

ADDRESS BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA AT THE 2025 LIMPOPO KA DIZEMBA  
MEDIA LAUNCH AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF KEY EVENTS  
MEROPA CASINO, POLOKWANE

20 NOVEMBER 2025

Programme Director,  
MEC for LEDET, Mr Tshitereke Matibe,  
Polokwane Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr John Makoro Mpe,  
Capricorn District Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr Mamedupi Teffo,  
Councillors,  
LEDET HOD, Dr Rathumbu,  
LTA Board Chairperson and respected Board Members,  
CEO of LTA, Mr Moses Ngobeni,  
Traditional Leaders,  
Faith-Based Leaders,  
All Tourism Stakeholders,  
SA Brewery Representatives,  
Government Officials,  
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Ndi Masiari, Thobela, Inhlekani, Good Day, Goeie Dag,

We gather here today at Meropa Casino and Entertainment to officially activate the 2025 Limpopo ka Dezemba campaign, an important component of our weekly Tourism Thursdays programme. This activation is more than a ceremonial event; it is a strategic platform to showcase the unique experiences and competitive advantages that position Limpopo as a destination of choice for both domestic and international travellers.

Today, we are also unveiling the 2025 summer campaign packages, complete with exciting Tourism Black Friday specials crafted to offer unforgettable and affordable experiences. I must commend the tourism sector for its unwavering dedication in keeping Limpopo consistently amongst the top three most visited provinces in South Africa. Your resilience, creativity, and commitment are the pillars that sustain our tourism economy.

But we know that to remain competitive, we must broaden our horizons. We need stronger partnerships to bid for and host major events. Limpopo remains Africa's Eden, a province blessed with breathtaking landscapes, abundant wildlife, unmatched cultural diversity, heritage sites of global significance, and the only place in the world that proudly hosts the Big Six, which includes the iconic Baobab Tree. These are powerful assets that should give us confidence as we compete for major events and conferences.

Just this September, Limpopo demonstrated its hosting capacity with excellence. We welcomed over a thousand delegates for the South African Association of Public

Administration and Management (SAAPAM) conference in Thohoyandou, in partnership with the University of Venda. This was a major economic injection into the local tourism value chain.

Similarly, we hosted the 150-year celebration of the Presbyterian Church around Elim and Valdezia—yet another example of how faith-based tourism continues to bring life and economic activity to our communities.

These successes affirm that Limpopo is ready to host, ready to grow, and ready to lead. But we must strengthen our collaborations to ensure that events reach deeper into our rural communities, spreading economic benefits and building sustainable livelihoods.

Colleagues, Limpopo's greatest strength is its cultural and natural heritage. This is why village tourism must take centre stage as a driver of local economic development. We must use tourism as a tool to create jobs, strengthen small enterprises, and reduce poverty in rural communities.

Earlier this year, through Tourism Thursdays, we launched the Spring Campaign in Sekhukhune, featuring the hidden treasures of Ba-Dinkwanyana Village. The Sekweneng Tufa Rock and the Sethunyeng Hiking Trail, with their striking natural formations and perennial waterfalls that stand out as world-class attractions.

These are unique jewels that must be marketed aggressively, particularly to the "Visiting Friends and Relatives" market that will return home this festive season. They must find their villages transformed into desirable destinations.

We were also encouraged by the strong participation in the LWR Mahala Week and SANParks Week. These initiatives boosted the movement of local tourists, especially families who rarely have the opportunity to explore our wildlife reserves and water-based recreational sites. These are strategic campaigns that build a culture of travel within our nation.

Our partnership with the private sector continues to yield success. Recently, FlySafair introduced the Cape Town–Hoedspruit route, which is now operating at 70% capacity. This confirms what we have always known: our province is unmatched when it comes to authentic safari experiences. We need more such partnerships, and we must collectively work to ensure that tourism becomes a key driver of job creation and economic growth.

The Tourism Thursdays initiative has opened new doors for us to rediscover Limpopo. It is reigniting curiosity and deepening appreciation for our products. We want travellers—local and international to re-imagine Limpopo as a year-round destination with endless possibilities.

Today, we have brought together product owners from Polokwane and across the Capricorn District to officially announce a series of major events coming to the province. These include:

The annual Sapa Yopa celebration,

The CAF match between Kaizer Chiefs and Zamalek,

The 2025 Carling Cup Final, featuring Orlando Pirates and our own Marumo Gallants,

The Mapungubwe Festival,

The Likompo Youth Festival,

And the celebration of the Yellow Arum Lily Flower in Leolo and Roossenekal.

These events will attract visitors from across South Africa and the SADC region. As the tourism sector, you are our frontline ambassadors. We rely on you to deliver world-class hospitality, service excellence, and quality experiences that keep visitors coming back.

Venues like Meropa must serve as hubs for entertainment, collaboration, and economic activity. Together, let us ensure that festive spend circulates within our province and benefits local businesses.

The objectives of the Limpopo ka Dezemba Campaign are clear:

To inspire and increase domestic travel,

To promote geographic spread to less-visited areas,

To reduce tourism seasonality,

And to create inclusive economic opportunities throughout the year.

This year, we have assembled competitive packages to drive our Limpopo Ka Dezemba campaign. We call on all tourism partners to share their festive season specials so they can be featured on the Limpopo Tourism website and promoted widely.

As the Provincial Government, our message is simple:

Let each one of us work tirelessly to ensure that Limpopo continues to shine as one of South Africa's top three must-visit destinations, not only during December but throughout the year.

The festive specials and travel packages are now officially available on the Limpopo Tourism website. We encourage all citizens and visitors to explore, book, and enjoy what our beautiful province has to offer.

As we officially launch the 2025 Limpopo ka Dezemba Campaign, I wish all our visitors, partners, and residents a safe, joyful, and memorable festive season.

I thank you.