and international visitors.

## Celebrating Excellence Along the Panorama Route

Mpumalanga's commitment to delivering world-class tourism experiences has been recognised through several prestigious national awards. These accolades not only affirm the quality of its attractions but also strengthen the province's reputation as a leading destination.

### Bourke's Luck Potholes

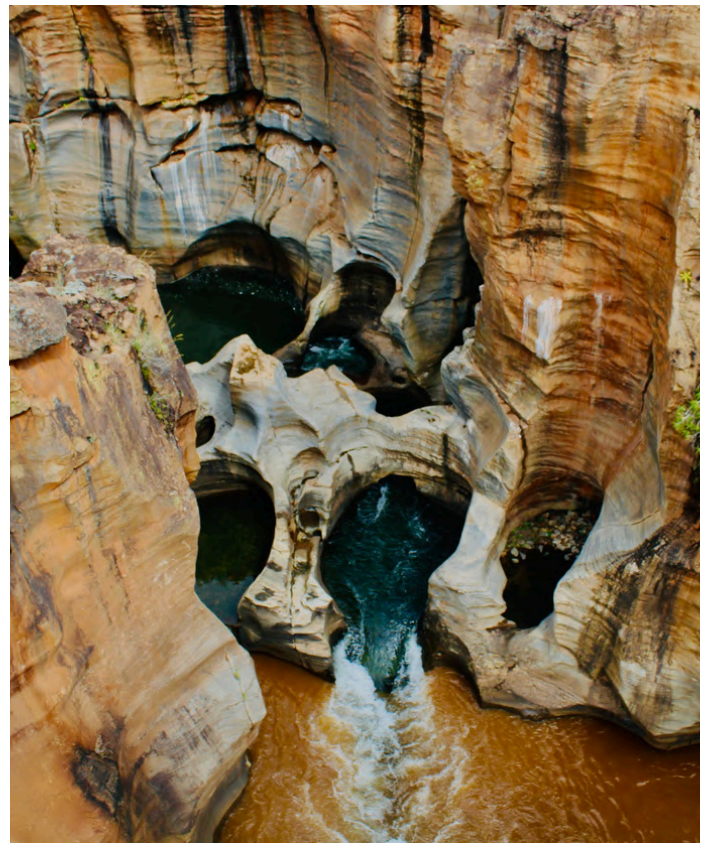
- Visitor Experience Award – Lilizela Tourism Awards (2015)
- Scenic Beauty Award (2017)

### God's Window

- Scenic Beauty Award (2017)
- Recognised for exceptional site management and visitor experience (2015)

### Three Rondavels

- Best Scenic Beauty Award (2017)



Bourke's Luck Potholes



God's Window



Three Rondavels

These achievements reflect consistent efforts to maintain high standards in visitor experience, environmental preservation, and destination management. More importantly, they position the Panorama Route as not just a scenic destination, but a recognised benchmark for tourism excellence in South Africa. Tourism plays a critical role in the province's economy. It contributes significantly to provincial GDP and supports more than 60,000 jobs across sectors such as hospitality, transport, guiding services, and informal trade. The Panorama Route, in particular, serves as a major driver of economic activity, creating opportunities for small businesses, youth entrepreneurs, and rural communities.



Informal Traders



Mr Oupa Pilane

However, despite these strengths, several challenges continue to limit the sector's full potential. Ageing infrastructure at key tourism sites, declining maintenance standards, and safety concerns affect the overall visitor experience. In addition, many surrounding rural communities remain insufficiently integrated into the tourism value chain, limiting broader economic participation.

Addressing these challenges is central to the province's current strategy. The development approach begins in Graskop, where efforts are being made to integrate tourism assets managed by government, municipalities, and private stakeholders into a cohesive and efficient system. This integrated model aims to improve coordination, enhance service delivery, and ensure that tourism development is both structured and sustainable.

A key component of this strategy is the deliberate inclusion of local communities. By creating pathways for participation in tourism-related activities ranging from small business development to cultural experiences and service provision the province seeks to ensure that tourism growth translates into tangible benefits for its people.

Furthermore, the emphasis on beautification and infrastructure improvement is expected to elevate the overall appeal of the region, making it more attractive to high-value international markets. Enhanced safety measures will also play a crucial role in building visitor confidence and strengthening the destination's global reputation.

Ultimately, the goal is not only to increase visitor numbers but to transform the Panorama Route into a world-class adventure destination that delivers lasting economic and social impact. This requires a balanced approach that combines strategic investment, effective management, and strong collaboration among all stakeholders.

Mpumalanga stands at a pivotal moment. With its unmatched natural assets, growing recognition, and a clear development roadmap, the province is well-positioned to redefine its place in the global tourism landscape. As this vision unfolds, one message becomes increasingly evident: Mpumalanga is not just ready to compete on the world stage it is ready to lead.



Bourke's Luck Potholes View

# From Heritage to Healing: How Busisiwe Nkambule Turned Impepho into a Thriving Indigenous Brand



Busisiwe Nkambule



In a world increasingly dominated by modern lifestyles and synthetic products, some entrepreneurs are finding innovative ways to preserve African heritage while creating sustainable economic opportunities. One such entrepreneur is Busisiwe Nkambule, founder of Impepho Essentials, a proudly South African brand transforming the indigenous impepho plant into a range of natural wellness and personal care products. For Busisiwe, the journey began long before the business itself. Growing up, she watched her grandmother use impepho, a traditional African herb, as a natural remedy for ailments such as flu. Like many African households, traditional knowledge was passed down through generations, but over time much of this heritage began fading as modern practices took center stage.

Years later, after losing her job and facing uncertainty about the future, Busisiwe found herself reflecting on those childhood memories. She remembered the healing properties of the very same impepho her grandmother had relied on. What started as a memory soon became a mission. Driven by curiosity and determination, she conducted extensive research and discovered that impepho offered far more than traditional medicinal benefits. The plant possessed properties that could be incorporated into hair care products, body care solutions, wellness products, and home fragrances. Seeing an opportunity to combine indigenous knowledge with modern innovation, she took a bold step into entrepreneurship.



For Busisiwe, preserving culture is just as important as building a business. She believes that society has gradually drifted away from its cultural roots, and her work serves as a reminder that heritage remains relevant in today's world. Through Impepho Essentials, she is helping people reconnect with indigenous knowledge while appreciating the value of African plants. The growing demand for organic and natural products has also contributed to the company's success. As consumers become increasingly aware of the effects of harsh chemicals on their skin and overall wellbeing, many are turning to natural alternatives. Impepho Essentials responds to this demand by offering products rooted in nature, wellness, and authenticity.

Beyond business growth, sustainability remains at the heart of Sibusisiwe's vision. She actively promotes responsible harvesting practices, encouraging harvesters to collect impepho in a manner that protects future growth rather than depleting natural resources. Her philosophy is simple: conservation today ensures opportunities tomorrow.

Starting with only R350, Sibusisiwe began experimenting and learning. She spent countless hours watching educational videos, attending training programmes, and equipping herself with the skills needed to build a sustainable business. Her dedication attracted support from institutions such as SEDA and the CSIR, which assisted with product testing, compliance processes, and scientific validation of the benefits associated with her products. Today, Impepho Essentials stands as a remarkable example of how indigenous plants can be transformed into commercially viable products while preserving cultural heritage. The company produces a growing range of products, including body care solutions, hair care products, room fresheners, candles, and wellness items developed through the extraction of natural oils from the impepho plant.

What makes the brand particularly unique is its ability to bridge the gap between tradition and modern living. Recognising that many people seek ways to remain connected to their cultural identity while embracing contemporary lifestyles, Sibusisiwe introduced innovative products such as Impepho candles. These products provide a modern alternative for people who wish to honour cultural and spiritual practices without relying solely on traditional methods.



Looking ahead, she hopes to establish her own impepho cultivation projects, creating employment opportunities while reducing pressure on naturally occurring plants. This vision reflects her belief that entrepreneurship and environmental conservation can work hand in hand. Her commitment to community development extends even further. Rather than discarding production by-products after oil extraction, she repurposes the remaining material into practical products such as black shoe polish for school children and fire lighters.

Through partnerships with community organisations, including the SEZ Foundation, she continues to create positive social impact beyond her business operations. Busisiwe's long-term ambition is to see Impepho Essentials grow into a nationally and internationally recognised brand with dedicated retail outlets across South Africa and beyond. Yet despite her success, her message to aspiring entrepreneurs remains simple and powerful:

**"Start where you are. Don't wait for funding before you begin. Step out of your comfort zone and use what you already have."**



Her journey demonstrates that entrepreneurship does not always begin with large investments or sophisticated resources. Sometimes it begins with a childhood memory, a deep respect for nature, and the courage to turn an indigenous plant into a symbol of innovation, heritage, and hope. As Mpumalanga continues to celebrate its rich natural assets and indigenous biodiversity, entrepreneurs like Busisiwe Nkambule remind us that the future of conservation lies not only in protecting nature, but also in creating meaningful opportunities that allow communities to benefit from it sustainably.



# Nkomazi Tourism Indaba Advances Sustainable Tourism Agenda



Nkomazi Tourism Indaba 2026

The Nkomazi Tourism Indaba took place on 29 April 2026 at Naas Shonga Events, bringing together key stakeholders under the theme: “Promoting Sustainable and Responsible Tourism in Nkomazi.”

The event marked an important step in shaping a tourism sector that prioritises sustainability, inclusivity, and long-term economic impact.

The Indaba was attended by MPAC Chairperson Cllr BS Nkosi and MMC SS Mahlalela, alongside representatives from DEDET, MEGA, MTPA, and Bukhosi baka Ngomane. Their presence, together with business leaders, tourism stakeholders, and vibrant exhibitors, underscored the collective commitment to growing the local tourism economy.

A key highlight of the event was the series of five stakeholder panels, where industry experts led engaging discussions on critical issues affecting tourism in the region. These sessions provided a platform for sharing insights, addressing challenges, and identifying practical solutions to strengthen the sector.

More than just a dialogue, the Indaba served as a catalyst for collaboration, reinforcing partnerships and encouraging innovative approaches to tourism development.

Overall, the event reflected a unified vision: to advance a sustainable and responsible tourism economy that benefits communities while preserving the natural and cultural heritage of Nkomazi.



Nkomazi Tourism Indaba 2026



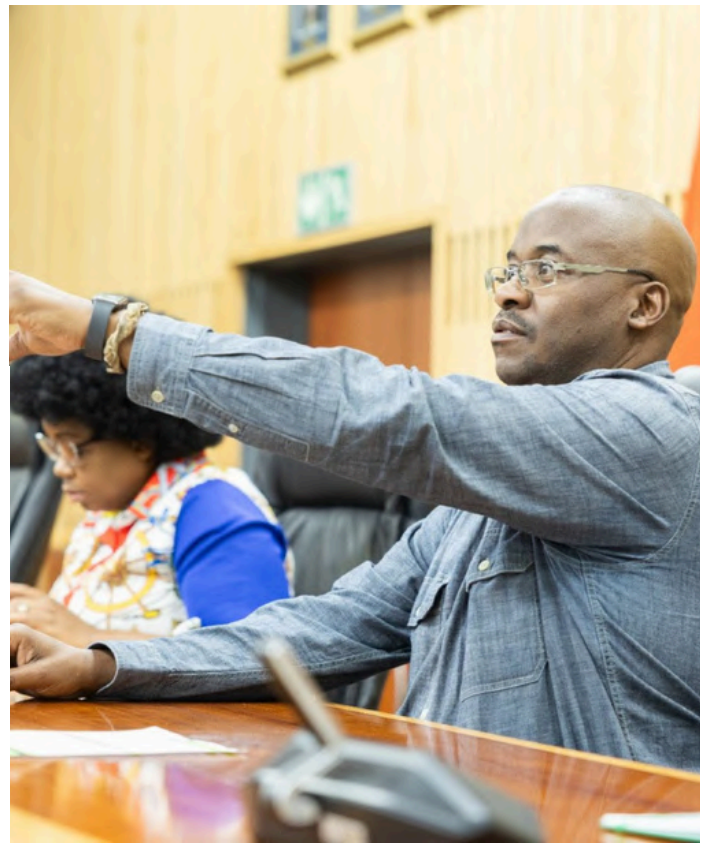
# MEGA Drives SMME Growth Through Provincial Roadshow Workshops

The Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) successfully hosted its first MSME Funding and Business Support Workshops as part of a broader SMME Roadshow held across three district municipalities. The initiative reflects MEGA's ongoing commitment to empowering small businesses and unlocking inclusive economic growth across the province. The workshops took place on **01 April in Nkangala, 22 April in Ehlanzeni, and 23 April in Gert Sibande**, bringing together entrepreneurs, stakeholders, and development partners in each district for focused engagement and support. Facilitated by MEGA officials, Smangele Mkwini, Tebogo Mabuza, and Linda Ntshangathe the sessions provided practical guidance on funding opportunities, business support programmes, and tools aimed at strengthening and growing enterprises.



Smangele Mkwini

The programme featured key institutions including AFG, Productivity SA, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDA), and eKash. These stakeholders delivered presentations and led discussions covering a wide range of topics, from funding instruments and application processes to business turnaround strategies and one-on-one consultations.



Tebogo Mabuza

A notable highlight was the Ehlanzeni workshop, where Street Legacy participated in the panel discussions, introducing its SMME development programme and contributing to conversations on enterprise growth and community impact.





Nkangala District

More than just informational sessions, the workshops created a platform for meaningful engagement, knowledge-sharing, and direct access to support services. This approach ensures that entrepreneurs are not only informed but also equipped to take actionable steps toward business sustainability. Through this roadshow, MEGA continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening the SMME ecosystem driving innovation, supporting enterprise development, and fostering a more inclusive economy across Mpumalanga.



Ehlanzeni District



Gert Sibande District



SMMEs



Nkangala District Municipality



GERT SIBANDE  
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



EHLANZENI  
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

# Standard Bank Champions Inclusive Entrepreneurship at 2026 Excellence Awards



Standard bank Representative

**S**tandard Bank took centre stage on 23 April 2026 as it hosted the inaugural Inclusive Excellence Awards at Emnotweni Arena in Mbombela, reaffirming its commitment to building an inclusive and equitable economy. The awards recognise and support Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) owned or led by persons with disabilities, while promoting inclusive entrepreneurship, resilience and sustainable business growth.



Award winner

The initiative forms part of Standard Bank Business and Commercial Banking's Enterprise and Supplier Development programme, which seeks to advance inclusive entrepreneurship by supporting majority black-owned South African businesses to start, manage and grow into sustainable enterprises. Through the awards, Standard Bank continues to create meaningful opportunities for entrepreneurs who are often underrepresented, enabling them to participate fully in the economy while gaining access to markets, funding opportunities and strategic partnerships

Speaking at the event, Mpumalanga MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Ms Jesta Sidell, emphasised the importance of collaboration between government and the private sector:



MEC: Ms. Jesta Sidell

**"Government cannot walk this path alone. It is through these public-private synergies where capital meets conscience that we will bridge the inequality gap and build a Mpumalanga that truly belongs to all who live in it."**

The awards celebrated outstanding entrepreneurs from across South Africa. Category winners included Setlogong Project 2 (Agriculture), Me4uTalented Studios (Arts and Culture), Umba Creative Service (Innovation), Seated by Jenkie (Manufacturing), Renature trading as Eully's Cakery (Community Champion of the Year), and Abundance Solutions, which received the Youth Achievement Award. The Overall Winner of the 2026 Standard Bank Inclusive Excellence Awards was Esisipho K (Pty) Ltd, a KwaZulu-Natal-based agricultural enterprise focused on food security and sustainable farming practices. Winners shared a prize pool of R400,000.



Award winner

Standard Bank deserves recognition for leading from the front and setting a benchmark in inclusive economic development. Its continued investment in initiatives such as the Inclusive Excellence Awards demonstrates not only corporate responsibility but also a genuine commitment to empowering communities, supporting SMMEs and advancing socio-economic transformation. By uplifting entrepreneurs with disabilities, the bank is helping to reduce inequality and create a more inclusive future for South Africa.

# Vusi Thembekwayo to Ignite Charged Up Africa's 3rd Entrepreneurship Gathering

As Charged Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network, we are proud to officially unveil the 3rd instalment of our impactful platform continuing our mission to empower, connect, and elevate African entrepreneurs. We are honoured to introduce our distinguished keynote speaker, Vusi Thembekwayo a powerful voice shaping the future of African business, leadership, and innovation.

Join us on 19 September 2026 at Emnotweni Arena for an unforgettable Charged Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network experience an initiative dedicated to advancing sustainable entrepreneurship and driving economic transformation across the continent.

**Theme:** Driving Africa Forward Leading Sustainable Entrepreneurship for Economic Transformation

**Red Carpet:** 11:00 AM

**Main Event:** 12:00 PM

**Don't miss your chance to be part of something truly transformative.**

**CHARGED UP**  
Entrepreneurship Africa Network

**Driving AFRICA FORWARD**  
LEADING SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

HOSTED BY CHARGED UP CEO *Afisake Mahlaule*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER *Vusi Thembekwayo*  
SPEAKER | INVESTOR | LEADER

**19 SEP 2026** | **EMNOTWENI ARENA, MBOMBELA**

RED CARPET: 11 AM START TIME: 12 PM

COMPUTICKET	EARLY BIRD (APRIL-JUNE)	STANDARD (JULY-SEP)	TABLE OF 10 SEATS	EXHIBITION STALLS
	TICKETS: R1200	TICKETS: R1400	R10 000	R2000

FOR ENQUIRIES: 072 231 4262





**Upcoming...**

**"Cultivating Prosperity: Advancing Agriculture, Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods".  
June & July Edition**

# Subscribe today!

NEVER MISS ANY MOMENT!

Join the Street Legacy community and never miss a moment of **impact!**



Follow us on  
streetlegacy2025



Connect with us on  
Street Legacy Foundation



Like us on  
Street legacy foundation

Subscribe to our newsletter for exclusive stories, entrepreneur spotlights, behind-the-scenes content, and first access to our upcoming events and programmes.

Be the first to know what's happening in youth innovation, entrepreneurship, and community development all in one inspiring monthly drop.



<https://streetlegacyfoundation.co.za/>

**STREET LEGACY**  
MAGAZINE

TOURISM, ADVENTURE & ECONOMIC GROWTH EDITION  
APRIL 2026