

## Media Release

26 August 2016

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### News report on Pastafarian wedding not discriminatory

A discrimination complaint about a TV news item reporting on the world's first legally recognised Pastafarian wedding has not been upheld by the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA).

The BSA found the *Newshub* item did not breach broadcasting standards.

The item, broadcast on TV3 on 16 April 2016, reported on the Pastafarian wedding celebration between two members of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster (CFSM). The reporter referred to the CFSM as a 'spoof religion' and said "Pastafarians believe that pirates are supreme beings from which all humans evolved, and it's an official religion".

The Authority found that describing the CFSM as a 'spoof religion' did not breach the discrimination and denigration and accuracy standards. It took the view that the broadcaster's reference to the CFSM as a 'spoof religion' was an opinion which was available to be taken and able to be expressed. In reaching its decision, the Authority firmly believed that the item did not reach the high threshold required for discrimination and denigration to be established.

"The tone of the item in our view reflected the fun and festive atmosphere of the wedding, rather than mocking or making fun of the CFSM. ...The opinion was not expressed maliciously nor with any level of invective and its expression was in keeping with the freedom that we all have to state views of this kind," the Authority said.

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 16 April 2016. This complaint was determined under the new Free-To-Air Television Code. 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](http://www.bsa.govt.nz).