

Top Women Awards single out business' rising stars

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The rising stars of business excellence stepped up to the stage on Wednesday night to collect their awards at the [9th annual Top Women Awards](#). The Awards shine the spotlight on this year's top businesswomen and companies at the forefront of gender empowerment.

The prestigious annual event [attracted a virtual who's who of the South African business world](#), who braved the cold snap to arrive at Emperor's Palace for the glittering event.

This year top government leaders were also out in full force to support the initiative, and the red carpet was full of names like Home Affairs Minister and incoming chairperson of the African Union Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma; South Africa's first female National Police Commissioner Riah Phiyega, the Minister of DIRCO; Deputy Ministers from Energy, Economic Development and Women, Children and People with Disabilities, as well as MECs from various portfolios in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the North West.

Top Women Publisher Karla Fletcher said the huge showing by government really reflects the country's commitment to women. South Africa is a world leader when it comes to women in government - SA is on track for the SADC's protocol on gender development - aiming for 50% women in political decision-making by 2015.

Fletcher also praised the companies on the night, saying they stand out as real leaders in their sectors that are transforming the South African business environment.

"Take a firm like KPMG which scooped two of our Awards. The judges found that the company's gender empowerment strategies were integrated into all its policies. It openly recognises and values the role of all its female employees with 54% of its staff being women; 55% at management level; and 33% are policy board members."

KPMG won the Top Gender Empowered Company (Financial Sector) as well the overall Top Gender Empowered Company of the Year.

Another big winner on the night was Standard Bank with its Head of Home Loans Funeka Ntombela winning the *Top Woman Executive* and *Top Businesswoman of the Year* awards.

Entries were received from outstanding candidates including Engen Petroleum, Exxaro Resources, Kumba Iron Ore, Women of Africa Fuels & Oils, KPMG, Netcare Limited, IBM South Africa, among many more.

An esteemed judging panel included top South African businesswomen Basetsana Kumalo, Leigh Gunkel-Keuler Director at Pfizer South Africa, Stewart van Graan GM: Dell Southern and Central Africa, Christine Ramon Chief Financial Officer and Executive Director of Sasol Limited and Dolly Mokgatle Executive Director of Peotona Group Holdings. The judges assessed entrants across a number of categories that were formulated to reflect the growing influence of women in all sectors of business and government.

The categories at this year's event were sponsored by some of the country's most respected organisations including DIRCO, Standard Bank, the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) and Anglo American Platinum.

The evening was brought to an end with the incoming chairperson of the African Union Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma accepting the Lifetime Achievement Award. Fletcher used the event to launch this year's 'bible of top women', the annual *Top Women* magazine.

To view the full list of winners, [please follow this link](#). For all media queries and images contact Carla Fourie on carla.fourie@topco.co.za.

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