

Media Release

23 December 2015

BSA finds *Dog Squad* breached woman's privacy

The Broadcasting Standards Authority has upheld a complaint made by a woman shown on TV ONE's *Dog Squad* attempting to smuggle tobacco to her partner in prison.

The episode showed dog handlers with the Department of Corrections searching visitors to a prison. It showed two occasions of the complainant being searched; firstly, her bag was searched when she was driving onto prison premises, and secondly, a sniffer dog identified that she was carrying contraband (tobacco) inside the prison and she was shown surrendering this to Corrections staff. In both instances her face was blurred.

The Authority considered that the complainant was identifiable, despite her face being blurred, by her clothing, body type and voice, and possibly other details. It found that the broadcast revealed private facts about her, including that she was taking prescription drugs and that her partner was in prison, and that the disclosure of these facts would be considered highly offensive to an objective reasonable person.

In response to TVNZ's submission that the footage carried 'direct public interest' because it showed the consequences of smuggling contraband into prisons, the Authority said, 'TVNZ could have communicated these public interest messages without disclosing [the complainant's] identity. This could have been achieved, for example, by using pixellation that properly concealed the features of the complainant, avoiding full-body shots and masking her voice'.

The Authority awarded \$1,000 privacy compensation to the complainant for the breach of her privacy.

ENDS

For more information contact Morgan Coats on 021 072 8280.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The full decision is available at <http://bsa.govt.nz/decisions/latest>.

ABOUT THE BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

The Broadcasting Standards Authority is an independent body that oversees the broadcasting standards regime in New Zealand. We do this by determining complaints that broadcasts have breached standards, by doing research and also by providing information about broadcasting standards.

We are essentially an appeal body, which is why complaints generally go to the broadcaster first (with the exception of privacy issues and election advertisements).

The Authority members who determined this complaint were Peter Radich (Chair), Leigh Pearson, Te Rau Kupenga and Paula Rose.

For more information see our website: www.bsa.govt.nz.