

FEDHASA celebrates 70 years as hospitality industry champions

May 2019: Seventy years ago, The Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa ([FEDHASA](#)) was established to champion change within the hospitality and tourism industry. FEDHASA has weathered many challenges and changes over the decades, but still remains dedicated to advocating for the industry's growth.

The first attempt at creating a single national body for the hospitality industry was attempted in 1905, but it would take another 44 years before FEDHASA (then the Federated Hotel Association of Southern Africa) was formed. FEDHASA's primary function has been to represent the hospitality industry and lobby on its behalf with government. This work began almost immediately, with the newly established organisation entering discussions on regulations and legislation affecting the hotel industry. One of FEDHASA's challenges lay in the Liquor Act, which saw 25 amendment bills gazetted over 30 years. Many of these amendments placed strain on the hospitality industry, by regulating what liquor had to be stocked and later allowing grocers to obtain licences to sell wine.

Marking milestones

In 1965, FEDHASA launched the Hotel Training Scheme to enable students to train at selected hotels. FEDHASA not only witnessed the establishment of the first Department of Tourism in 1965, but also the establishment of the first hotel school, opened by the Minister of Tourism, in 1972 in Johannesburg.

Before democracy, FEDHASA fought for transformation within the industry by lobbying to allow employees of all races to work and live on site at hotels as well as to be able to provide accommodation for all race groups. By 1986, 78% of all hotels in South Africa were open to all races. The '90s brought with them increased tourism from abroad and international goodwill, with international flights tripling over just a few months



Lee Zama, current and first female CEO of FEDHASA adds: "This year marks a monumental occasion for FEDHASA. The organisation has withstood many tests over time, but continues to represent its members' interests despite the changing business and tourism landscapes. The many successes achieved by FEDHASA speak to the passion of this industry's stakeholders and the FEDHASA team."

As FEDHASA celebrated its 55th birthday, it was decided to restructure to keep up with modern times. The new government had decentralised to local, provincial and national tiers of government, and in 2004 it was decided to mirror this structure. This saw the creation of FEDHASA Cape, FEDHASA Inland, and FEDHASA East Coast to interact with their respective provincial governments.

These regional offices have carried the baton in lobbying their respective provincial and local governments.

Local lobbying

Over the last 15 years, FEDHASA Cape has worked to promote tourism and business in the Western Cape. One such example is the 'Nowhere Does it better' Campaign – a collaborative industry initiative driven by Wesgro, Western Cape Government, City of Cape Town, and tourism bodies including FEDHASA – which aims to encourage tourism after the drought experienced last year. In

addition, the organisation has been coordinating with role-players over the water crisis. This resulted in a water pledge, which saw FEDHASA members committing to reduce water consumption, as well as a unified position during the crisis.

The organisation has also been instrumental in promoting the industry's interests in the City of Cape Town's liquor by-law (where, amongst others, champagne breakfasts were back on the cards).

However, FEDHASA Cape has also been investing in the future of the industry. The Association added a special segment to their membership portfolio in 2008, the Youth segment, that later became known as the FEDHASA Young Professionals, representing the young and upcoming leaders of the industry. The association then also established a Youth Bursary Fund from the proceeds of their annual golf day, which covers tuition for a deserving hospitality student, and the Leadership Bursary Fund for young and upcoming leaders of member establishments. FEDHASA Cape has also been playing their role in job creation and in nurturing entry level staff through participation in the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). With this programme, young basic-skilled entrants are given the opportunity to get trained and thus have the opportunity to get a permanent job.

FEDHASA National and FEDHASA Cape chairperson, Jeff Rosenberg, says: "We're proud to continue this FEDHASA legacy, working together with our national counterparts, to bring about transformation and growth within the hospitality and tourism industries. With our members, we have created real change through lobbying government and we look forward to continuing to build on the foundation laid by this historical organisation."



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About FEDHASA:

FEDHASA is recognised and respected by government and all industry role players since 1949 as the prime representative and voice for the South African Hospitality Industry. The association aims to ensure a sustainable and profitable business environment for the Hospitality Industry as a private business sector voice.

For more information on FEDHASA or media queries, contact:

Issued By	Positive Dialogue Communications
On Behalf Of	FEDHASA National
For Further Information Contact	Jaylene Williams
Tel	(021) 461 5108
E-Mail	jaylene@positivedialogue.co.za