

Media Release

19 October 2016

BSA rejects complaint about TV3 items inspired by ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ movement

A complaint that items about historic colonial memorials in New Zealand were unbalanced and inaccurate has not been upheld by the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA).

The items, broadcast on TV3’s *The Nation* and *Newshub* were inspired by the ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ protest movement. They discussed whether various colonial figures in New Zealand were still worthy of commemoration by statue or memorial, particularly when their actions were considered against 21st century values.

One of the historians interviewed during the items referred to a statue of Colonel Marmaduke Nixon in Auckland. The historian described the Colonel’s involvement in historical events that occurred at Rangiaowhia in 1864 as ‘an appalling act of genocide’ and ‘a terrible atrocity’.

The Authority found that the historian’s analysis was opinion, based on his interpretation of a historical event and was not subject to the accuracy standard. The Authority considered that most viewers of *The Nation* would be able to distinguish between statements of fact, and an expert’s own interpretation of historical events.

The Authority said ‘This programme carried high public interest and raised legitimate questions about the way we view New Zealand’s past. In our view upholding the [complaint] would unreasonably limit the right to freedom of expression, including the right of both the broadcaster and of [the historian] to impart ideas, and of the audience to receive them.’

ENDS

For more information contact Nicole Hickman on 027 313 0179.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

The programme was broadcast on 2 April 2016. The decision was made under the new Free-to-Air Code of Broadcasting Practice. The new Codebook has been in force since 1 April 2016 and is available at <http://bsa.govt.nz/standards/overview>.

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.

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

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