



End of an era: Ticketpro Dome to close

Monday, 19 July 2021: It is with a heavy heart that RX Venue Management today announces that after 20 years of being the management company of South Africa's largest multipurpose indoor arena, The Ticketpro Dome has now been sold by the owners, Sasol Pension Fund, to a third party which does not operate in the event space.

This is another devastating blow for the exhibitions, events, and entertainment industry due to Covid-19. The ban on public gatherings has meant that during 2020 and now 2021, the Ticketpro Dome has been unable to operate.

Carol Weaving, MD of RX Africa says: "The selling of the Ticketpro Dome, is extremely disappointing and heartbreaking for our industry. The Ticketpro Dome has been home to many international concerts and events in South Africa, and this will undoubtedly leave a huge void. Unfortunately, as we are only the managing company, we were unable to change the outcome of Sasol Pension Fund selling the venue due to force majeure."

The Ticketpro Dome solidified global recognition with companies and promoters throughout several industries and will be remembered as an iconic venue across the events, exhibitions, and entertainment sectors.

The Dome opened on 8 April 1998 with a concert by Diana Ross attended by over 15 000 people with a special guest appearance by the late former President Nelson Mandela. Over the years, the venue has played host to top international music artists such as Pink, Katy Perry, Lionel Richie, Lauren Hill, Pharrell Williams, Celine Dion and Michael Buble. On the local front, artists such as Prime Circle, The Parlotones, Lira, Tonya De Lazy, Black Coffee, and Soweto Gospel Choir has graced the stage. South African rapper, Cassper Nyovest become the first local artist to sell out the Dome. Some 20 000 tickets were sold even before the event, suitably billed 'Fill Up The Dome'.

On the exhibition front, the Dome has been home to many consumer and trade shows such as Homemakers Fair, Rage, Mama Magic Baby Show, Fire and Feast Food Festival, Mediatech Africa and Africa Automation Technology Fair.

In 2017, the NBA Africa Games were held at the Dome and WWE International and Disney on Ice has also been staged there.

In 2020, the Ticketpro Dome launched the successful Hybrid Studio in response to the global pandemic. "Our sector has been extraordinarily innovative in transforming our offerings to accommodate online participation, but a hybrid event incurs two sets of costs, one for the online component and one for the in-venue aspect. Attendance capacity restrictions make in-person events unviable, and online does not carry the same appeal," says Projeni Pather, Chairperson of the Association of African Exhibition Organisers.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EVENTS

According to a recent News 24 article, the cultural and creative services sector contribute more than R74.4 billion a year to the South African economy. They also have a multiplier impact because they generate tourism and increase retail spending in host city economies. Furthermore, they contribute towards the production of goods and services for consumption at events and in host cities and create

employment for unskilled and semi-skilled workers and low-income households. If you take that into account, the cultural economy accounted for R241.8 billion or an equivalence of 5.6% of GDP.

Tourism contributes about R400 billion to the economy every year, and events are a substantial contributor – because people travel to go to concerts, business meetings, sporting events, weddings, exhibitions, conferences and so on, in what has been labelled the "experiential economy".

Tourism also employs about 800 000 people, so the pandemic has affected two million people in the two industries combined – industries that collectively contribute about R500 billion or 10% of GDP (not including the multiplier effect) to the economy each year and employs 15% of the country's workers.

According to, Ismail Mahomed, Director of the Centre for Creative Arts at University of KwaZulu-Natal, "Government has failed miserably in serving the arts, cultural and entertainment sector right through the lockdown period by not establishing an Advisory Committee of industry specialists that could work together with the Department of Sports, Arts & Culture to develop and implement a relief, rehabilitation and recuperation strategy for the sector.

"The Department of Arts & Culture can no longer continue to operate with its head in the sand and ignore the economic challenges of the sector and the important contribution of the sector to South Africa's economy and to the country's wellbeing".

The South African Events Council (SAEC) has been lobbying government, since its inception in 2020, to let the live events industry operate within Covid-19 safety regulations. If shopping centres can operate so too should event and exhibition venues. SAEC wants- government to allow venues to operate at 50% capacity so that the industry can start rebuilding.

The Ticketpro Dome is the latest causality of not being able to operate and the consequences of its closure will have a ripple effect on the South African economy. It is too late for the Ticketpro Dome but may its final curtain call be a sober reminder that there needs to be drastic rethinking on how the South Africa government views our industry.

The official handover of the venue will be on 7 September 2021.

Ends.

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ABOUT

The Ticketpro Dome

The Ticketpro Dome is a Johannesburg landmark and is a highly sought-after venue in Johannesburg for special events and exhibitions. As the cornerstone of the Johannesburg events and entertainment scene, organisers and visitors can enjoy the venue's versatility and unrivaled capacity to host any size event, in any setup. The main arena capacity is highly versatile and has seen a multitude of concert setups, special event setups and hosts some of the most well-known trade and consumer exhibitions in South Africa. The Blue Wing Conference and Events Venue adjoined to the Ticketpro Dome is a blank canvas for smaller more intimate meetings and events.

RX Venue Management

RX Venue Management is a subsidiary of RX Africa, is the venue management company for The Ticketpro Dome.

RX Africa

RX Africa is one of the largest and most successful event companies in Africa. RX delivers high-profile, customer-focused events in established and emerging markets. RX Africa manages The Ticketpro Dome venue management contract under the supervision and leadership of Carol Weaving, MD, and is the preferred venue of several RX Africa's trade and consumer shows annually.