

'Cull crime to save tourism'

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For every eight tourists in the Bay a job is created – and that must be protected.

Tabling his motion of exigency during a safety and security committee meeting on Thursday, DA councillor Gustav Rautenbach said tourism stakeholders in the metro had raised the issue of increased crime in the metro, saying that it was affecting the number of people visiting the city.

“Recently, on the premises of City Hall, we had three DA councillors who were robbed and two of those were victims of signal jamming.

“We also recently had two groups of tourists robbed at gunpoint at the Donkin Reserve and another pistol-whipped in New Brighton.

“Hearing these stories is heartbreaking, because when these things happen the

tourists take to social media and they say that Nelson Mandela Bay is not a safe place to visit,” Rautenbach said.

The councillor said crime had an impact on jobs because tourism had the ability to create thousands of jobs.

“If our own people are not safe, how will tourists be safe?

“The amount criminals cost the metro and cost the brand that is Nelson Mandela Bay is insurmountable,” he said.

Rautenbach questioned what the department’s tourism safety plan was.

DA councillor John Best revealed he was one of the councillors Rautenbach had referred to in the meeting.

Best said he was robbed at knifepoint by three men while coming out of a meeting in Govan Mbeki Avenue.

“We have to come up with a solution,” he said.

“Tourists create jobs and the fact that they are declining is

worrying and we need to come up with a strategy and appoint law enforcement officers and train people, even through the EPWP [expanded public works programme],” Best said.

Safety and security political head Queenie Pink said the crime issue needed to be tackled before tourists stopped coming to the metro.

ANC councillor Simphiwe Tyukana said his car’s alarm had been jammed twice.

“We live in very threatening times, especially as councillors.

“I get calls every day from people threatening me.

“I’m threatened by SMMEs demanding tenders, and at this moment I’m not even driving my own car because I don’t know what will happen.”

The committee resolved to come up with a crime-fighting strategy, but Pink said this should also involve the department of economic development, tourism and agriculture.