

Media Release

18 December 2017

BSA finds ‘authentic’ interview language not in breach of broadcasting standards

The Broadcasting Standards Authority has not upheld a complaint about an interviewee’s use of the phrase ‘for Christ’s sake’ during an item on *1 News*.

The item reported on the outbreak of a cattle disease on a farm in South Canterbury, and featured an interview with a farmer in the region. In response to the suggestion that the infected herd should be culled, he expressed his support for the farm owners and said, ‘for Christ’s sake, don’t let these people in here try and get up good farmers’.

The Authority did not uphold a complaint that the use of the expression ‘for Christ’s sake’ was offensive and unacceptable to broadcast when children might be viewing.

The Authority found that this item was in the public interest and had high value in terms of the right to freedom of expression. It informed viewers about an important issue in New Zealand, and allowed viewers to hear from those affected first-hand and in their own words.

“It is important for viewers to hear New Zealand stories directly from New Zealanders, and there is high value in the use of the authentic New Zealand voice in news reporting,” the Authority said.

The Authority acknowledged that some people may find the use of the expression ‘for Christ’s sake’ offensive, but stated that “expressions of this nature are commonly used as exclamations, without any intention to be offensive.” The expression was used by the farmer in this item to express his frustration at the way the disease outbreak was being handled, and in strong defence of the farm owners. The Authority found that the broadcast was not in breach of the good taste and decency and children’s interests standards.

ENDS

For more information contact Catie Murray on 021 623 794.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The item was broadcast at 6.10pm on 2 August 2017 on TVNZ 1. The full decision is available at <http://bsa.govt.nz/decisions/latest>. The decision was made under the Free-to-Air Television Code of Broadcasting Practice which is available at <http://bsa.govt.nz/standards/overview>.

ABOUT THE BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

The BSA is an independent Crown entity that oversees the broadcasting standards regime in New Zealand. The BSA determines complaints that broadcasts have breached standards, undertakes research and oversees the development of broadcasting standards in consultation with broadcasters.

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

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