

**Media Release**

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## 2016 Litmus Testing on good taste and decency released by BSA

New research has been released by the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) today on the public's attitudes to standards of good taste and decency.

The research revealed that New Zealander's perceptions of good taste and decency have changed over time, with several key themes emerging, including:

- Some New Zealanders now have a higher tolerance of bad language and sexual content than in previous years. Participants believed this was strongly influenced by greater exposure to broad and diverse content through the internet.
- New Zealanders have heightened sensitivity to material containing potentially sexist or racist content. Participants in the litmus testing were less accepting of content that appeared to denigrate or demean someone based on their race or gender.

The litmus testing research was conducted by Nielsen for the BSA and involved 28 members of the public in Ashburton, Wellington, Hamilton and Auckland who were invited to 'litmus test' five BSA decisions in focus group sessions.

The testing is used to gauge community attitudes and to assess how BSA decisions align with public opinion. The research outcomes will be taken into consideration by the BSA in its determination of complaints from the public that standards of broadcasting practice have been breached.

BSA Chief Executive Belinda Moffat says "the litmus testing work is an important aspect of the BSA's research function. It enables the BSA to gain insights into community views on the standards New Zealanders expect from broadcasters. Through it, we gain feedback on the decisions the Authority has made when applying those standards. This report highlights the changing attitudes of New Zealanders who are less accepting of content containing sexist and racist material.

"This valuable work will assist the BSA in its own decision-making and may also provide some guidance to all those who create and release media content to New Zealanders."

The full report on the 2016 Litmus Testing is available [here](#).

The report on the 2012 Litmus Testing on Good Taste and Decency is available [here](#).

ENDS

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### 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 Board has four members – Peter Radich (Chair), Leigh Pearson, Te Rau Kupenga and Paula Rose.

**For more information see our website: [www.bsa.govt.nz](http://www.bsa.govt.nz).**