

Media Release

25 August 2016

***The Rock Morning Rumble* stunt breaches broadcasting standards**

A complaint about a radio stunt alluding to prison rape has been upheld by the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) and seen broadcaster MediaWorks ordered to pay \$1,000 in costs to the Crown and make a statement on air.

The BSA found the stunt on *The Rock Morning Rumble* breached the good taste and decency and responsible programming standards.

The broadcast took place on 16 December 2015 when morning hosts of *The Rock* who had the Prime Minister as a guest invited him to enter a cage installed in the studio. He was asked by the hosts to 'pick up the soap'. As the soap was picked up the host quoted a line from a recognised rape scene in the film *Deliverance*.

The Authority concluded that the stunt was a deliberate reference to prison rape and trivialised sexual violence. "Sexual violence is a serious issue which affects some of the most vulnerable people in society, including those who are incarcerated" the Authority said in its decision.

It found that the content went "beyond currently accepted norms of good taste and decency into something that was inappropriate and in poor taste, and would have offended many people."

"This was not an off-the-cuff or fleeting joke made on the spur of the moment. Rather, the gathering and use of props such as soap, as well as quoting from the film *Deliverance*, in our view clearly required some forethought."

The Authority noted that while *The Rock* and *The Rock Morning Rumble* are known for an irreverent and controversial brand of humour, this broadcast went too far and showed poor judgement.

The Authority ordered MediaWorks to broadcast a statement summarising the upheld aspects of its decision on top of costs to the Crown.

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 December 2015. The decision was made under the previous Radio 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 and Paula Rose.

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