



18 October 2021

Collaboration in crisis leads to Collective action

Never waste a crisis they say. In May 2020 two restaurant leaders got together (Natasha Sideris of Tasha's and Grace Harding from Ocean Basket). Their aim was to pull together and start to tackle common challenges we face. Within a few weeks, many of the sit-down restaurant's brands joined forces to speak with one voice to government, landlords and the general public and to support all restaurant owners by providing free resources for implementing protocols to keep employees and customers safe.

Today that organisation is officially launched as a registered NPC to represent all sit-down restaurants and taverns in SA: The Restaurant Collective (TRC).

The surviving sit-down restaurants need a unified voice to get the industry back on its feet and build a vibrant sit-down restaurant industry for future entrepreneurs and employees alike.

Who is the sit-down industry and why do they need a voice?

The sit-down restaurant industry of South Africa comprises more than 30 000 restaurants and over 35 000 taverns and employs more than 600 000 people – quality food establishments that form the heart of SA's tourism sector.

The majority of these businesses are small entrepreneurial successes. The industry also supports a massive ecosystem of suppliers from small farmers, wholesalers and shopfitters to pest control, plumbers and electricians. Not to be overlooked is the value of these establishments to the mall environment and their contribution to the success of these venues.

Grace Harding (Chairman) explains: "The sit-down industry has fallen between the cracks yet plays a critical role in the hospitality sector and contributes to the sustainability of consumer goods. Improved standards, enhancing leadership and entrepreneurial skills as well as creating platforms to up-skill all crew – both front and back of house – will contribute to a higher quality guest experience and improved results for entrepreneurs.

"As a collective of people with common needs and dreams that contributes to more than one industry, we are keen to collaborate with all our associations, so that we can pull together our diverse skills and voices."



Who is TRC?

The TRC board is chaired by Ocean Basket CEO Grace Harding: "We wanted to put together a diverse board that included not only restaurant industry players, but also media and supplier representation. It is a great privilege to have the head of the liquor traders on the board, as Lucky Ntimane brings with him an in-depth understanding of the tavern industry. This will ensure that we understand the broader sit-down industry."

Ntimane adds: "As the National Liquor Traders we are excited to be partnering with The Restaurant Collective as we believe that it is through collaborative efforts that the lives and livelihoods of those that are dependent on the restaurant sector could be protected and preserved. The new normal which has been brought about by Covid 19 has meant that we do things differently and partners to bring about positive change not just for our country but also for our workers who are looking to us for leadership in this challenging environment we find ourselves in."

A cross-section of industry champions form the board:

- Colleen Francis, McCain Marketing and Category Executive
- Lucky Ntimane, National Liquor Traders - Convenor
- Andrew Mundell, Famous Brands Group Executive Business Development
- Tessa Purdon, Eat Out & Food24 Content Head
- Desmond Mabuza, Signature Restaurant Group founder and CEO
- Grace Harding, Ocean Basket CEO

Strategic direction is provided by Jean Sloane, Ocean Basket Group Strategic Head, and managed by Tracey Turner, whose background includes sponsorship, events management, and marketing.

The TRC will be focused on four key objectives:

- Create a healthy sit-down restaurant industry to ensure longevity
- Build a safe, enjoyable environment for customers
- Encourage entrepreneurship across the restaurant value chain.
- Contribute to our country and its economy



Get back to living

The Restaurant Collective is working with restaurant owners to make dining out as safe as possible and our launch project is to educate and assist restaurant owners on vaccinating their staff to make restaurants as safe as possible and get feet back through their doors.

We are inviting all sit-down restaurants and taverns to register on the website to take a short course (10 minutes) on COVID protocols and how to explain to employees that vaccinations are safe, dispel myths and encourage vaccine awareness and uptake.

Once the owner or manager has completed the course he or she will receive a certificate from TRC endorsed by **Discovery Health and the Department of Health** to display in-store so customers can see restaurants are safe places where they can get back to living... and help bring the restaurant industry back to life. All of this is offered to restaurant and tavern owners at no cost.

The campaign is supported by an outdoor and radio ad campaign, and we are grateful to the brands and businesses who have generously contributed to cover the costs.

The back to living campaign has been supported by:

- Jacaranda
- ECR
- Adreach
- Airport Ads
- Boo Media
- MMap
- Epic Outdoor
- JB Media
- Hot 1027

Restaurant owners can visit therestaurantcollective.co.za for a range of free resources and assistance.

For more information, contact Tracey Turner at tracey@therestaurantcollective.co.za or visit our website.