

New Mr Gay World crowned in SA | IOL

Cape Times / 4 May 2015, 06:32am

francesca.villette

THE world has a brand-new ambassador to champion gay rights.

Twenty-one-year-old Klaus Burkart, from Germany, was crowned Mr Gay World (MGW) 2015 in front of a sold-out crowd at the Knysna Mall Exhibition Centre on Saturday. He succeeds MGW 2014 Stuart Hatton, from the UK.



MAN OF THE MOMENT: Mr Germany Klaus Burkart, 21, is the winner of Mr Gay World 2015. The event was hosted in Knysna.

Having beaten 20 other finalists for the title, Burkart – a milk technician by profession – will embrace the world stage as an ambassador of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. Emmanuel Luciano, 35, from Hong Kong, finished in second place and Tomi Lappi, 24, from Finland, came third.

Burkart said in his profile on the official MGW website that he wanted to be a role model for young gay men around the world.

“(I want to) help them with their coming out (declaring that they are gay) and also change young people’s opinion of homosexuality. With my very own experience, I can say that coming out is one of the most sensitive parts in the life of young gay people.

“I would like to lead the world to a point where it is not essential to even have a ‘coming out’,” Burkart said.

Coenie Kukkuk, managing director of MGW in the Africa and Middle East region, said the 21 finalists were evaluated on, among other things, their appearance, grooming, intellect and history knowledge.

The contestants also participated in art, sporting and public speaking challenges.

Craig Maggs, 25, from Johannesburg, and Siyathokoza Khumalo, 28, from Zambia, were the only two representatives from the African continent. Both ended in the top 10 of the competition.

Maggs came second in the sporting challenge and Khumalo won first place in the arts challenge.

Chairman of the MGW board Dieter Sapper said the event was not a beauty pageant and there was no age limit.

“As long as the person has the ability to represent the gay community and be a positive role model, then they are free to enter,” Sapper said.

The oldest person to participate, in 2009, was 54.

Last month Mr Gay India, whose name was withheld for his own safety, was forced to withdraw from the competition due to threats against him and his family. He was a part-time model and fashion post-graduate who faced ostracism from his community in India.

Kukkuk said:

“It is unfortunate that LGBT rights are not accepted everywhere.

“In 2012, we had the same situation with Zimbabwe, when he (the participant) had to withdraw due to threats against his family.”

francesca.villette@inl.co.za