

Government to support community media through advertising

Communications Deputy Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams said it is important for government to support community media in order to ensure that they are able to sustain themselves.



Image via [123RF](#)

Interacting with journalism students from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology on Tuesday, ahead of her department's Budget Vote in Parliament, the Deputy Minister said as the debate on media transformation continued, it was crucial for community radio, TV and newspapers to get support from local government

"Through the assessments that we did, we realised that there is a need to create a sustainable programme in terms of community media because what we would do previously is give people licences - those that want broadcast community radio and TV.

"But we realised that as much as we license people, capital remains a problem because for any initiative to thrive in terms of that space, you have got to get people who will be there to do adverts, amongst other things, in order to sustain the media outlet," she said.

The Deputy Minister said this as her department, which subsidises community media through the Media Diversity and Development Agency, recently announced that in order to offer support, it was looking at setting aside 30% of its advertising to the sector.

Government would mobilise local municipalities to also re-channel most of their advertising that related to local communities to be advertised in community media opposed to having such published in national media.

Answering questions from students, the Minister said it was important to ensure that content that is posted on-line is appropriate and secure enough for consumption. She said content that is X-rated should come with a warning to the user.

This would go a long way in ensuring that there is adequate regulation of the cyber space.

In March this year, the Film and Publications Board (FSB), which falls under her portfolio, announced the publication of the draft Online Regulatory Policy for public comment.

The policy was developed following concerns that the current legislation is not platform specific, and the FPB's compliance and classification activities have over the years focused more on physical platforms and less on the online space, resulting in children being exposed to unclassified content accessed through the internet and other mobile platforms.

"This was done to ensure that there must be options that are provided for future classification, labelling and on-line content standards.

"If you notice right now, you can go and search anything - it does not matter if you are six or eight years old, or 20 or 50.

"Our parents are not even aware about this cyber space and they are not able to warn us about cyber security, cyber bullying and so on. They only buy these cellular phones for us, they don't even monitor the content that we have access to.

"As government, as we say we will be rolling out broadband to everybody, we have a responsibility to ensure that the content that is there - we warn you through the Films and Publications Board," she said.

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