

# Entries open for MDDA-Sanlam Local Media Awards

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The MDDA-Sanlam Local Media Awards for 2014 are now open for entry and will close on 30 January 2015.



The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) and Sanlam, co-sponsors and organisers of the Awards for the past four years, have also announced the introduction of new categories in the print section of the competition. This reaffirms the commitment of Sanlam and the MDDA to continue growing the awards following the additional categories that were introduced in the broadcast section last year.

The new categories are in the writing and newspapers sub-sections and they are specifically for grassroots community newspapers. The new categories are: Hard News; Human Interest; and Sport. Journalists working in grassroots community newspapers will be eligible to also compete with their peers for the other categories in the writing section.

Another new category, Best Indigenous Language Newspaper, has also been introduced in the newspapers sub-section.

The new categories are in response to the print judges' concerns about the vast differences between entries received from well-resourced community publications and the grassroots community newspapers which have limited resources and are usually funded and run by small enterprises. The judges also indicated a need to encourage more entries from newspapers published in indigenous languages.

Says Sanlam Group's Head of Communications, Mr Ainsley Moos: "In their report, the print judging panel pointed out a few matters to which we have responded. Primary among these was the issue of fair competition in the writing section where journalists working for corporate owned and other well-resourced newspapers tended to have advantage over journalists working for smaller newspapers supported by small businesses and the community.

"We have also introduced the Best Indigenous Language Newspaper category in recognition of the growing number of indigenous language publications in the country. We believe this will address the judges' concerns about poor participation in the competition by these publications," added Moos.

Encouraging journalists to participate, acting CEO of the MDDA, Mr Mshiyeni Gungqisa, said: "We are excited about the upcoming competition and anticipate that entries will continue to grow. These are the only awards in the country that specifically recognise community media work and we call on all media in the sector to participate in their numbers."

There are over 200 community newspapers, about 130 community radio stations and seven licenced community television stations. These are all eligible to enter the MDDA-Sanlam Local Media Awards.

It will be the fifth year that the joint MDDA-Sanlam Local Media Awards are presented. The Awards celebrate and promote excellence in local/community media, bringing more than 20 years of Sanlam Community Newspaper Awards and four years of SABC News/MDDA Community Media Awards into one big event.

The Awards are held in partnership with Print and Digital Media South Africa; Association of Independent Publishers; Forum of Community Journalists; National Association of Broadcasters; National Community Radio Forum and the Association of Christian Media.

"We have enjoyed a mutually beneficial and fruitful partnership with our stakeholders and value their participation in supporting us to organise these awards and assist us with communicating to all the potential participants. We look forward to working with them again this year," Gungqisa concluded.

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