

Judging complete for Frewin McCall and Joel Mervis competitions

The independent judging panel has completed its review of the entries into this year's Frewin McCall and Joel Mervis competitions and the judges say they have been suitably impressed, adding that this is a positive year for newspapers.



Convenor judge, Clive Loxton, says, "It is pleasing to note that standards are not dropping. This is especially so in light of the considerable challenges the newspaper industry faces."

The Frewin competition, which has been in existence for 66 years, recognises urban daily newspapers, with a circulation above 50,000, that excel in the criteria laid down by the industry.

In existence for the past 54 years, the McCall competition recognises urban daily newspapers, with a circulation of 50,000 or less, that excel in the criteria laid down by the industry.

Together with Loxton, Tebogo Serobotse, Linda Rademan and Logan Naidu make up the judging panel, which is not affiliated to the newspaper industry in any way and has been part of the judging panel for many years. The advantage this gives them, explains Loxton, is that it enables them to note continuity as well as innovation.

Afrikaans newspapers show craftsmanship

Afrikaans newspapers, in particular, are reflecting an old-fashioned craftsmanship that is creating excellence in these papers. For example, *Rapport* had a makeover two years ago and, while it missed winning by a hair back then, now we are now seeing that style mature and it has made the paper visually exciting.

Exciting is what they are looking for, says Rademan, who judges photography and graphics, and in this regard she has been pleased with how pictures have been presented. "For example the cropping is good. It is also nice to see some papers still presenting lovely big pictures."

"Picture quality has also stood out," says Loxton, who judges layout and typography, "Despite, compared to previous years, this year's Sports pictures were less dramatic and bold."

As many newspapers move more and more into the digital space, the number of entries dropped off a bit this year. The judges say it is a pity that some newspapers did not enter this year

Newspapers of the future

Regardless of this, Loxton says this is a year to be positive. "This year's entries have provided us with some wonderful innovations, many of which are pointing the direction of newspapers in the future."

He adds that it is now, in a time when there are so many negatives working against the newspaper industry, from technology to the economy, that newspapers need to deliver daring and great work. This makes Awards even more important.

"Awards provide a quest for excellence, to be recognised as the best. It is important for young craftsmen because it will inspire them, it will give them the courage to do a better job and that is a direct spin off on the bottom line of any business."

Rademan adds that the formal evaluation that goes with an Award is what makes it so valuable.

The winners will be announced at the Standard Bank SikuVile Journalism Awards that is scheduled to take place on 24 June 2015.

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