

# Money Woes for Durban's Marine Theme Park

By  
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The escalating financial predicament that uShaka Marine World in Durban finds itself in, is putting its attractions at risk. A new turnaround strategy is necessary.

uShaka Marine World is a six-hectare theme park which opened in April 2004. It says the COVID-19 lockdown regulations and inability to trade severely impacted its cashflow. It has asked the eThekweni Municipality for a R66,9 million bailout.

Although uShaka Marine World reopened in October trading has been slow.

City councillors have refuted uShaka's claims that its troubles are due to the lockdown. While acknowledging this as part of the problem, they say that there has been declining traffic for the past two years. This is attributed to the struggling economy and constrained domestic tourism.

According to the 2018/19 annual report, a social impact assessment conducted in January 2019 showed that the park has contributed R544 million to the KZN economy. It also contributed R543.8 million to the eThekweni Municipality.

### Proper turnaround plan

uShaka Marine World has been advised to approach the City of Durban with a proper turnaround plan.

eThekweni Municipality has approved a R15 million grant for capital projects. It has also agreed that R6.9 million can be reallocated from its partner company, the South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR).

SAAMBR ensures the theme park's Sea World aquarium is adequately stocked and that the dolphin and seal shows and penguin feeds are conservation orientated, educational and entertaining.

eThekweni Municipality also agreed to suspend the utility payments of about R23 million.

- *Last year it was agreed that uShaka Marine World would be upgraded and developed to international standard.*
- *An amount of R16-million was set aside for the project.*

### Durban's uShaka Pier Extension Plans Questioned

