

Media Release

22 November 2016

BSA finds *3D* item about alleged bullying within the New Zealand Fire Service did not breach broadcasting standards

A complaint from the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) about a *3D* item which investigated alleged bullying within NZFS has not been upheld by the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA). The NZFS complained that the item, broadcast in November 2015, was inaccurate, unfair and lacked balance.

The complaint challenged the accuracy, authenticity and reliability of evidence and sources relied on in the *3D* investigation into bullying within certain volunteer fire brigades. The BSA found that the broadcaster had made reasonable efforts to ensure, overall, that the item was accurate, balanced and fair.

The BSA further found that the broadcaster had provided NZFS with a fair and reasonable opportunity to comment on the allegations of bullying and those responses were fairly represented in the programme. In particular, the NZFS interviewee “came across impressively in his interview and clearly articulated the NZFS’s position” the BSA said.

In reaching its decision, the BSA emphasised that it was not its role to determine whether or not bullying was a significant problem within NZFS.

The BSA acknowledged that there were certain facts in dispute between NZFS and the broadcaster. However, it found that *3D* relied on a variety of sources and had a reasonable basis for broadcasting the allegations that it did and also included the response from NZFS to those allegations.

The BSA emphasised that investigative journalism programmes such as *3D* are a vital part of the media and carry high public interest value. Such programmes draw attention to, and inform the public about, legitimate issues.

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 2 November 2015. The decision was made under the old Free-to-Air Television 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 Te Raumawhitu Kupenga. **For more information see our website: www.bsa.govt.nz.**