

Wesgro launches new Roblox game to inspire young travellers and families

Wesgro - the official tourism, trade and investment promotion agency for Cape Town and the Western Cape - has launched a new Roblox game to inspire tweens, teens, and their families to explore the Western Cape this winter. The game *Starlight Adventures In The Cape Karoo* aims to drive tourism across the region, highlighting lesser-known but exciting family destinations where tourism is critical to the local economy.



Source: Screengrab - Roblox game

Wesgro is the first tourism promotion agency in the world to use Roblox in its marketing campaigns, with the launch being the second game it has released on the platform.

The game includes a digital clone of Prince Albert, a small town with only 7,000 people, that has been transformed into a playable experience. In researching the game, Wesgro consulted with local tour guides and cultural experts - using 3D scans of landmarks and objects to create an accurate representation of the town. With a map spanning four square kilometres, the game is one of the largest on Roblox.

Informing and inspiring young minds

Looking to drive regional spread to the Karoo region this winter season, Wesgro partnered with popular family roadside pit-stop BP, Shell, and Engen to launch the game, with collateral stationed at approximately 20 garages around the Western Cape and leading up to Prince Albert, distributing interactive adventure booklets with a checklist and map promoting the game and region. Aligning with school holidays, the partnership aims to inspire young road trippers to not only download and play the animated game but visit the real-life town as part of their winter vacation itinerary.

Jean Scheltema, Wesgro's chief marketing and innovation officer, says: "*Starlight Adventures in the Cape Karoo* draws on the insight that the youth market has a significant role to play in influencing family holiday decisions and comes off the back of the previously successful "Climb Table Mountain in Roblox" effort. Through digitising key attractions in the region, we've combined edtech and gaming to inform and inspire young minds.

"Strategically, BP and Shell are brands synonymous with the roadtrip market domestically and are valuable distribution partners for this campaign. The partnership has offered us a smart touch point to combine the Metaverse-like game with a more traditional marketing approach. A trip to the Karoo is magical and we want young people to experience this at least once in their lives."

Players compete to win unique user-generated content (UGC) items based on the local heritage and culture of Prince Albert. Additionally, for the first time in a game, the history and culture of the Khoisan people, the world's oldest tribe, is featured.

Taking cue from real-world Karoo legends

The historical, and astronomical facts that lead to the dramatic action, are all garnered from people living in Prince Albert and the greater Karoo area. All characters featured in the game are either real life or modelled on people that live in Prince Albert.

"Destination innovation ensures we remain globally competitive, and we've committed to being first movers," says Wrenelle Stander, Wesgro CEO.

"Beyond resembling the real-world experience, the game wouldn't have been possible without the input and knowledge sharing from citizens in the region," adds Stander.

Two real life characters include Museum Curator Lydia, based on Prince Albert's Fransie Pienaar Museum Curator Lydia Barella, and Ghost Hunt Guide Ailsa, based on real-life Prince Albert Walking Tour Guide, Ailsa Tudhope. Both Barella and Tudhope were invaluable in sharing the history of the town, along with its legends and ghost stories.

"We are thrilled that the interactive gaming experience of Roblox's *Starlight Adventures in the Cape Karoo* helps place our region on the younger visitor's radar. There is a definite uptake in youngsters loving what the Karoo has to offer - wholesome lifestyle, fascinating history, abundant outdoor adventure, pristine nature - the introduction of a digital Prince Albert experience will elevate this enthusiasm and ultimately lead to more visitors," says Inga Terblanche, Chair of Prince Albert Tourism.

"The presence of two of our iconic residents, Ailsa Tudhope and Lydia Barella, makes this gaming experience even more magical and exciting. We are thankful to Wesgro's initiative in creating awareness of a whole new, non-urban, fun adventure waiting to be explored, at the same time putting emphasis on the importance of historic and cultural heritage," added Terblanche.

The game is available to play now on Roblox.