

## Media Release

31 October 2017

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### Trident Systems treated unfairly in RNZ broadcast

The Broadcasting Standards Authority has found that Trident Systems, which ran a fishing camera monitoring trial for the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), was treated unfairly during a broadcast about the quota management system and fish dumping on *Insight*, broadcast on RNZ National.

Trident complained that the item featured an interview with the Executive Director of Greenpeace NZ, who described a camera monitoring trial run by MPI and said that, during the trial, Trident Systems ‘found nothing’, while a rival research company found ‘lots of illegal behaviour’. The Executive Director then implied that MPI awarded a contract to Trident for filming of a commercial fishery because of these results.

The Authority found that, while the Executive Director was entitled to express his view, this implication reflected negatively on Trident and Trident ought to have been given a fair and reasonable opportunity by RNZ to provide a comment in response:

“While Trident did provide comment on other aspects of the broadcast, it was not given the opportunity to refute this particular allegation or provide further, more informed, context to [the interviewee’s] comments.”

The Authority recognised that the Executive Director’s comments carried a high level of public interest and was a valuable exercise of the right to freedom of expression. However, there was a risk of reputational harm for Trident and more care was needed to be taken by RNZ to ensure its obligations under the fairness standard were met.

The Authority ordered RNZ to broadcast a statement summarising the decision and to publish a statement beneath the online version of the article, noting that the item was in breach of the fairness standard. The Authority also ordered the broadcaster to pay to the complainant a reasonable portion of its external legal costs incurred in pursuing the complaint.

The Authority did not uphold the complaint under the accuracy and balance standards.

ENDS

**For more information contact Catie Murray on 021 623 794.**

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The item was broadcast on 12 and 13 March 2017 on RNZ National.

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

The decision was made under the fairness, accuracy and balance standards of the Radio Code of Broadcasting Practice. The Code 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 Crown entity that oversees the broadcasting standards regime in New Zealand. We determine complaints that broadcasts have breached standards, undertake research and also provide 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](http://www.bsa.govt.nz).**