

How to design a kick-butt media self-regulation system

By [Guy Berger](#)

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Self-regulation by the press and access to our courts by complainants need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, annulling the so-called "waiver" for complainants who approach the Press Council will strengthen public perception that it really is a body intent on ensuring the highest ethical standards in journalism in South Africa.

Joe Thlooe, the Press Council's venerable ombudsman, often points out that reforming the self-regulatory structure is not about appeasing the ANC.

He's entirely right - we need to deal with the merits of ANC criticisms separately from any underlying political agendas.



Redressing internal weaknesses will undercut much of the external criticism. But sustainable self-regulation in the longer-term also depends on the system actually improving journalists' adherence to ethics - and, through that, a strengthened press service to society.

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