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Registration: 2005/039586/08

**24 January 2025**

**To Whom It May Concern,**

I am pleased to extend the Association of Independent Publishers' (AIP) full support for the continuation of the **Community Media Digitisation Drive** under the leadership of MeD8 Media. This initiative has been instrumental in equipping independent publishers, all of whom are AIP members, with the tools and skills necessary to remain relevant and impactful in an increasingly digital world. By aligning with AIP's mission to empower independent media, the digitisation drive has played a vital role in sustaining and strengthening these publishers.

South Africa's growing issue of news deserts—areas lacking access to reliable local news—poses a serious threat to the constitutional right to access credible information. The continuation of this initiative ensures that local journalism remains accessible to communities, directly supporting the democratic principle of an informed citizenry. Christopher Mcinga, an active AIP member and a vital contributor to our Sustainability Subcommittee, has been instrumental in leading this initiative. His extensive knowledge of the challenges facing independent publishers, enhanced by his participation in a study trip to Ohio University, has significantly benefited the publishers involved in the digitisation drive.

AIP believes that the continuation of this initiative under MeD8 Media represents a strong commitment to addressing the challenges faced by South Africa's independent media sector. We are confident in MeD8 Media's ability to deliver meaningful outcomes and remain dedicated to supporting their efforts as they work to preserve and advance the role of local journalism in our democracy.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Kate Skinner**  
Executive Director  
Association of Independent Publishers (AIP)

**AIP Directors:**

A Mangxaba, E. Phiri, D Ntsanwisi, S Mboleka, T Mjiba, S Khanyile, J Makgate, M Dlakude, P Luhanga  
K Skinner (Executive Director)



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