

The Role of Gauteng in South Africa's Backpacking Economy

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted, either in the same or different form, to this or any other university for any degree.

Signature:

Abstract

This study is a detailed investigation into the backpacking sector of Gauteng. The findings of both a backpacker consumer survey and a backpacker enterprise survey are drawn upon in revealing the current trends and key shaping issues within Gauteng's backpacking sector. As the province in which South Africa's major international airport is situated, Gauteng plays a key role as the starting and concluding point for backpacker travel in South Africa. As such, the form and function of the backpacking industry of Gauteng has evolved to suit this somewhat narrow, yet crucial, role played by the province. Within the limited role that Gauteng plays in the South African backpacking economy, a number of obstacles to the growth and socio-economic impacts of Gauteng's backpacking sector are identified. Several strategic recommendations are put forward in order to address these challenges. These recommendations aim to broaden the role that Gauteng plays within the budget tourism industry, and remove the barriers to growth, so as to ensure that the sector plays a part in the wider national goals of empowerment and redistributive growth.

Preface

The research which constitutes this dissertation is a detailed examination of the backpacking sector of Gauteng. The topic of investigation grew out of my involvement, as junior researcher, in the 2006 ECI Africa national backpacking sector study of South Africa. In agreement with ECI Africa this research paper on the role of Gauteng in the South African backpacking economy expands on the ECI Africa study, and is composed entirely out of research which I myself conducted.

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