

Seven reasons tourism needs major events

By [Danny Bryer](#)

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Tourism is taking a knock right now. With the Cape, Johannesburg and Durban all in various degrees of water shortages, the industry needs more than a Get Well card, and events are what will see us on the road to recovery. Here are some reasons why events hold one of the more measurable keys to sustainability in the sector:



Image Source: [Ultra South Africa Instagram](#)

- 1. Events don't always rely on specific seasons:** They can be developed and held on a year-round basis, so in the traditionally quieter tourism months, tourism professionals and others in related, secondary-tourism businesses can maintain a steadier flow of income if there are big events happening every month.
- 2. World-class events lead to international visitors:** The Cape Town Cycle Tour didn't start out as a massive event, it grew. As the event grew in size and popularity, it's marketability grew apace, so much so that the world's biggest individually-timed cycling race has 35,000 participants, 4,000 of whom are international visitors, and it contributes more than R500m to the economy. Regional visitors also use our airlines, stay in places of accommodation, eat in restaurants and enjoy some pre and post-event exploration.
- 3. Events breed events:** The popularity of the Cape Town Cycle Tour has contributed in many ways to the growth of the Absa Cape Epic, which contributed R300m to the economy in 2016, with 600 teams of two tackling the 700km route, attracting the globe's elite riders as well as amateurs who take the lottery to get a place. Not to be left out, Cape Rouleur attracts 160 pro, former pro, celebrity, and amateur riders from 16 countries across Africa, America, Australasia and Europe. Then there's the latest addition: 2018 saw an inaugural race taking place in Stellenbosch, with the UCI World Cup series kicking off the season there for the first time. Cycling events, then, collectively boost the economy by over R1bn.



UCI Mountain Bike World Cup series 2018 to boost Cape's tourism coffers

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4. Events can help to share awareness: Visitors heading to destinations will research where they're going. In our case, they'll be aware that we've had water shortages as a result and will come forearmed with information. They'll also share what it's really like on the ground when they return home, hopefully that they've had a fantastic time with minimal disruptions because of water, or that we, as a city, have not run out of water as is being reported in some places.

5. Business development via events: A large-scale event like Mining Indaba or WTM Africa is a breeding ground for business development, with alliances and partnerships being formed that can lead to international trade agreements. When they're well-held events, more organisations will see the value in holding their own meetings and conferences in a venue, so the events advertise our capacity. Remember the FIFA World Cup Soccer tournament of 2010? All eyes were on our cities as we hosted matches, and we did it well.

Adding a string to our cultural bow: The Cape Town International Jazz Festival (one of the city's biggest annual events with 37,000 visitors) brought in R700m in 2014, but more than that, it showcases that there's more to Cape Town than beaches and a mountain. We get to show off our multi-cultural diversity to fresh audiences. That can be true of any city hosting these kinds of events.



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6. Investor confidence: If we host successful events and developers note that our infrastructure ranging from the capacity at Cape Town International Airport to our transport systems are functioning, we could land more large-scale developments in the city, with employment opportunities in construction and all through various supply chains.

7. Events provide employment and job sustainability: Tourism directly employs around 50,000 people in Cape Town, but the indirect effects are trickier to monitor, since the small-scale farmer supplying fruit and veg to a hotel, for example, is benefiting from tourism. Magnify that across meat suppliers, bedding manufacturers, wine producers, IT developers – you name it, the tourism sector relies on other industries for survival, industries that are the lifeblood of the city.

So yes, we need day visitors and extended stay visitors who come to our cities for events. We have managed so far to reduce any impact of tourism on water and will continue to do this. It's essential for the health of our sector that we encourage tourism, whether for business, leisure or events.

ABOUT DANNY BRYER

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