

# The State of South Africa's *Conference Industry 2026*

First-of-its-kind index of **1,854 active conference venues** across **9 provinces** and **468 cities and towns**. Geographic distribution, capacity profile, venue mix, amenity coverage and quality markers — drawn from the most comprehensive open dataset of SA conference inventory yet assembled.

**Publisher:** Conference Venues SA    **Methodology:** Section 8 below

**Citation:** *Conference Venues SA, 2026.*

## 01 · Headline numbers

**1,854**

Active conference venues

**9**

Provinces covered

**468**

Cities & towns with venues

**48%**

Of inventory in WC + Gauteng

**48%**

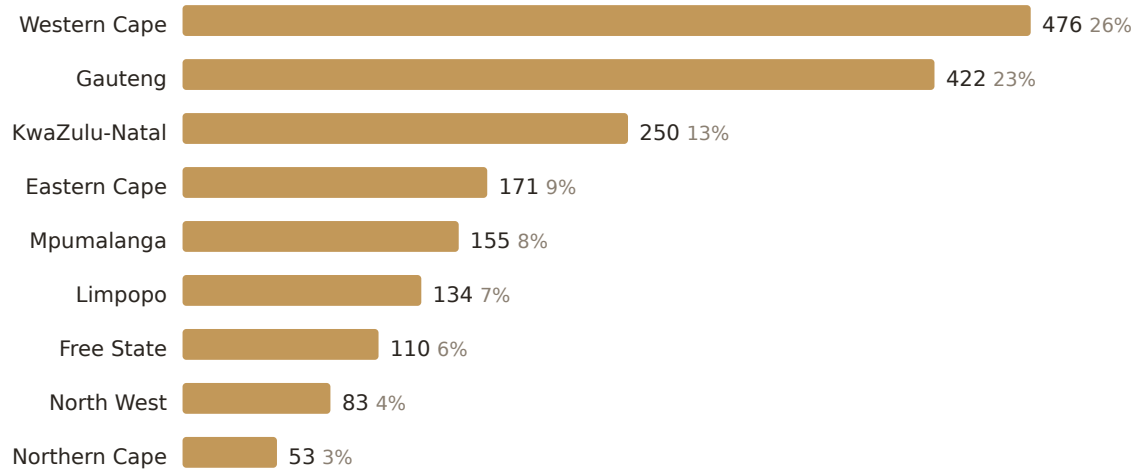
Are hotels (not dedicated centres)

**1%**

Offer video-conferencing

## 02 · Where SA's conference venues actually are

South Africa's conference inventory is concentrated in two provinces: the **Western Cape** (476 venues, 26%) and **Gauteng** (422 venues, 23%). Together they hold **48%** of the country's listed inventory. The Northern Cape — three times the size of England by area — has just 53 listed venues.



## 03 · Top 20 cities by venue count

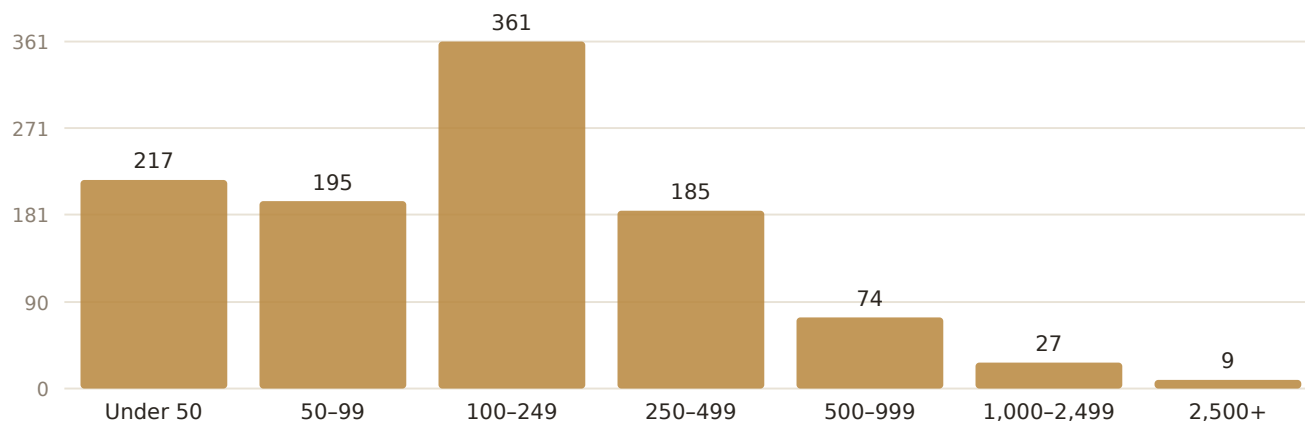
The top ten cities account for **24%** of all SA conference venues. Cape Town leads on raw count; the broader Cape Metro (Cape Town + Stellenbosch + Paarl + Franschhoek + Somerset West) accounts for **183** venues, more than greater Johannesburg + Sandton + Pretoria + Centurion + Midrand combined (**186**).

#	CITY	PROVINCE	VENUES	SHARE
1	<b>Cape Town</b>	Western Cape	100	5.4%
2	<b>Johannesburg</b>	Gauteng	69	3.7%
3	<b>Pretoria</b>	Gauteng	48	2.6%
4	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	Western Cape	45	2.4%
5	<b>Sandton</b>	Gauteng	37	2%
6	<b>Durban</b>	KwaZulu-Natal	37	2%
7	<b>Bloemfontein</b>	Free State	35	1.9%
8	<b>Port Elizabeth</b>	Eastern Cape	29	1.6%
9	<b>Kempton Park</b>	Gauteng	27	1.5%
10	<b>Polokwane</b>	Limpopo	26	1.4%
11	<b>East London</b>	Eastern Cape	25	1.3%
12	<b>Muldersdrift</b>	Gauteng	20	1.1%
13	<b>Paarl</b>	Western Cape	20	1.1%
14	<b>Centurion</b>	Gauteng	19	1%
15	<b>Hazyview</b>	Mpumalanga	18	1%
16	<b>Franschhoek</b>	Western Cape	18	1%
17	<b>Oudtshoorn</b>	Western Cape	17	0.9%
18	<b>Umhlanga</b>	KwaZulu-Natal	16	0.9%
19	<b>Knysna</b>	Western Cape	16	0.9%
20	<b>Bela-Bela</b>	Limpopo	14	0.8%

*Cities with at least one listed venue. Source: Conference Venues SA, 2026-04-30.*

## 04 · Capacity distribution — the mid-market dominates

72% of South African conference venues are sized for under 250 delegates. Only 3% can host events of 1,000+ delegates — a meaningful constraint for organisers planning national or pan-African conferences. The country has just 9 venues with stated capacity of 2,500 or more.



*Distribution of stated maximum capacity for the 1,068 active venues with capacity data on file (58% of inventory).*

### The 12 largest venues

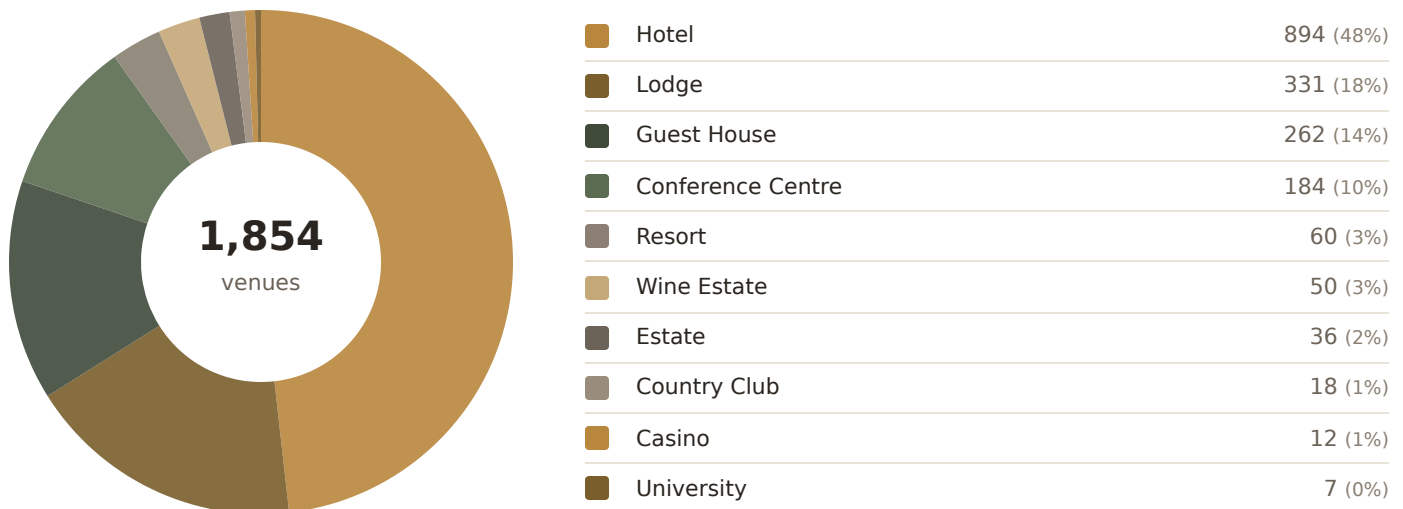
VENUE	CITY	PROVINCE	MAX DELEGATES
<b>Peter Mokaba Stadium, Polokwane</b>	Polokwane	Limpopo	45,000
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<b>Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (Durban ICC)</b>	Durban	KwaZulu-Natal	10,000
<b>Cape Town International Convention Centre</b>	Cape Town	Western Cape	5,000
<b>Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre</b>	Boksburg	Gauteng	5,000
<b>Heartvelt Arena</b>	Pretoria	Gauteng	4,500
<b>Tshwane Events Centre</b>	Pretoria	Gauteng	3,780

VENUE	CITY	PROVINCE	MAX DELEGATES
<b>Birchwood Hotel &amp; OR Tambo Conference Centre</b>	Boksburg	Gauteng	3,000
<b>Emerald Resort and Casino</b>	Vanderbijlpark	Gauteng	3,000
<b>The Constitution Hill</b>	Johannesburg	Gauteng	2,400
<b>Premier Hotel ELICC</b>	East London	Eastern Cape	2,100
<b>East London Convention Centre ( ELICC)</b>	East London	Eastern Cape	2,100

*Excludes duplicate listings. Stadiums (Peter Mokaba, Moses Mabhida, Heartfelt Arena) host conferences as part of their broader event programmes.*

## 05 · The venue mix — SA's MICE market is hotel-led

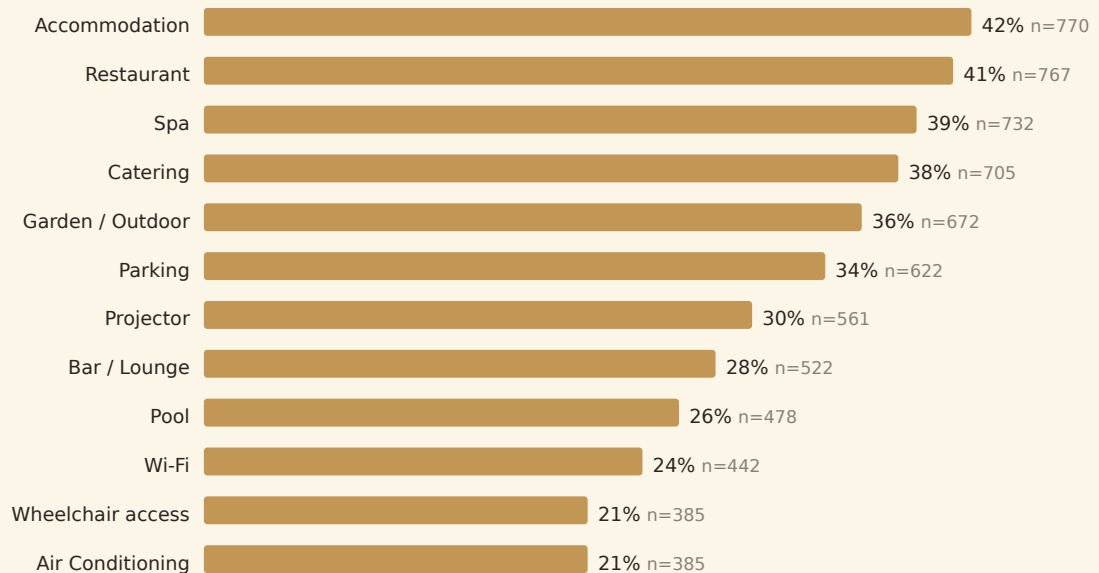
South Africa's conference industry is structurally **48% hotels**. Dedicated conference centres make up just **10%** of inventory. Lodges and guest-houses combined account for 32% — reflecting the strong overlap between SA's tourism economy and its meetings sector. Wine estates, country clubs and casinos round out the differentiated end of the market.



## 06 · The hybrid-event readiness gap

**Just 1% of South African conference venues advertise video-conferencing capability.** Wi-Fi appears as a stated amenity for only 24% of venues — a number that almost certainly understates real coverage (most venues have Wi-Fi but don't list it as a marketing amenity), but which is itself a finding: SA venues are not signalling hybrid-event readiness.

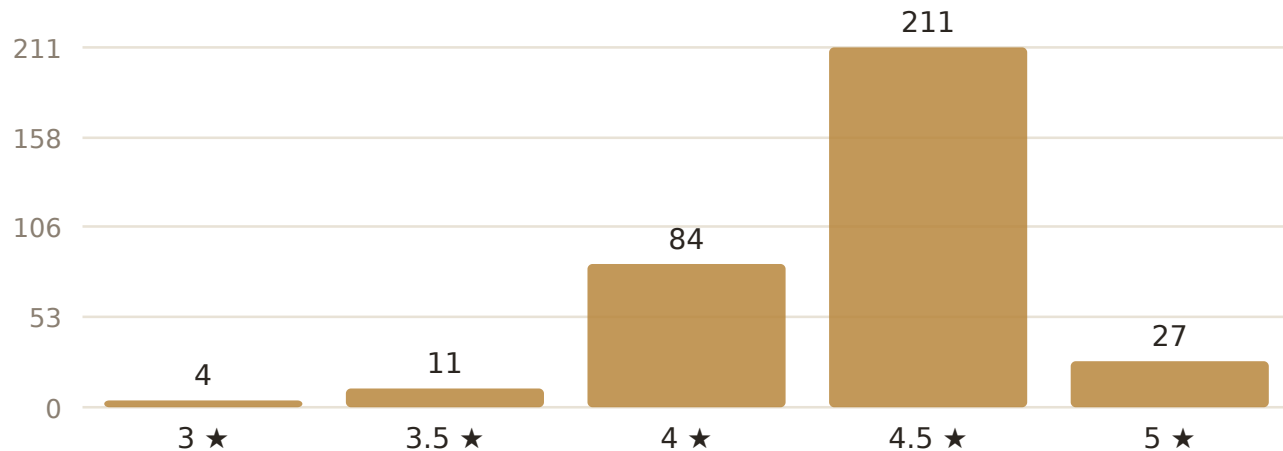
For corporate events that now default to a hybrid format — in-person delegates plus a remote stream — the inventory that meaningfully supports it is much smaller than the headline 1,800-venue total suggests. This is the single biggest gap between what the market offers and what post-pandemic event planners need.



*Amenity tags on venue listings. Includes only listings where the amenity has been explicitly verified or asserted by the venue or our enrichment pipeline.*

## 07 · Quality markers

Of the venues with verified Google Business ratings on file, the median is **4.4 stars**. 238 venues hold ratings of 4.5 stars or higher. Image coverage on the index sits at **84%** — nearly nine in ten listings include at least one venue photograph.



*Distribution of Google Business star ratings, grouped to nearest 0.5. Includes 337 venues with verified ratings on file.*

## 08 · Methodology

### What this report covers

"Conference venue" here means any commercial property with a stated function/conference room, dedicated meeting space, or working conference facility. The dataset includes hotels with conference rooms, dedicated convention centres, lodges and guest-houses with meeting capacity, wine estates with conferencing facilities, casinos with event spaces, country clubs, and university conference centres. It excludes pure-leisure hotels with no meeting space.

### How the data was collected

The 1,854-venue dataset combines (1) Conference Venues SA's manually curated listing of South African conference properties built since 2004, (2) Google Maps and Google Business Profile data for each listed property, refreshed via API, and (3) direct venue-supplied information collected through our listing-management workflow. Each listing is scoped to a single property; multi-site operators (Sun International, Tsogo Sun, Marriott, etc.) appear as separate listings per property.

### Known limitations

- **Capacity coverage** — 58% of listings have stated maximum capacity. Statistics in section 4 are based on this subset.
- **Amenity tagging** — the amenities reported in section 6 are based on explicit listing data. Real-world amenity availability is likely higher (most hotels have Wi-Fi but don't always advertise it as a meeting-room amenity).
- **Pricing data** — day-delegate package rates were not statistically reliable across the dataset and have been excluded from this edition. Forthcoming editions will add a venue-supplied pricing benchmark.
- **The Northern Cape inventory** may be undercounted relative to other provinces given the smaller commercial venue ecosystem in that province.

### Updates

This report is generated live from the Conference Venues SA database. The numbers above will reflect any inventory changes since publication. The next print edition is scheduled for

late 2026.

## How to cite

Conference Venues SA. (2026). *The State of South Africa's Conference Industry 2026*.

Conference Venues SA. <https://conferencevenues.co.za/reports/sa-conference-industry-2026/>

## 09 · About Conference Venues SA

Conference Venues SA ([conferencevenues.co.za](https://conferencevenues.co.za)) is South Africa's independent index of conference, meeting, function and event venues. Established in 2004, the site lists 1,854 active venues across all nine provinces and offers planners a free venue-finding service: tell us your brief, get a working short-list back — no commission, no markup.

For data inquiries, custom analysis, or media queries, contact [info@conferencevenues.co.za](mailto:info@conferencevenues.co.za).

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