

Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards 2021 announces Western Cape regional winners

The quality of entries at this year's Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards (VJOY) has instilled "confidence in the future of journalism in South Africa" and has set a new benchmark for excellence in South African journalism. This was the unanimous agreement by the competition's judging panel at the announcement of the regional winners of the 2021 Vodacom Journalist of the Year (VJOY) awards for the Western Cape.



The virtual awards announcement was the culmination of a judging process which reviewed more than 1,300 entries received nationally across 12 categories. This year's theme for the Awards is "Resilience". Despite many challenges, and sometimes at significant personal cost, South African journalists across the country have persevered to bring high-quality journalism to the public through various mediums.

Takalani Netshitenzhe, Vodacom South Africa chief officer for External Affairs says: "For two decades, the Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards have recognised many of the leading lights of South African journalism, those who have contributed to upholding democracy and protecting the right of freedom of expression, so vitally important in our society. The VJOYs give us an opportunity to reflect on the news headlines of the past year and applaud the stellar work produced by our country's media. This competition celebrates the profession and its integral part in our daily lives. I would also like to extend my personal congratulations to all regional award winners and my heartfelt thanks to our hardworking panel of judges who make the VJOYs possible."

This year's VJOY judging panel consists of convener Ryland Fisher and judges Jermaine Craig, Arthur Goldstuck, Patricia McCracken, Mapi Mhlangu, Gilbert Motsaathebe, Collin Nxumalo, Jovial Rantao, Robin Sewlal, Phindile Xaba and Obed Zilwa.

Convener of the judging panel, Ryland Fisher says: "The Vodacom Journalist of the Year awards have once again produced an excellent selection of entries, which give the judges confidence in the future of journalism and the media industry in South Africa. Our journalists have displayed resilience and continue to produce work that belies the upheavals that the industry experienced in the past two years. The judges had a difficult time to decide on winners at a regional and national level, because of the high quality, which is always a good problem to have. Congratulations to all the regional winners and good luck with the nationals."

The regional winners, who each won R5,000 are as follows:

- Investigative – *Daily Maverick*, Pieter-Louis Myburgh
- Opinion – *Sunday Times Daily*, Tanya Farber

- Features – *Sunday Times Daily*, Aron Hyman
- Lifestyle – eNCA, Tanya Nefdt, Mario Pedro, Crescendo Louw and Asanda Javu
- Sport – eNCA, Justin Ford
- Financial and Economics - AmaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism, Susan Comrie and Sam Sole
- Politics - *Daily Maverick*, Rebecca Davis
- Sustainability – Joint regional winners from *Daily Maverick*, Steve Kretzmann, Nompumelelo Mtsweni, Peter Luhanga and Nombulelo Damba-Hendrik; and from Fin24, Lameez Omarjee
- Live reporting/ breaking news - Newzroom Afrika, Athi Mtongane and Nduduzo Shandu
- Young Journalist of the Year Award - *Daily Maverick*, Suné Payne
- Photography – *Sunday Times*, Esa Alexander
- Innovation in journalism – *Daily Maverick*, Pieter-Louis Myburgh and Rudi Louw

The regional award-winning journalists will compete for national honours against their peers in other provinces at the national awards ceremony on Thursday, 25 November 2021.

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