

How should the Karoo prepare for FIFA 2010?

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Karoo products: Tourism

- Eco-tourism
- Small-town tourism
- Architecture
- Cultural heritage
- Railway tourism
- Astro-tourism
- Fossils
- Game reserves
- Artists
- Niche towns, e.g. Richmond booktown
- Horses - horse racing, horse shows, horse breeding
- SPACE, silence, solitude!



Karoo products: Arts and Crafts



Problems faced by Karoo Tourism (Judy Maguire)

1. Lack of Inter-provincial planning, integration and marketing of tourist routes
 2. Lack of common branding: “Northern Cape Real”, “Gateway to the Western Cape”, “Karoo Heartland” (Eastern Cape), “Open Spaces Little Places” (Free State)
 3. Many towns are accessible only by means of gravel roads and the roads are in poor condition
 4. Tour buses cannot or are not prepared to use these roads, and many heritage assets are inaccessible to such groups
 5. Some heritage sites need off-road vehicles to access – especially fossil and rock art sites
 6. Heritage assets are widely dispersed – long travel distances perhaps seen as ‘boring’ and not worth the effort
 7. Poor signage and information boards at the entrances to small towns informing travellers about heritage assets, and things to see and do
 8. Museums and places of interest are often closed
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Problems ...

1. The curators of heritage assets are often 'ou omies' or 'ou tannies' – precious 'living heritage' but a dying breed; or young and unqualified
 2. There are no local guides to interpret local places of interest
 3. Local guides mainly speak only one language fluently enough – Afrikaans
 4. Small towns can't accommodate larger groups all in one venue
 5. Few credit card facilities and ATM's, or out of order
 6. Some towns do not have 24 hour petrol stations and repair facilities – punctures are almost inevitable (bikers and motorists)
 7. Rail transport through the Karoo is extremely poor – a huge missed opportunity
 8. There is no commercial Karoo airport to cater for visitors who are money rich but time poor – need scheduled flights
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Problems ...

1. Most SA tourists are 'destination oriented' – the seaside or caravan park at a dam is the favoured destination – special interest routes may not be attractive to this market
 2. Heritage is everywhere deteriorating and nothing is being done to arrest the decay – e.g. built environment and railway heritage
 3. Many Municipalities have allowed tourism support infrastructure – often unusable (swimming pools, caravan parks, ablution facilities, picnic sites).
 4. Medical assistance is often not first- world standard for all emergencies in small Karoo towns
 5. Poor website presence
 6. Poor service, inexperienced service providers.
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Rural tourism in SA:

Policy problems ...

- Often lip-service paid to tourism as a part of rural development as part of job creation and LED
 - Main focus is on community-based initiatives – problems of management in a sophisticated sector
 - Neglect of key physical investments (e.g. airports, rail)
 - Neglect of main service delivery issues (e.g. management of tourism sites).
 - No coherent transport strategy – road, rail, air – either capital investment or maintenance.
 - Insufficient collaboration: Provincial Growth and Development Strategies and Tourism strategies compiled in isolation.
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The potential impact of mega-events in a host country

- Financial multiplier effects in the local or regional economy
- Community pride
- International recognition and marketing
- Strengthening of regional values and branding – “this is us”
- New govt policies and programmes – “it focuses the mind”.

Key question; Will it lead to lasting impacts? And will it promote rural development?

FIFA 2010 and non-host areas

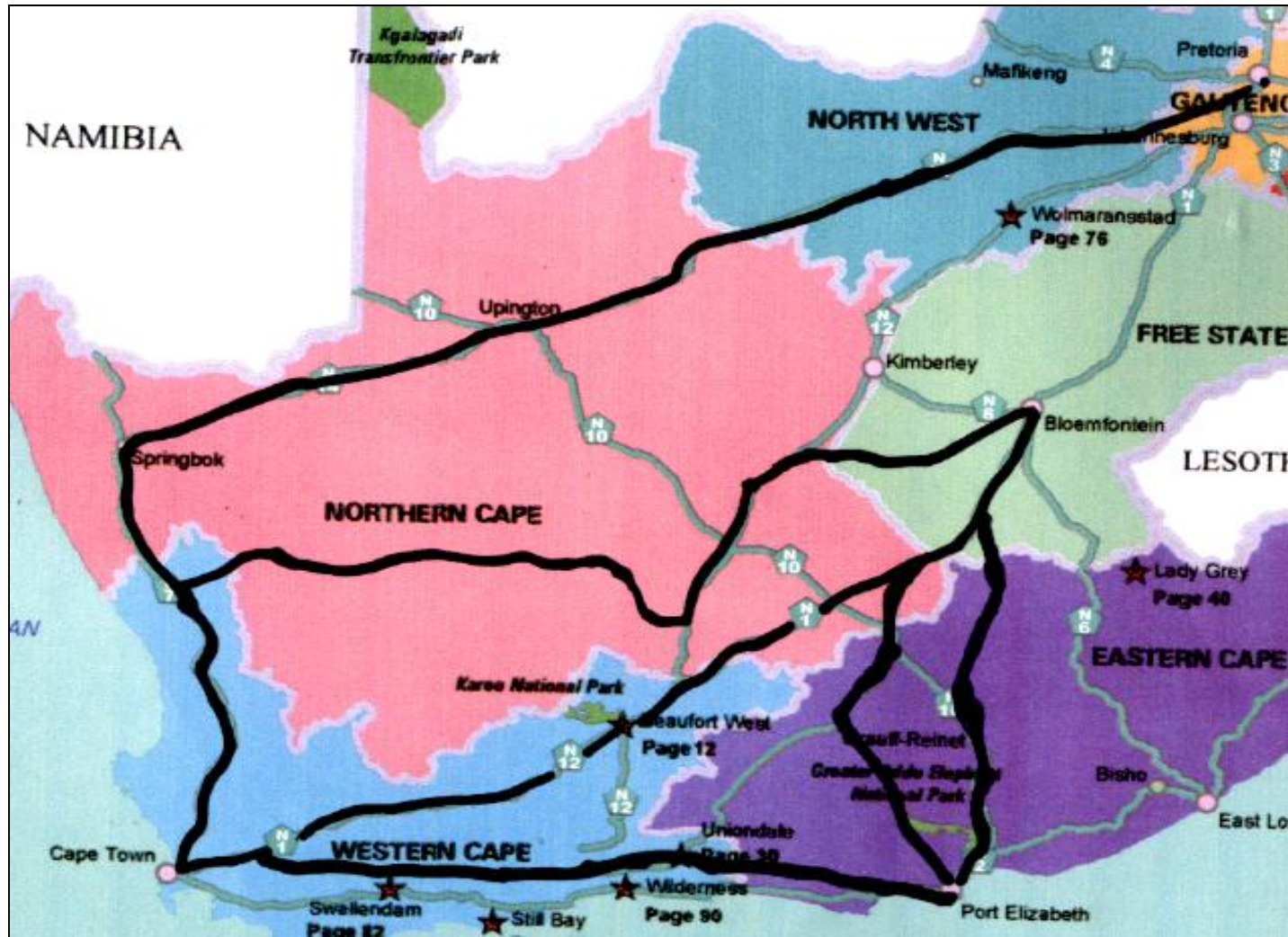
Win some, lose some

1. A sudden windfall – massive increase in **demand** – 700 000 foreigners?
 2. Can **supply** of tourism services cope with it?
 3. “Spillover effects” of mega-events on rural towns – how are the games likely to affect the Karoo (the “non-host areas”)?
 4. May experience *fewer* problems than host cities, e.g. less problems of crowding, traffic, crime and high prices.
 5. May benefit from the “displacement effect”, e.g. South Africans may now holiday in the non-host areas
 6. BUT rural areas are less experienced to deal with the influx.
 7. Karoo has a special advantage: It is located on the transport routes, hence we have identified six (potentially seven) key routes.
 8. Not everyone can fly! And airline prices will increase.
 9. So major increase in road traffic.
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5 Different types of tourists in the Karoo during 2010

1. Highway tourism: Transit traffic between host cities
 2. Area tourism: Visitors explore sub-regions, game farms, game parks, small towns
 3. Satellite towns: Accommodation for host cities – how far afield?
 4. Fan parks
 5. Displaced South African tourists.
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Opportunity for 2010: The Karoo Highways



Lessons from the literature

The impact of a mega-event will depend on how it is managed at a local level.

E.g. 3 Australian towns and the Olympics of 2000:

- Canberra focused on sport
- Gold Coast built a community coalition of sport, tourism and business, with a major focus on tourism marketing
- Hunter Valley saw it as a business opportunity to sell the town to new investors, e.g. linked to training camps.

It all depends on political leadership and local economic innovation. Local coalitions!

Market a region

“In less favoured regions, initiatives that seek to build a sense of pride and regional identity may be a helpful tactic, when introducing new policies ... moreover, in a cross border context, where border regions artificially divide cultural regions, with common traditions and a common language, developing this regional identity could well benefit from a cross-border element” (Smallbone et al, 2007)

Mega-events create opportunities for regional mobilisation and local mobilisation (Deccio and Baloglu 2002)

The Karoo is a desert region!

International perspective

UN: *Global Deserts Outlook*

“Deserts have become favoured destinations for tourism and outdoor recreation”

Three types of desert experiences:

- Desert as wilderness (eco-tourists)
 - Desert as challenge (hiking, SUV, river rafting)
 - Desert as scenery (romantic locales).
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International Perspective:

UN: *Tourism and Deserts*

“The supply of desert tourism products has visibly increased and been offered to a wider market over the last decade or so. The appeal of deserts can largely be explained by the image of purity and serenity associated with them, and by travellers’ quest for simplicity and well-being.”

Most visited deserts in the world (UN)

North America: Sonoran desert, Mojave desert, Grand Basin desert, Chihuahuahua Desert

South America: Atacama and Uyuni Deserts, Coastal Peruvian Desert, Patagonian desert

Asia: Taklamakan desert, Thar desert, Gobi desert, Karakoum desert

Australia: Great Sandy Desert, Simpson Desert, Great Victoria Desert, Gibson Desert (“the Outback” – including “The World’s Longest Short-cut” of 5 000 km)

Middle East: Arabian Desert, Syrian Desert, Negev Desert, Sinai Desert

Africa: Sahara, Somalian desert, Danakil desert, Chalbi desert, Kalahari Desert, Namib Desert

But no mention of the Karoo! Why not?

Lack of “branding” of the Karoo as a whole

- Lack of a coherent focus on “arid areas” as a whole – very fragmented region
 - No recognition of the term “desert” – “desert as an asset”
 - Many South Africans do not see the Karoo as “desert” – just an empty place on the way to Cape Town
 - Many South Africans are not aware of deserts as destinations or appealing localities
 - Lack of appreciation by municipalities of what their tourism advantages are – architecture
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Lessons for 2010 for the Karoo

1. Promote the highways
 2. Promote secondary attractions for the displaced market
 3. Build local coalitions
 4. Work across boundaries
 5. Understand the desert as a niche market
 6. Brand the Karoo!
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