

Media Release

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BSA finds Hosking 'ponytail' comments unfair

The Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) upheld four complaints that comments made by Mike Hosking about the ponytail incident involving the Prime Minister and a waitress were unfair to the waitress.

Mr Hosking said the waitress' motivations for speaking out were 'selfish' and 'a puffed up self-involved pile of political bollocks'. He also said the café owners were the 'victims' of the situation.

The Authority upheld the complaints that these comments were unfair to the waitress. The comments were made in Mr Hosking's 'final word' segment, where he gives his views on a chosen topic often in a provocative manner. The Authority said the nature of this segment meant there was no opportunity for any response or defence to be given.

While public figures can generally expect to be the subject of robust scrutiny or criticism, the Authority found the waitress was not a public figure in the usual sense, despite her story being made public.

'In reaching these findings we do not mean to say anything about the rights or wrongs of the ponytail incident... [A] person who is not a public figure should be able to speak up and make assertions whether they are right or wrong without being treated unfairly and in an intimidatory way by a television presenter speaking from the platform of a powerful broadcaster', the Authority said.

The Authority held publication of the decision was sufficient to mark the breach and did not make any order.

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, Te Rau Kupenga and Paula Rose.

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