

Media Release

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Interview about resignation of senior Māori Television staff inaccurate and unfair

The Broadcasting Standards Authority has upheld complaints from Mihingarangi Forbes and Annabelle Lee, finding that an interview broadcast on Radio Waatea was inaccurate and unfair to them.

In July 2015 Willie Jackson interviewed the Head of News and Current Affairs of Māori Television about the recent resignation of senior staff, among other things, and repeatedly referred to Ms Forbes and Ms Lee.

The BSA acknowledged that there was public interest in the broadcast and that it was a valuable exercise of freedom of expression, but found ‘the importance of maintaining standards of accuracy and fairness outweighed the value in the programme as it was presented’.

Statements made during the interview could be seen as criticising Ms Forbes’ and Ms Lee’s professional ability and integrity.

These statements ‘reflected negatively on these individuals and had the potential to impact on their reputations, which was unfair given they were not given a reasonable opportunity at the time to respond to the matters raised in the programme or to defend themselves’, the BSA said.

Mr Jackson also made statements that he had no evidence for – such as that Ms Forbes had leaked information to the mainstream media – and claimed Ms Forbes declined an invitation to appear on the programme, which were inaccurate.

The BSA did not make any order, finding that publication of the decision was a sufficient remedy in the circumstances.

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>.

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 and Paula Rose.

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