

Passenger safety a top priority for Robben Island Museum

The Robben Island Museum (RIM) management has reported to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament's Standing Committee on Economic Opportunities, Tourism and Agriculture on the progress made since the incident where the chartered ferry, Thandi took on water.



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Following the incident, an in-depth investigation was conducted by the South African Maritime Authority's (SAMSA). All stakeholders were kept informed on the process for continuous service improvement.

"We reported on the recommendations that we have successfully implemented since the incident. To date, as Robben Island Museum we've appointed two harbour masters and have suspended the use of 25GT vessels until SAMSA regulations are much clearer in regulating these types of ferries. The safety of passengers to and from the Island is a key priority," share Morongoa Ramaboa spokesperson at Robben Island Museum.

"Additionally, regular training and safety drills are conducted on a regular basis; passenger lists are now made available on every vessel leaving Nelson Mandela Gateway and the Island. We've also introduced mystery shoppers who regularly report on our holistic service as a Museum."

One of the key drivers that led to the incident was as a result of the weather conditions. RIM has subsequently implemented recommendations set out by SAMSA in the investigation report. RIM has installed additional wind monitoring equipment on the Island so that actual wind conditions can be monitored in Cape Town and at Robben Island.

As an additional precaution, RIM has updated its systems and processes for the monitoring of weather conditions and weather warnings. Steps have been taken to improve the frequency and quality of weather monitoring reports as well as interactions with harbour masters with regard to weather conditions. RIM has also engaged with Transnet National Port Authority on this added reporting process.

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RIM's management team also reported on the organisations' up-to-date compliance with SAMSA's regulations and this was confirmed by SAMSA in the same reporting meeting. Beverley Schäfer, MPP, DA Western Cape Spokesperson on Economic Opportunities, Tourism and Agriculture commended RIM for the hard work and evidential progress in implementing SAMSA's recommendations since the incident occurred. Robben Island welcomes and appreciates the committee's support together with the Provincial Department of Economic Development's inclusion in the City's key interventions to address visitor safety as a whole.

"RIM would like to ensure that the increase in visitors over peak season will be met by an increased capacity to operate and to provide an excellent standard of the tour experience for all visitors," concludes Ramaboa.

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