

EDTEA withdraws from 2023 SA Music Awards

The Recording Industry of South Africa (RiSA), the organiser of the SA Music Awards (SAMA) learnt with disappointment this morning of the eleventh hour decision by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) in KwaZulu-Natal to withdraw from SAMA29.



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Statement from RiSA on SAMA29...

"We have a three year contract with EDTEA and will be consulting with our contractual partners, to find out what led to this decision and carve a way forward. As such, we will advise in due course what the next steps for SAMA29 will be.

The SAMA remains the largest, most prestigious, inclusive and representative music awards event in the South African music landscape. We continue to attract considerable attention and support as well as market-leading viewership among televised music awards shows across the continent.

We note with dismay that a prestigious, credible and apolitical national cultural asset that has been in operation for 29

uninterrupted years, longer than any other award ceremony in South Africa and the continent, has been characterised as a conduit for looting. This is an assertion that we as RiSA strongly rebuke. It is problematic that an institution of great importance to the pulse of our cultural economy has been violated for cheap politicking.

What has been lost in all of the resultant noise are the economic benefits of hosting a show of this magnitude for any city or province. The SAMA is not a superfluous party, any such assertion flies in the face of the contribution made by the SAMA to the Mzansi Golden Economy. It stood to benefit the creative sector as well as to ignite a number of other economies including tourism, hospitality, retail, transportation and the informal sector.

The SAMA was going to directly create over 150 new job opportunities and over 100 musicians and practitioners would have performed across the SAMA29 programme which included the nominees announcement, regional and national activations, public viewing area, non-broadcast awards as well as the live broadcast show. Further to these events, affiliate partnerships with outlets across the province were being concluded to stage pre-parties that would have created the opportunity for at least a further 20 local and SAMA nominated artists to perform.



All the SAMA29 nominees

5 Oct 2023



As it stands, the SAMA alone was in the process of confirming up to 350 rooms per night across various hotel groups between 12 and 20 November 2023. These hotel groups would have further benefitted from providing accommodation to the estimated 3500 to 4000 South African music supporters business who would have visited the province from across the country, the continent and the world.

Many numbers had been bandied about as the alleged sponsorship amount from EDTEA and we wish to categorically state that none of them were a true investment made by the department. In addition to a provincial sponsorship which was not sufficient to cover all the production, eventing and promotional needs, the SAMA still had to solicit and rely on the generosity of commercial sponsors in organising this proudly South African annual event.

Contrary to spurious allegations, our conversation with the City of eThekweni had been on infrastructure and logistics support and did not include any financial contribution.

We are thankful for the support shown by the government of KZN to our industry that was hardest hit by the devastating Covid-19 pandemic and other calamities such as floods, as well as a tough economic environment our practitioners find themselves in. Unfortunately, the net losers in the sudden turn of events are the musicians and creatives who oftentimes receive the short end of the stick.

RiSA remains committed to the cause of musicians and putting them first. We look forward to celebrating these gallant South African heroes of song and dance at an event that befits their stature.

The music industry continues to prove its tenacity and resilience and will recover from this setback. We are proud of our musicians who are making strides on international stages as cultural ambassadors exporting our unique and vibrant craft.

Further information will be shared on the future of SAMA29. We are thankful to our partners and sponsors who continue to put their vote of confidence in the arts."

Nhlanhla Sibisi, CEO of RiSA

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