

# Media24 comes before Competition Tribunal

Media24 is expected to appear before the Competition Tribunal in Pretoria today for allegedly pushing a competitor out of the community advertising market on purpose.



The case against Media24, which was brought to the tribunal by the Competition Commission, surrounds the demise of competitor Gold-Net News, which operated between 2004 and 2009.

Media24 allegedly positioned a competing community newspaper, Goudveld Forum, in opposition to Gold-Net News and ran the newspaper at a loss until Gold-Net News's closure.

The commission alleged that after the closure, Media24 closed down Goudveld Forum and either retrenched its staff or redeployed them to other Media24 publications.

One of those publications was Vista, which operated in the same geographic area as Gold-Net News and Goudveld Forum.

Media24 has denied the commission's allegations and said Goudveld Forum covered its costs between 2004 and 2009.

The company also said it was not true that Goudveld Forum was kept open so it could deter competition against Vista.

Media24 also denied that Gold-Net News closed down due to anti-competitive strategies on its part, citing the 2008 economic downturn and other possible reasons for Gold-Net News's decline and subsequent closure.

The area of operations in which the complaint arose is what the commission terms the Goldfields area.

The Goldfields area consists of the towns of Welkom, Odendaalsrus, Allanridge, Riebeeckstad, Virginia, Hennenman, Bronville, Jerusalem, Wesselsbron, Bultfontein, Theunissen, Ventersburg, Thabong, Meloding, Kutlwanong, and Phomolong.

The tribunal's hearing is expected to take place over 10 days in November, starting today, 6 November and ending on 29 November.

The case against Media24 is the first of its kind brought by the commission to the Competition Tribunal in its 14-year history.

Source: Sapa, via I-Net Bridge

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