

Entries to Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards open

Entries for the Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards (VJOY) have opened, with a new convener at the helm of the judging panel.



After five years as convener of the judging panel, Ryland Fisher has stepped down and Mapi Mhlangu, eNCA's former managing director and editor-in-chief, has ably stepped in to fill his shoes.

Mhlangu is credited with expanding eNCA's leadership position despite the arrival of two competing news channels during her time at the helm. She holds an MBA from Henley Business School and is a Bloomberg Ali media fellow and Duke University Menell Media Fellow. Now the managing director of her own agency, Mhlangu brings her newsroom experience as well as her academic studies to lead the judging panel.

What to expect

The national awards ceremony will adopt a hybrid approach. The 2022 theme is 'Storytellers': Journalists act as watchdogs in our society, seeking to report the stories of our time and holding power to account. The VJOYs pay tribute to these remarkable men and women.

Takalani Netshitenzhe, chief officer for External Affairs at Vodacom South Africa, says, "Judging the Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards is no easy task; it requires a significant time commitment and many years of media experience. On

behalf of Vodacom, I would like to thank Ryland for his extraordinary efforts in expertly guiding our judging panels over the years.”



2021 Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards winners announced

26 Nov 2021



“We are proud of our esteemed panel of VJOY judges, who themselves have earned many accolades as seasoned media professionals. We extend a warm welcome to our new convener Mapi, who we know will do an excellent job in taking the competition to even greater heights,” Netshitenzhe continues.

Mhlangu says, “Journalism remains an important component of our democracy. Now more than ever, we need to recognise and acknowledge those who advance the values of our nation and act as a check on institutions of power.”

The judges and awards

The VJOY team would like to pay tribute to 2021 judge Phindile Xaba, former *Sowetan Women* editor, who tragically passed away earlier this year. Xaba left an indelible impression on her VJOY colleagues and friends – may her beautiful soul rest in peace.

In 2022, veteran journalist and academic Elna Rossouw returns as a judge, joining peers Jermaine Craig, Arthur Goldstuck, Ryland Fisher, Professor Gilbert Motsaathebe, Patricia McCracken, Collin Nxumalo, Jovial Rantao, Advocate Robin Sewlal and Obed Zilwa. The collective media experience of the judging panel exceeds 300 years and all of South Africa’s official languages are represented by the judges.



Sanef mourns death of Phindile Xaba, the journalist's journalist

9 May 2022



Awards are given across 12 categories: Live reporting and breaking news; Investigative; Opinion; Lifestyle; Features; Photography; Sport; Financial and Economics; Politics; Sustainability, Innovation in Journalism and the Young Journalist of the Year Award. The VJOYs also give a Lifetime Achiever Award each year. Each of the five regions has finalists selected, who then compete at the national finals.

Journalists must enter their best work produced between 1 August 2021 and 31 July 2022. Entries must be submitted [here](#) between 16 August and midnight on 1 September 2022. No late entries will be accepted.

The winner of the Young Journalist award wins an all-expenses paid overseas trip to work in an international newsroom. Regional category winners receive R5,000, national category winners take home R10,000. The overall Vodacom Journalist of the Year winner receives R100,000. Should there be joint winners, the prize money is shared.

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