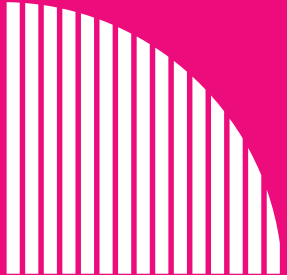
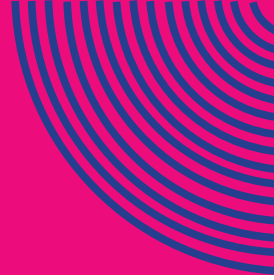




Day 1 | 24 FEBRUARY 2026



of Connecting Africa
to the World



Let the Trading Begin: Celebrating 20 Years of Connecting Africa to the World!

It is with great pride and excitement that I welcome all delegates, buyers, exhibitors and media to Meetings Africa 2026. This year we celebrate an extraordinary milestone, 20 years of connecting Africa's business events industry to the world. Two decades of partnership. Two decades of growth. Two decades of positioning Africa as a powerful, competitive and compelling meetings destination. We gather at a time when South Africa's tourism sector is firmly on a growth trajectory. In 2025, our country welcomed over 10.5 million international arrivals, surpassing pre pandemic performance and reaffirming global confidence in South Africa as a destination of choice. This recovery is not accidental. It is the result of collaboration, strategic focus and alignment across government and industry. Tourism is a vital driver of economic growth. Business events are central to this growth story. The Meetings Incentive Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector is a high value driver of economic impact. It stimulates demand across accommodation, transport, catering, creative industries and small enterprises. It brings decision makers, investors and innovators into our cities. It drives geographic spread and supports job creation across our provinces. Let me share the evidence. According to the official economic impact

assessment of Meetings Africa 2025. Its total direct impact reached R690 million for the South African economy. These figures demonstrate that Meetings Africa is not only about conversations on the exhibition floor. It is about measurable economic value. It is about livelihoods. It is about growth. We also see the strength of this platform in trade outcomes. In 2025, deals concluded during Meetings Africa reached R182 million, underscoring the real commercial value created through this gathering. Business Events are central to the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan which is the country's strategic roadmap to accelerate tourism growth as a key driver of economic development, jobs and inclusive transformation. Over the coming days here in Johannesburg, you will experience a world class trade platform, dynamic African exhibitors, and forward thinking leaders shaping the future of our industry. I encourage you to visit the Sustainability Village, engage meaningfully with partners from across the continent, and explore new markets and opportunities. Beyond the exhibition floor lies an even greater opportunity. South Africa invites you to extend your stay. Discover our diverse landscapes, rich heritage, vibrant cities, and warm hospitality across all nine provinces. Every meeting here is an



invitation to experience something more, culture, creativity, gastronomy, nature and innovation. As Minister of Tourism, I am immensely proud of the resilience and ambition of our business events community. This twentieth anniversary is not only a celebration of how far we have come. It is a statement of intent about where we are going. Let us trade boldly. Let us collaborate intentionally. Let us grow Africa's share of the global tourism pie together. May Meetings Africa 2026 be productive, profitable and inspiring. Here's to 20 years of connection and to an even brighter future for Africa's business events industry.
Hon. Patricia de Lille
Minister of Tourism



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DAY 1 PROGRAMME

TIME	EVENT	VENUE
08:30 – 09:00	TGCSA SPEED MARKETING - ACCOMMODATION AND VENUE FOCUSED SESSION	SCC - Committee Room 5 By Invitation Only
08:30 - 10:30	TRADE FLOOR OPENING	Exhibition Level -2 - Restaurant Area Open to all attendees
10:30 - 12:00	MINISTER OF TOURISM - WALK-ABOUT	SCC – Hall 1 & -2
10:00 - 17:00	EXHIBITION TIMES	SCC – Exhibition 1 Open to all
10:00 – 17:00	SUSTAINABILITY VILLAGE	SCC – Exhibition 1 Open to all
11:00 – 11:30	BOMA TALKS - SESSION 1	BOMA: Exhibition Level 1 Open to all
11:00 – 15:00	TOURISM COMMUNICATORS FORUM	SCC - Ballroom 6/7 By Invitation Only
12:00 – 13:00	GROWING THE AFRICAN TOURISM MARKET – A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT	Media Centre, Café Nala, Mezzanine Level Open to Media
13:00 – 14:00	ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORISATION (ETA) SESSION 2	SCC - Ballroom 4 By Invitation Only
13:00 – 16:00	AAXO COLLECTIVE - CONNECTIONS TO CONVERSIONS	SCC - Ballroom 2 By Invitation Only
14:00 – 15:00	COLLABORATIONS AS AN ECONOMIC CATALYST: HOW ARTS AND CULTURE DRIVE DESTINATIONS GROWTH	Media Centre, Café Nala, Mezzanine Level Open to Media
14:00 – 15:30	MINISTERIAL AVIATION ENGAGEMENT	SCC - Committee Room 4 By Invitation Only
15:00 – 15:30	BOMA TALKS - SESSION 2	BOMA: Exhibition Level Open to all
15:30 – 16:30	CLUB MED MEDIA ENGAGEMENT	Media Centre Open to all
18:00 – 22:00	MEETINGS AFRICA WELCOME NETWORKING EVEN	Sandton City Rooftop Open to all invited and RSVPed attendees

* INFORMATION CORRECT AT TIME OF PUBLISHING

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BONDay Sets the Stage for Meetings Africa 2026 with Powerful Conversations

Tourism and business events stakeholders gathered today at the Sandton Convention Centre for Business Opportunity Networking Day (BONDay), the official precursor to Meetings Africa 2026, to explore how Africa can leverage business events, culture and sport to drive economic growth, global competitiveness and inclusive development.

Opening the programme, Dr Senthil Gopinath, Chief Executive Officer of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), highlighted the critical role of advocacy and leadership in unlocking Africa's business events potential. He noted that Africa's business events sector is projected to grow by 22% by 2032, with business events accounting for approximately 25% of global tourism and contributing 10% to global GDP. Globally, the sector was valued at USD 736.8 billion in 2021 and is expected to grow to USD 2.5 trillion by 2035.

ICCA actively advocates with institutions such as the United Nations, European Union, and World Economic Forum. Dr. Gopinath highlighted Africa's leadership legacy within ICCA, acknowledging past presidents and board members like Nina Freysen-Pretorius, Corné Koch, and others "brought Africa to the rest of the world using ICCA as a platform," positioning Africa as a vital bridge connecting to global networks.

The industry navigates challenges including geoeconomic tensions, AI-driven cyber risks, supply chain disruptions, and inflationary pressures, yet optimism prevails - with nearly 85% of professionals expressing confidence in the sector's future. AI has emerged as an "enabler," with 94% of leaders viewing it as a key change driver for personalised, interactive experiences that enhance human connections

rather than replace them. Sustainability is evolving into regeneration, with 40% of attendees demanding visible, measurable outcomes that generate positive economic, environmental, and social value.

Generational diversity calls for inclusive, experience-driven events that shift the focus from traditional ROI to ROE (return on experience). For Africa, this means capitalising on its youthful energy and regenerative ethos to host impactful gatherings that foster cross-border dialogue and collaboration.

Dr. Gopinath urged, "Let us position business events as engines of development, innovation and long-term prosperity."

The keynote address, Africa as a Turning Point: Connecting Africa to the World Through Business Events, was delivered by Nozipho Tshabalala, Chief Executive Officer of The Conversation Strategists.

Tshabalala, emphasized that "the world moves at the speed of conversation." She highlighted measurable triumphs born from such gatherings, including "large-scale investments in education" that built schools and improved outcomes, healthcare initiatives "saving lives and lifting communities," and infrastructure like the World Bank's Mission 300, delivering electricity to 300 million Africans. - "our greatest export is our perspective."

Fintech surges in South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya demonstrate "what financial inclusion really means," outpacing global models. South Africa's renewable energy program serves as a "case study" in public-private partnerships, referenced worldwide from Geneva to Sao Paulo.

She framed conversation as "coordinating infrastructure," transforming policy into action. A mere document "does not create trade" without convened spaces fostering regulatory clarity and private sector alignment. "You can't write trust into a legal document," she asserted; it demands strategic forums to build coalitions.

Success metrics must shift to "strategic influence" over delegate spend. Panels pitting ministers against CEOs enact "economic diplomacy," regulators versus innovators drive "governance in motion," and entrepreneurs facing investors recalibrate "perceptual risk," lowering Africa's risk premium and boosting investments.

Tshabalala's vision inspires: true breakthroughs occur when "the right people [are] in the right room with courageous questions."



The programme also featured a vibrant drumming session that brought the spirit and rhythm of Africa to life, reinforcing the continent's cultural richness and sense of connection.

A fireside chat followed between radio veteran Shado Twala and design thought leader and entrepreneur Craig Jacobs, who explored storytelling through fashion and heritage. The conversation underscored that culture is dynamic and progressive, evolving alongside society, and that economic direction is shaped by the stories and conversations held within creative spaces.

Sports tourism then took centre stage, with a panel discussion featuring Tjaart van der Walt, Chief Financial Officer, Cricket South Africa, Chris Bentley, Regional Managing Director, LIV Golf South Africa, Zeph Masote, Head/CEO, NBA South Africa, and Rendani Khorombi, Executive Head: Tourism Strategic Services, Johannesburg Tourism Company. The session was moderated by Bronwen Auret, Chief Quality Assurance Officer at South African Tourism.

Panelists highlighted sport as a powerful economic driver, job creator and destination marketing tool. Discussions focused on leveraging major sporting events to stimulate tourism demand, by involving small businesses and long-term community benefits beyond the duration of events. The role of sport in embedding destinations into communities and elevating Africa's global profile was emphasised.

True to the spirit of Meetings Africa's mission to connect the continent to the world, BONDay concluded with an announcement by Emmanuel Hategeka, High Commissioner of Rwanda to South Africa, confirming that the ICCA Congress will be hosted in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2027 — a significant milestone for Africa's business events industry.

BONDay successfully set the tone for Meetings Africa 2026, reaffirming the continent's readiness to lead global conversations, forge meaningful partnerships and convert opportunity into lasting economic impact.



WHERE WETLANDS MEET WILDLIFE

NYLSVLEI NATURE RESERVE, A RAMSAR TREASURE



Nestled in the heart of Limpopo, Nylsvlei Nature Reserve is South Africa's largest floodplain and an internationally recognized Ramsar site, preserving over 16,000 hectares of unique wetland ecosystems. For nature lovers, bird enthusiasts, and those seeking a tranquil retreat into South Africa's wilderness, Nylsvlei is a hidden gem waiting to be explored.

A Haven for Wildlife and Birding

The reserve is home to over **370 bird species**, many of which migrate annually to breed here, turning Nylsvlei into a birdwatcher's paradise. The floodplains come alive with thousands of waterbirds, including rare and endangered species such as **the African wattled lapwing, African spoonbill, and pygmy goose**. Walking trails and bird hides offer plenty of opportunities for visitors to witness these avian wonders up close. Beyond birdlife, Nylsvlei also boasts a diversity of flora and fauna, from aquatic plants and dense grasses to larger mammals like **zebras, warthogs, and waterbuck**. As one of the most ecologically significant wetlands in southern Africa, the reserve is committed to protecting these valuable species and their habitats.



Affordable Accommodation

Part of what makes Nylsvlei so attractive is its commitment to accessible, budget-friendly accommodations that immerse guests in the serene landscape. Cozy chalets and camping options make it possible to wake up to the sounds of nature without stretching your budget. Whether you're staying in a rustic cabin or camping under the stars, accommodations are well-equipped and offer an affordable way to enjoy the reserve's natural beauty.



Plan Your Visit

Open year-round, Nylsvlei is ideal to visit in the **wet season (December to April)**, when floodwaters fill the plains and bird activity is at its peak. But even in the drier months, the reserve's landscapes offer a peaceful escape, with picturesque views and open skies. With accessible pricing, abundant biodiversity, and a commitment to conservation, **Nylsvlei Nature Reserve** is more than a destination—it's a glimpse into the delicate and breathtaking beauty of South Africa's wetlands. Whether you're an adventurer, a bird enthusiast, or simply someone seeking solace in nature, Nylsvlei promises an unforgettable experience.

Experience Nylsvlei for yourself and be part of preserving South Africa's natural heritage.

Contact details : 0147436925 / +27 71 057 0828



DMCs shown ease and efficiency of Electronic Travel Authorisation system

The Department of Home Affairs and South African Tourism are using the opportunity of Meetings Africa to conduct live demos of its innovative Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system, a digital platform to simplify visa processes and boost tourism from high-potential markets.

South African Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille championed the ETA system during a demonstration to local Destination Management Companies on BOND Day at Meetings Africa, pointing to clear evidence of what happens when visa barriers are lowered.

“What I learned with Ghana was that when we had simplified the visa regime for Ghana, the tourism increased by 120%. The same happened with Kenya. It’s an enabler for us to grow tourism. It will make it easier for people who want to come to our country, especially those big source markets like India and China.”

Developed by Home Affairs in partnership with Tourism and State Security, the ETA allows home-based applications with facial biometrics and passport scans, delivering outcomes in

60 minutes to 24 hours. Approved applicants receive a 12-month multiple-entry authorization for up to 90-day stays, with fast-track port-of-entry processing.

The phased implementation of the ETA system began in October 2025 with a pilot for G20 delegates at the Johannesburg Summit (November 2025), testing biometrics, risk automation, and border integration at OR Tambo, Cape Town, and later Lanseria airports.

By February 2026, Phase 2 expanded access to ordinary passport holders from these four countries for tourism and business visits (arriving at specified airports), with plans for further expansion to more ports and nationalities later in the year.



What's on at Meetings Africa 2026

Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) Session 2

Minister's outreach program in collaboration with Department of Home Affairs, Gauteng Tourism and TBSCA for DMCs from China, India, Indonesia, and Mexico

When: 4pm, 24 February 2026

Where: Sandton Convention Centre - Ballroom 4

*By Invitation Only

ICCA brings next Congress to Kigali

ICCA, the global leader in the international business events industry, has announced that its 66th Congress will take place 24–27 October 2027 in Kigali, Rwanda, followed by the 67th ICCA Congress, which will be held 12–15 November 2028 in Muscat, Oman.

Senthil Gopinath, CEO of ICCA, said: “ICCA is delighted to bring our Congress to Kigali in 2027 and Muscat in 2028. Both destinations exemplify the ambition, creativity, and commitment to excellence that define the global business events community. As ICCA continues to lead the business events industry forward, these Congresses will provide powerful platforms for collaboration, transformation, business opportunities for members and shared growth. We are incredibly excited for the journey ahead.

“Each Congress offers a unique

opportunity for our community to unite, exchange ideas, and shape the future of our industry. Kigali and Muscat will help us elevate our global conversations to new heights.”

Janet Karemera, CEO, Rwanda Convention Bureau, said: “It is a great honour for Rwanda to host the ICCA Congress and to welcome the global association community back to Africa for the first time in twenty years. This historic occasion reflects the continent's growing prominence and leadership within the international MICE industry. Made possible through the steadfast support of our partners and stakeholders, both local and regional, this milestone provides an important opportunity to offer distinguished experiences and to present, not only Rwanda's capabilities but also the collective strength and potential of our regional partners.”

ICCA President: It's about awareness

Senthil Gopinath, CEO of ICCA, says the one big thing African business event professionals should be pursuing this year is awareness.

“The customer does not know. Of course, they know Africa as a continent and that Africa has plenty of leisure activities to offer, but purely from a business events point of view, we need to showcase that we have the expertise, and that we can organise your meetings. That message has to be consistently carried forward,” Gopinath told Meetings Africa Daily News.

“If you look at a decade ago, we had almost roughly 90 convention bureaus, now it's 168. So that's the kind of competition and the messages being carried to the customer. Africa, every year I keep coming, the infrastructure, expertise, the larger meetings you host, even the government meetings, the big ones happen here. But that message is not carried forward.”

Gopinath also speaks about the

move from Return on Investment (ROI) to Return on Experience (ROE). “More and more in the last five years, every customer is looking at what's the experience, particularly for association meetings, for the membership when they come. Because there's so many destinations offering similar products around the world, you have to develop experiences which are relevant to that sector.

“For example, if the Diabetes Association comes here, they want to know what are the doctors doing here, what's happening locally, from technology, to skills development, everything. Then they can take that out and they can bring investment into the country, as well.

“So everybody who's putting a program together around the world, my advice, it's not about sitting in a panel plenary, having good fun, going to a beach or to a jungle to do trekking. It's about that content, which is more experiential,” he says.

From Attendee to Host: Corné Koch Takes the Helm at Meetings Africa

Corné Koch has attended all 19 editions of Meetings Africa, and now in its 20th year she is hosting it.

Recently appointed Chief Convention Bureau Officer of the South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB), a business unit of South African Tourism, she joins the organisation with more than 20 years' experience in tourism destination marketing and promotion across South Africa. Koch steps into a role originated by Amanda Kotze-Nhapho, who launched the SANCB at Meetings Africa in 2012.

Her favourite moment at Meetings Africa? When the trade floor bell rings. "It's like 'Okay, we've honoured the moment, now we've got to move.' It's electric."

The business events sector remains a key priority for South African Tourism. The SANCB has played a pivotal role in driving industry development and delivering broader economic impact, consistently achieving strong results.

Koch says "Business events are powerful

drivers of economic and knowledge growth for a destination, extending far beyond tourism. Our industry thrives because of passionate professionals across government, academia and industry who contribute to the growth of this sector."

She has been instrumental in advancing the growth of MICE in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Most recently, Koch served for 10 years as Head of the Cape Town and Western Cape Convention Bureau at Wesgro, where she led a high-performing team responsible for positioning the Western Cape as Africa's leading business-events destination.

Reflecting on her time at Wesgro, she highlights a key lesson: that everyone is an extension of one another's sales efforts.

"Whether you sell from a supplier side like the hotel or whether you're from outside, you sell the destination, you sell each other. So my learning is that you must always be on the same page. You must always be talking the same narrative. And that is something that I'd like to see, taking that learning and seeing if we can apply that into the bigger sector and obviously for the country and the continent."

Corné says the growth and the infrastructural development that's happening across the continent to enable business event



growth is incredible. "This is a long-term sector, you work two to three years to get something done, and you track events, but it's always a pipeline. You know that there will be jobs within, you know, there will be economic growth, and you will know that there will be impact from this. And I think that is what excites me the most."

Catching Corné at the end of her first Meetings Africa BONDay as SANCB CCBO, she is enthusiastic. "I think the day did what we wanted it to achieve. We celebrated 20 years. We celebrated our legacy. We also celebrated that Africa can connect with itself. And the programme lent itself to giving a lens of what Africa is and how it can spatially put itself in the business, but also focusing on issues, trends, the creative sector and the sports sector and how important they are for the eventing space as well."

Ahead of this year's big moment of the bell ringing to open the trade room floor, Corné says: "I want to extend a thank you to the industry. We're getting support, and without industry, we can't deliver this. And also to everybody that's been so instrumental in positioning this show from the incubation all the way to the growth, establishment and the legacy. And thank you to the exhibitors. All the best for the show. We look forward to you being here."

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CONVENTION CENTRE

Joburg Tourism Hails Lasting Impact of Meetings Africa

Joburg Tourism's Executive Head of Tourism Strategic Services, Rendani Khorombi, sees Meetings Africa as a powerful platform to further position Johannesburg as a competitive global destination for business events.

"Last Meetings Africa generated an economic impact of about R1.1 billion for the city, and through engagement with decision-makers here at the event, we were awarded some conferences that are going to be taking place between 2026 and 2030, which we are expecting at the very least 10,000 people coming to the city, with an economic impact of



about R5.5 billion or so.

And also, it impacts a whole value chain, says Khorombi. "If you've got more of these business events coming here, imagine the impact it can have on employment, on small business, and big business. Because big business, they also want to sustain and grow themselves. So, I think from that context of the whole value chain, business events are very important."

Khorombi says what excites him most about the buzzing Meetings Africa trade floor are the wide-ranging discussions - but those conversations should not end inside the convention centre.

"The ultimate goal for us is to be given an opportunity to bid for business events. There must be follow-up wherein we need to get the requirements for request for proposal, how do we submit our bid, and our expression of interest for these business events, so that ultimately we get the end goal of winning the bid, and of course once it's won, it goes back to the value chain and the employment it creates. The more of these business events take place here, the more somebody is getting employment, and it's making a difference."

"And then of course the businesses that are attached to it and the suppliers, because they also get to be sustained. If you've got a conference centre like Sandton Convention Centre as a partner, and Southern Sun as well, if they've got their hotel attached, the beds are always filled all the time, because of business events. They're sustaining jobs of people that are working there, and so it goes to the restaurants and other businesses. So at the end of the day for me, the more the merrier for the destination."

Khorombi emphasises that the city has demonstrated its state of readiness to the world by becoming the first African city to host the G20 Summit.

"You can't have an event without infrastructure. So, the fact that there are business events and leisure events that are taking place within Johannesburg, it means we are infrastructure ready. We can only improve on our challenges. We don't take it for granted that most business events are looking to be hosted here, so, we'll ensure that we've got enhancement of infrastructure development and investment to assist with the whole experience for the tourist."

Luxurious hospitality at Sandton Sun & Towers

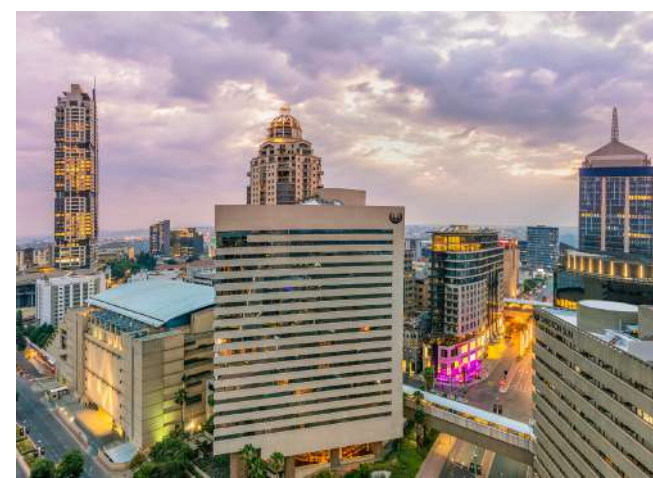
Integrated into Sandton City's Diamond Walk and connected to the Sandton Convention Centre, and just a 15-minute Gautrain journey from O.R. Tambo International Airport, Sandton Sun & Towers boasts an incomparable location. A landmark on the Sandton skyline, this iconic Southern Sun hotel consistently exceeds expectations for business travellers, leisure escapes, and international visitors. Sandton Sun & Towers is particularly well-suited to business travellers, offering corporate guests access to seven separate Business Suite meeting rooms, ensuring privacy and a full range of services. The conference facilities cater for groups of up to 150 delegates, providing flexibility for hosting meetings and conferences in the bustling CBD of Sandton. For guests with larger conference or event requirements, Sandton Sun & Towers offers direct access to the world-renowned Sandton Convention Centre via a skywalk.

Accessible, conveniently located, and professionally serviced, our facilities are suitable for business functions, special events, and meetings of every description. Following a stunning transformation to the Sandton Towers, all 28 floors and public spaces have been reimagined to blend timeless design with modern luxury. Making it a landmark destination in the heart of Sandton for both

business and leisure.

Accommodation at Sandton Sun & Towers seamlessly combines luxurious comfort with business convenience in a choice of 557 rooms and suites in various configurations. Options range from 5-star Superior Rooms with large flat screen TVs and skyline views, to spacious Suites and elegant Penthouses combining stylish décor and deluxe amenities, ensuring an unmatched hotel experience.

Sandton Sun & Towers is famous for its exceptional dining experiences, capturing the essence of the vibrant, resourceful, and energetic people of Africa. Deeply rooted in sustainability, San Restaurant's philosophy celebrates locally sourced, seasonal ingredients that are prepared with passion, presented with flair, and served with Jozi hospitality in a sophisticated, yet relaxed setting. Dining at the Atrium restaurant combines premium ingredients and refined presentation with an à la carte selection of both contemporary and familiar favourites. Floor to ceiling windows and refined table settings set the scene for memorable dining at any time of the day or evening. The show kitchen at San Restaurant offers the unique opportunity for an up-close-and-personal encounter with the chefs, suited to intimate celebrations, functions, business events and private dinners; all of which can be



exclusively accommodated in private and semi-private venues. Intuitive service by friendly, professional staff embodies a philosophy of African hospitality at its best.

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Meetings Africa Milestones

We look back at 20 Years of connecting Africa to the world.

2005 – 2009: The First Years

Meetings Africa was born in 2005, a continental platform created to connect Africa's business events industry with global buyers, unlocking opportunity, collaboration, and long-term growth for African destinations.

The first edition was officially opened by the then Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk. It included 80 exhibitors, of whom 80% were from South Africa and 20% from Sub-Saharan Africa.

South African Tourism purchased Meetings Africa in 2007 as part of its strategic development to grow Business Tourism. Within five years, Meetings Africa would host over 120 exhibitors, excluding stand sharers, cementing its role as a cornerstone of Africa's business events industry.

2010: Playing to Win

The bid parties, Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg Tourism Company, and the Gauteng Tourism Authority committed to Meetings Africa for the period 2009 to 2013 in a joint effort to grow the exhibition and strengthen South Africa's business tourism sector over the long term.

As part of this commitment, the Sandton Convention Centre agreed to host the exhibition at a considerable discount for the duration of the contract, while the other bid partners pledge substantial financial support. Collectively, the partners committed R8 million towards marketing in 2009, with total investment increasing to R18 million over the period 2010 to 2013.

2012-2013: Partnership Becomes Policy

The South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB) was officially launched at Meetings Africa in 2012 as a one-stop for destination expertise and convention planning support.

Since its launch, the SANCB has published a strategy to stimulate business event growth in South Africa and launched the "Win-as-One" pledge, which was well received and signed by key players in the business event industry.

2014: Positioning Business Events as Economic Driver

Meetings Africa 2014 introduced media panel discussions to position the event as a

2016: Advancing Africa Together

The inaugural IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum Africa took place on 22 February 2016. The initiative aims to inspire future leaders in the business events industry by featuring students from various African institutions to participate in a new educational challenge and industry networking initiative.

The 2016 edition of Meetings Africa saw 15 African countries represented, along with 58 African products and eight Tourism Boards exhibiting.

The event attracted 247 International and regional Hosted Buyers, an 11% increase from 2015, with 73% of hosted international and African buyers having never visited South Africa before. The Hosted Buyers at MA

2017: Advancing Africa Together (Spotlight SMMES)

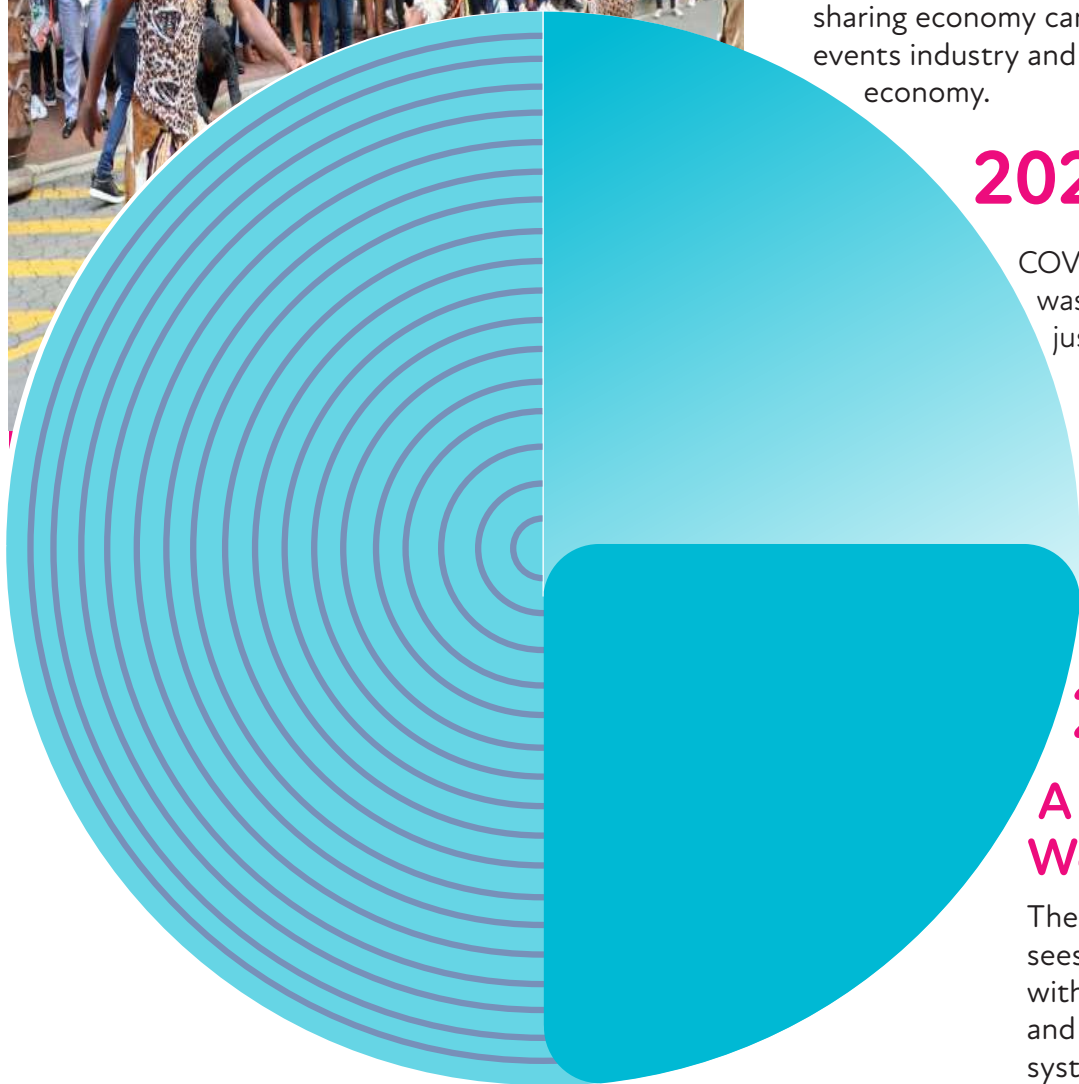
Meetings Africa introduces the Development Zone, where it hosts and showcases SMMES, becoming an enabler that provides market access and opportunities for small tourism businesses.

This edition of the show attracted 68,671 delegates, with the economic impact of the business the buyers represented at R1.75b.

The SANCB commissions a research programme to deliver an understanding of the real importance of the meetings industry and its contribution to tourism in South Africa.

importance of the meetings industry and its contribution to tourism in South Africa.





YEARS



2018 - 2019:

Advancing Africa together through shared economies

The show has more than 320 exhibitors, and 15 African Tourism Boards, demonstrating how the sharing economy can transform the business events industry and drive growth in the African economy.

2020:

COVID – Meetings Africa was successfully hosted just before COVID-19

2021:

COVID Pandemic affects the hosting of the show and as a result the show didn't take place

2022 - 2023:

A New Way of Working

The 2022 return of MA sees the show go hybrid, with in-person attendance and an online meeting diary system. The Hosted Buyer target is capped at 200 due to COVID-19 regulations on gatherings and travel bans. The main focus is on regional buyers to align with South Africa's Tourism Industry recovery plan, which prioritises Domestic and Regional recovery.

In 2023, Meetings Africa returns in a physical format and reintroduces international buyers.

The show reaffirms itself amongst the most sustainable and green shows globally. Its Sustainability Village is an indelible feature that epitomises "home-grown" arts and crafts empowerment. The village concept has now extended beyond Meetings Africa, with numerous national and provincial events emulating it.

2024:

Economic Impact

In 2024 Meetings Africa drew approximately 3,400 attendees, reflecting a 15% increase in total attendance compared to 2023.

29% of attendees are international visitors, 48% domestic overnight visitors, and 23% Johannesburg residents or day visitors, with the average trip expenditure per buyer estimated to be R20,755.

The total direct expenditure in South Africa generated from MA 2024 is an estimated R145 million, a 13% increase when compared to the R128 million generated in 2023.

An additional R275 million was generated through indirect and induced impacts.

MA 2024 resulted in the creation and/or sustainment of around 770 temporary and/or permanent annualised jobs in the South African economy.

2025:

Record Breaking Success

In 2025, Meetings Africa achieves record-breaking success, featuring 410 exhibitors - including 113 SMMEs, over 8,000 confirmed meetings, more than 320 buyers from 27 African countries, and approximately 3,609 attendees.

Exhibitor respondents indicated that they had an average of 25 meetings during MA 2025, of which two were converted to deals worth an estimated average value of R438 087 in 2025, a 12% increase from 2024.

South African exhibitor respondents indicated that they had an average of 24 meetings during MA 2025, of which two were converted to deals worth an estimated average value of R544 996. This is a 101% increase when compared to the average deal value of R270 777 in 2024.

The total direct expenditure in South Africa generated from MA 2025 is an estimated R236 million, a 62% increase when compared to 2024.

The direct contribution of the MA 2025 to the South African economy is projected at R236 million. An additional R454 million is projected to be generated through indirect and induced impacts.

It is projected that the MA 2025 resulted in the creation and/or sustainment of approximately 1 199 temporary and/or permanent annualised jobs in the South African economy (718 direct, 481 indirect and induced), and that the Event contributed R41 million in national government tax revenue.

Bring Your Event Onboard with MSC Cruises MICE & Charters

A fully integrated event solution delivering unforgettable experiences beyond the boardroom.

MSC Cruises' MICE & Charters division invites you to host your next event aboard one of the most innovative fleets at sea.

Over the past decade, the MSC Cruises fleet has grown by 800% in capacity, offering a diverse portfolio of ships ranging from classically elegant vessels to contemporary floating cities. This scale and variety allow event organisers to select the ship, itinerary, season and onboard facilities that best align with their objectives and brand message.

Whether you're planning incentive travel for sales teams, distributors and dealers, prize holidays, brand support and promotional events, conventions, conferences, product launches, presentations or large-scale international gatherings, MSC Cruises provides a dynamic and memorable alternative to traditional venues.

With end-to-end support from a specialist team, MSC Cruises combines expertise in marketing, branding, planning and logistics to ensure every aspect of your event or incentive is a resounding success, delighting guests, expressing your brand values and supporting your strategic objectives.

From reserving private venues and arranging bespoke dining experiences to integrating branded elements for corporate functions, the MSC Cruises team ensures every detail aligns seamlessly with your goals.

What MSC Cruises Offers Corporates and Event Planners:

- Private venues for meetings, conferences and special events
- No separate venue hire fees
- State-of-the-art facilities, AV equipment and technical support
- Dedicated event specialists ensuring seamless execution from start to finish
- Inclusive packages covering accommodation, dining and entertainment for exceptional value
- The result is a simplified planning process with predictable costs and maximum impact.

Spotlight on MSC Armonia

MSC Armonia, arriving in South Africa for the first time for the upcoming 2026/2027 cruise season, offers versatile conference facilities suited to a range of event sizes, with meeting spaces accommodating between 125 and 225 delegates and an onboard theatre seating up to 550 guests for larger gatherings.



The vessel is equipped with advanced sound and lighting systems, video projection technology and a computer-operated plasma wall. A high-tech vision-sharing system enables content from any source onboard to be broadcast throughout the ship or to specific lounges and public areas, ideal for fully integrated event experiences.

Value-Driven, Tailored Packages

MSC Cruises delivers convenience and value through comprehensive cruise packages, including:

- No additional venue hire charges
- All meals in buffet and main dining venues (excluding specialty restaurants)
- Accommodation in inside, ocean-view or balcony cabins
- World-class entertainment, theatre shows and live performances
- Access to pools, indoor and outdoor bars
- Fitness facilities including a gym, shuffleboard, mini golf and power walking track
- MSC Armonia's MSC Aurea Spa (beauty treatments, salon services and thermal area at additional cost)
- Onboard retail outlets offering fashion, accessories, perfumes and more
- Optional packages for beverages, WiFi, specialty dining, spa treatments, transfers and shore excursions can be pre-purchased, with group discounts of up to 15%.
- As an added incentive, MSC Cruises offers one complimentary cruise fare for every 23rd guest booked.



Why Host at Sea?

Hosting an event onboard creates a uniquely immersive environment. Delegates become a captive audience, sharing the same space over an extended period, fostering stronger networking, deeper engagement and meaningful connection.

Multiple destinations within a single itinerary add further appeal, transforming a corporate event into a memorable travel experience.

It's more than just a venue, it's an experience your delegates will remember long after the voyage ends.



Visit us at stand G28

Contact details

www.msccruises.co.za

groupsandevents@msccruises.co.za

010 980 0672

Uganda's MICE Triumph: A Beacon of Hope and Economic Power

Uganda is surging forward as Africa's rising MICE powerhouse. The 2024 ICCA rankings, released June 2025, mark its best-ever performance: 6th in Africa (up from 7th with 19 meetings) and 69th globally, while Kampala climbed to 4th among African cities.

"Since participating in five editions of Meetings Africa since 2018, this platform has transformed our sector," says Mellon Tukeikiriza, Senior Marketing Officer (MICE), Uganda Tourism

Board. "It creates vital opportunities for our private sector to meet global buyers and forge powerful collaborations with MICE suppliers across the continent."

Key gains for the country include the establishment of the Uganda Convention Bureau, the integration of MICE into national policy, and the US\$47 million Speke Resort Munyonyo Convention Centre - East Africa's largest - capable of hosting over 4 000 delegates across 32 breakout rooms. Other

milestones include the new Kampala Marriott Hotel, the creation of a dedicated MICE private-sector body, the Uganda Association of Conference and Incentive Industry, and the development of certified MICE professionals.

Tukeikiriza adds: "Sustainability shines as our standout Meetings Africa moment, protecting our natural heritage while delivering unforgettable value."

At this year's event, Uganda unveils the latest Marriott developments, multi-purpose Hoima Stadium, and world-class experiential products: primate encounters, safaris, adventure, vibrant nightlife, and deep community immersion.

Fuelled by the National MICE Strategy 2025–2030 targeting over US\$250 million annual impact – atop 2024's record US\$1.28 billion tourism revenue (↑26%) and tourism's 3.2% GDP contribution supporting 803,691 jobs – each MICE delegate creates 13 local opportunities.

With relentless marketing and visionary leadership, the Pearl of Africa beams with unstoppable hope: a sustainable, inclusive MICE engine powering prosperity and innovation.



Voices from the Floor



Johnny Arthur Quarm
Director Research, Monitoring
& Evaluation, Ghana Tourism
Authority

I'm here (at Meetings Africa) as a Research Director to benchmark what you have against what we are doing. For instance, we need to know what is driving people to South Africa so that we can do the same in Ghana. I'm looking at South Africa, I'm looking at Rwanda, I'm looking at Zambia, I'm looking at Kenya. What they are doing to attract people, MICE conferences to their country, so that we can also do the same.



Dhvani Desai
Zenia Hospitality Ltd,
Zambia

My company, previously Protea Hotels Zambia now Zenia Hospitality, has been on the Zambia stand for the past 10 years, and we find Meetings Africa very beneficial for us. We meet very valuable partners and hosted buyers. It's to achieve nice leads for them to come and give us more business in our country, but it's also to build long-term relationships, put a face to a name, and give them updates on what's going on with our companies, with our country.



Mellon Tukeikiriza
Senior Marketing Officer (MICE),
Uganda Tourism Board

What we look forward to seeing in the future is increasing the number of quality hosted buyers, especially buyers from the corporate agencies and associations, because they are the ones that give us business that comes with bigger numbers and bigger volumes. So, as we continue to participate, I would urge the Meetings Africa team to give us improved and more buyers from the association and corporate agencies.



Mary George
Head of Sales, Dusit Princess
House Residences, Nairobi, Kenya

My sole intention of being here is to expand visibility for the brand. We are majorly in the Asia region and we are slowly starting to encroach into Africa. And why not? Meetings Africa is the right place for us to start this. I'm pretty excited to meet the different buyers that are here, specifically because we are in the business of accommodation and MICE. So potentially getting into new contracts and relationships with the clients from here.

Q&A With Justin Hawes, Founder & MD, Scan Display

Justin founded Scan Display in 1996 and has been the company's Managing Director since its inception. He served on the executive committee of the Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa (EXSA) for five years. He was the association's Vice Chairman from 2002 to 2004, and its Chairman in 2005.

In 2009, Justin co-founded the Event Greening Forum (EGF), a non-profit organisation aimed at promoting sustainability in the South

African events industry. He is currently the organisation's Treasurer.

In 2011, Justin became the first African to be represented on the International Federation of Exhibition & Event Services' (IFES) board. He was the association's Treasurer from 2013-2016, Vice President: Finance from 2017-2020, and President from 2021-2022.

How many editions of Meetings Africa have you attended?

Scan Display has been attending Meetings

Africa since 2009. As there was no show in 2021, this year's show is our 17th.

The business events space has seen many changes over the past 20 years. What stands out for you?

There have been many changes seen in the construction of stands. Over the years, we have seen the growth of fabric graphics, with more vibrant use of colour. Exhibitors have become increasingly conscious of sustainability, impacting the use of materials for their exhibition stands. We have also seen increased use of AV presentations at the show.

Over the years, exhibitors have become more aware of the costs of exhibiting and the returns on their investment. It must be worthwhile for them to attend the show.

What trends are you pursuing?

We are committed to sustainability, both for our exhibitors' stands and for ourselves. We have been using the same portable reusable Fabric Pop-up Stand with fabric graphics at Meetings Africa for the past five years.

What are your objectives for this year's Meetings Africa event?

Our objective is to connect and engage with members of our industry, and to meet with new buyers wanting to host events or attend exhibitions. The show is also a great platform to showcase our products and services as well as our commitment to sustainability, with our Fabric Pop-up Stand.

Congratulations to Meetings Africa and South African Tourism on 20 years of a fantastic show! Thank you for creating and supporting this very important platform for our industry. It's wonderful to be part of such an important and exciting sector.



Green Stand Awards Recognises those who Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose, Reduce

South African Tourism and SANCB have partnered with the Event Greening Forum (EGF) to judge and present the Green Stand Awards at Meetings Africa 2026.

As the recognised industry body driving sustainability in events and exhibitions, the EGF is committed to setting clear standards for green and sustainable stands.

The Meetings Africa team aims to showcase Africa as a premier business events destination that cares about its people and the natural environment. Through hosting the event in a responsible manner, it reflects the importance of local economic development, and keeps abreast of international trends.

An independent panel of industry experts will be judging the stands live on site at Meetings Africa, during the course of the day on Tuesday 24 February 2026.

The judging criteria will align with the NZCE Better Stands Initiative and EGF Green Stand Awards criteria to ensure consistency in recognising truly sustainable stands.

All exhibitors who believe their stand meets green and sustainable design principles were invited, with the award open to all, regardless of membership of an industry association or not.

There will be 3 award categories – Bronze (3rd place), Silver (2nd Place) or Gold (1st Place) – depending on the particular elements that

are reused or recycled, points will be awarded by the judges on each aspect and the degree to which each complies to the EGF minimum sustainability standards and the 4R's (Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose, Reduce) All elements of a particular category must be shown to be reused or recycled in order to achieve the relevant award category.

What's on at Meetings Africa 2026

The Top 3 scoring entries in each award category will be awarded EGF/EXSA Best Green Stand Awards by the SANCB and the EGF

When: 12h00 – 13h30 Wednesday 25 February 2025

Where: Media Centre, Café Nala, SCC

Africa Smart Cities Investment Summit 2026 to Launch at Meetings Africa

The Africa Smart Cities Investment Summit (ASCIS) 2026 will officially launch on 24 February at 11am on the sidelines of Meetings Africa, marking a pivotal moment in Africa's urban transformation journey.

Set to take place from 1–3 December 2026 at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, ASCIS 2026 will convene city leaders, ministers, investors, development finance institutions, and technology innovators under the theme:

With Africa expected to account for the majority of global urban population growth in the coming decades, ASCIS 2026 shifts the conversation decisively from vision to value focusing on how cities can lower the cost of living, unlock productive urban economies, and mobilise capital for scalable, integrated solutions.

Johannesburg's role as host city reinforces its position as Africa's financial and commercial hub, a fitting backdrop for a summit designed

to bridge governance, investment, and implementation.

The 2026 edition will feature high-level plenaries, a closed-door Mayoral Programme, an Investment Deal Room, the Africa Smart City Index & Awards, and curated engagements aimed at accelerating bankable urban projects across the continent.

Jean Philbert Nsengimana, Chairman and Chief Curator of ASCIS, said: "Africa's urban future will not be defined by how smart our cities appear, but by how affordable, productive, and inclusive they become. ASCIS 2026 is designed as a platform where policy, capital, and innovation converge for implementation, not just discussion. Johannesburg provides the ideal ecosystem to advance this agenda at scale."

The official launch at Meetings Africa signals South Africa's growing role as a continental convener of strategic economic and urban development dialogue, setting the tone

for what promises to be one of the most consequential smart cities gatherings on the continent.



What's on at Meetings Africa 2026

The Africa Smart Cities Investment Summit (ASCIS) 2026 Launch

When: 11am, 24 February

Where: Media Centre, Sandton Convention Centre

Harties Harbour / Daily Cruises / Beach Café / Cocktails / Views / Restaurant



OUR BOATS

Daily cruises on the Alba, Danny Buoy, Tora Ya Me and our private Pontoon!



Experience the Magic!

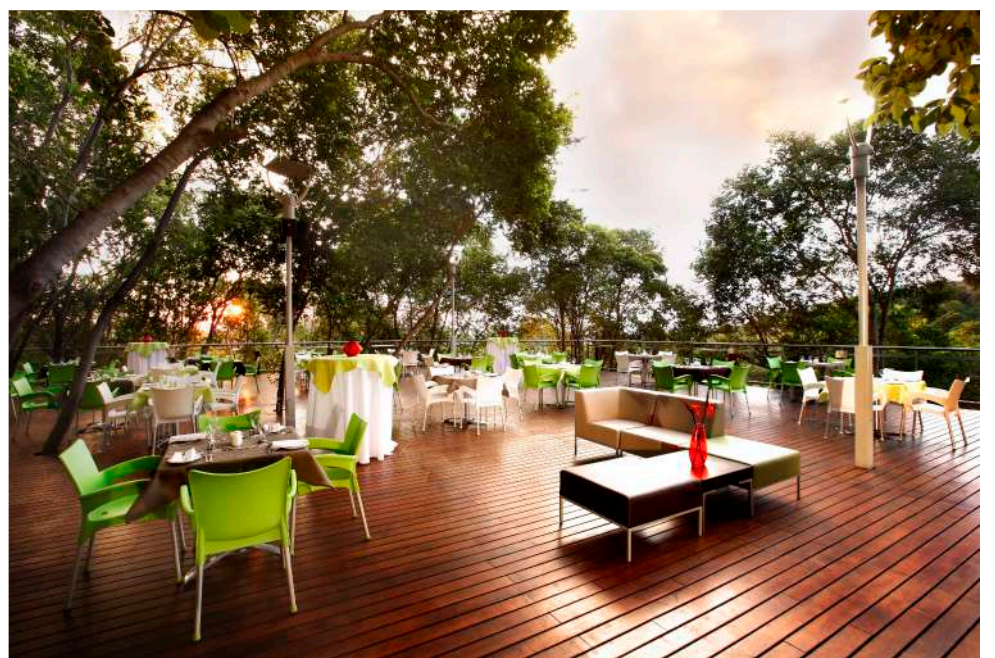


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Limpopo Guinness Corner

DID YOU KNOW ?

Sagole Big Tree is

the largest Baobab in the World.

According to the Guinness book of World record, the largest known living baobab is the Sagole Big Tree, a specimen of *A. digitata* located in Masisi, Vhembe, South Africa, near the border with Zimbabwe. Based on its most recent measurements, Sagole has an extremely large base that covers 60.6 m² (652.3 sq ft), a height of 19.8 m (64 ft 11.5 in) and a total wood and bark volume of 414 m³ (14,620 cu ft). Its aboveground dry mass is estimated to be 54 tonnes (60 US tons).



source: <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/635578-largest-living-baobab-tree-volume>

Tallest planted tree

On 8 November 2021, a team of arborists led by Leon Visser (South Africa) entered the Magoebaskloof State Forest in Limpopo Province, South Africa, to re-measure a stand of giant eucalypts belonging to the species *Eucalyptus saligna* (aka Sydney blue gum). A trio known as the "Magoebaskloof Triplets" previously measured here in 2013 were known to reach 81.5 m (267 ft 4.7 in) but on this latest outing an even taller specimen was discovered, dubbed "Fourth Kin", which had a tape-drop height of 83.7 m (274 ft 7.3 in). Native to eastern Australia, these trees were originally planted in 1906 by forestry pioneer A K Eastwood.



source: <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/636343-tallest-planted-tree>



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