

Media Release

20 September 2017

BSA finds National Party election advertisement not in breach of Election Programmes broadcasting code

The BSA has not upheld a complaint that a National Party campaign advertisement parodying the Labour Party's campaign motto, 'Let's do this' with the tagline, 'Let's tax this' was inaccurate and misleading.

The Authority found that the advertisement 'promoted National's views of Labour's various tax announcements and, in critiquing those announcements, contrasted National with the Labour Party, with the aim of promoting its own party'. As such, the advertisement promoted the political opinions of National regarding Labour's policies rather than making assertions of fact.

The Authority considered whether the advertisement breached the standard under the Election Programmes Code, which requires factual information to be clearly distinguishable from opinion or advocacy. The Authority noted that the standard is aimed at ensuring that political parties and broadcasters take care not to mislead viewers by presenting political assertions as statements of fact.

The Authority was satisfied that it would be clear to viewers that the election programme was a campaign advertisement for the National Party, which clearly advocated the National Party's own views on Labour's tax policy in an effort to convince voters to vote for National.

'[W]e consider it would have been clear to viewers that the advertisement did not contain factual information, but rather National's own analysis of Labour's comments, policies and tax announcements', it said.

In making its decision, the Authority took into account the public interest in election programmes and party policies, and the robust political environment in the lead up to the general election.

ENDS

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FURTHER INFORMATION

The election advertisement was broadcast on 14 September 2017 on TVNZ 1.

The full decision is available at <http://bsa.govt.nz/decisions/latest>.

The decision was made under Standard E2 – Distinguishing Factual Information from Opinion or Advocacy, of the Election Programmes Code of Broadcasting Practice. The Code has been in force since 1 June 2008 and is available at <https://bsa.govt.nz/standards/election-programmes-code>.

The complaint was determined pursuant to the BSA's fast-track procedure for Election Programme complaints: https://bsa.govt.nz/images/Fast-track_complaints_process_for_election-related_content.pdf.

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 are Peter Radich (Chair), Te Raumawhitu Kupenga and Paula Rose.

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