

# The AVBOB FCJ Excellence Awards – 2023

Presented by the Forum of Community Journalists NPC



## ABOUT THE COMPETITION

The AVBOB FCJ Annual Excellence Awards is aimed at encouraging excellence and rewarding meritorious work in local and community print media. Only permanent and regular freelance editorial staff members working for such media in South Africa may enter. Regular freelance means such a person must contribute to your publication at least once a month on average. The awards ceremony will be held on 2 August 2024 in Johannesburg.

## CALL FOR ENTRIES

Read through the instructions for entering carefully. Entrants not adhering to the instructions/rules will be disqualified.

1. The competition covers the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.
2. The **closing date** for entries (in all the categories) is **Friday, 26 April 2024 at 23:59**.
3. For enquiries about entries, contact the judges' convenor, Mr André Gouws, at [andreg@akademia.ac.za](mailto:andreg@akademia.ac.za) or, alternatively, the FCJ Executive Director, Ben Burger, at [myfcjinfo@gmail.com](mailto:myfcjinfo@gmail.com).
4. **Entrants will receive electronic confirmation when entries are submitted through Google Forms.** If entrants do not receive a confirmation within 24 hours, the onus rests on the entrant to follow up with André Gouws. No late entries will be accepted.
5. The decision of the judges will be final, and no correspondence will be entered into. The judges reserve the right to make no award if insufficient entries are received or if they feel that none of the entries in a particular category are sufficiently meritorious.
6. Please see **How to enter below**, and each entry form for specific instructions on how to enter per category. **It is of utmost importance to read the instructions carefully and follow them.**

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## HOW TO ENTER

- All entries should be electronic, in **PDF format only (except in the photography categories, as explained on the photography entry form)**. Entries that are not in the correct format will be disqualified.
- In the writing category all articles that you wish to enter (per category) should be in **ONE PDF document** only.
- Read the entry forms for instructions about each category carefully and follow the specific **naming conventions** for your PDF entries. The entry form for each category should be added to the top of your PDF, as the first page. To combine PDFs, use Adobe Acrobat or any free program, such as the free version of [Adobe Acrobat](#) or [Open PDF](#). The simplest way to create a combined PDF with all your entries and the entry form at the top, is to create a Word document. Paste your entries into the Word Document, as well as the entry form, and save the document as PDF.
- Make sure that the text in your articles is clear and readable, otherwise adjudicators will not be able to judge your entry.
- If you submit full pages with many stories, clearly indicate on the page which story you are entering. Judges are not able to guess which story to judge if there are three stories on a page.
- When your entry is ready, create a Google Drive folder in your personal Google Drive, named according to the naming convention as explained on the entry form for each category. Upload the PDF to the Google Drive folder. Change the sharing settings for your folder to “Anyone with link” and “Viewer”. **Complete the Google Form (link below and on the entry form) to finalise your submission.**
- The Google Form is [available here](#).
- Please [watch the video](#) here that explains the entry process in more details.

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## WRITING CATEGORIES

There are 8 writing categories that give recognition to excellence in journalistic writing at community newspapers. Please make sure that you enter in the correct category.

Follow the instructions on the entry form.

- **Please take not of the number of articles to submit in each category.** It is not possible for adjudicators to judge your work based on just one or two articles.

### Alet Roux Award

Journalists (who are permanently employed) with fewer than three years' experience who enter any category will automatically be considered for the Alet Roux Award, for best newcomer. The directors have taken the decision that in future, a journalist can win the Alet Roux Trophy only once. **If you would like to qualify for the Alet Roux Award, it is essential that you indicate your years of experience on the entry form and in the Google Form.**

### Journalist of the year

The winner of this prestigious award will be selected by judges from the pool of entries in the various writing categories. Journalists are thus encouraged to enter as many categories as possible to showcase diversity.

### Categories

#### 1. Investigative reporting

Enter a maximum of 10 and a minimum of 5 articles, **including** follow-ups.

#### 2. Headlines

Enter 5 headlines, with the accompanying articles. The impact and creativeness of the headlines and relevance to the articles will be judged – not the article content.

#### 3. Hard news

Enter 10 articles in total, **including** follow-up articles.

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## 4. Human interest

Enter 5 articles.

## 5. Editorial comment and columns

(This is now one category.)

Enter 5 articles. These can be a combination of editorial comment and columns, or only editorial comment or only columns.

## 6. Sport

Enter 5 articles.

## 7. Digital reporting

Enter 5 digital stories.

## 8. Vernacular language

Enter 5 articles in any South African vernacular language. The articles must be by the same journalist in the same vernacular language.

## PHOTOGRAPHY CATEGORY

In all photography categories entries will be judged as a portfolio. **Submit 6 photos in EACH category that you would like to enter.**

**Follow the instructions on the entry form.**

### Photographer of the year

The winner of this prestigious award will be selected by judges from the pool of entries in the various writing categories. Photographers are thus encouraged to enter as many categories as possible to showcase diversity.

### Upcoming photographer of the year

Photographers (who are permanently employed) with fewer than three years' experience who enter any photography category will automatically be considered for this award. The directors have taken the decision that in future, a photographer/journalist can win this category only once. **If you would like to qualify for the award, it is essential that you indicate your years of experience on the entry form and in on the Google Form.**

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## **FRONT PAGE CATEGORY**

From this year, there will be only one front page category. All entrants will compete in one pool for an overall winner as the community newspaper with the best front page in South Africa. This adds to the prestige value of the award. Enter three front pages that showcase your work throughout the year.

Follow the instructions on the entry form.

## **BACK PAGE CATEGORY**

This is a new category. There will be only one back page category. All entrants will compete in one pool for an overall winner as the community newspaper with the best back page in South Africa. This adds to the prestige value of the award. Enter three back pages that showcase your work throughout the year.

Follow the instructions on the entry form.

## **CATEGORY: NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR**

This category has been simplified. Starting from this year, all sold community newspapers (regardless of pagination and ABC figures) will compete in one pool for an overall winner as the best sold community newspaper in South Africa. This adds to the prestige value of the award. Enter three full newspapers that showcase your work throughout the year.

Likewise, all free community newspapers (regardless of pagination) will compete in one pool for an overall winner as the best free community newspaper in South Africa. This adds to the prestige value of the award. Enter three full newspapers that showcase your work throughout the year.

Follow the instructions on the entry form.