

PRESS RELEASE

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Sustainable Tourism in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve

The Government's decision to place restrictions on foreign licensed vehicles entering the Upper Rock Nature Reserve forms part of the sustainable tourism initiatives that have recently been undertaken in the area. It is not a radical policy shift but part of the holistic way in which the future of the Upper Rock is being considered, in keeping with the policies of this Government.

It is no secret that Gibraltar's tourist product is undergoing a major re-brand: it is proving very successful and is something that we can all be proud of. Our existing attractions have been sensitively improved and the new rope suspension bridge and Skywalk are also set to become primary tourist attractions in the Upper Rock. As such, the Government is dealing with a number of logistical challenges that are created by traffic on narrow roads, including crowd control and access for emergency service vehicles.

Tighter regulations on how tourists can enter the Upper Rock will result in an improvement in the overall tourist experience and how we are able to manage it. Less congestion and a significant reduction in emissions will create a better experience for visitors to the Upper Rock, whilst restricting access also gives us greater control over how visitors are able to move around the nature reserve and access major attractions. This will be increasingly important as tourist numbers are expected to reach record levels this year with significant increases in cruise calls and passenger flights.

Minister for Tourism, the Hon Samantha Sacramento MP, said: 'The Government has made this decision as part of our wider policy of environmentally sustainable tourism in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve. The Upper Rock is not just a product that is for sale that can be exploited without thinking of the long-term impacts that this might have. We also have to think about the type of tourist product that we want to offer, and the natural environment is an extremely important, attractive part of it.

Neither tourists nor locals visiting the Upper Rock want to encounter congestion, pollution and disorganised crowds. The projected increase in tourist numbers for this year mean that the Government has had to do a lot of strategic forward-planning to meet the new logistical challenges brought by this. The result of this holistic policy will be a markedly improved Upper Rock experience for everyone to enjoy for years to come'.