

## Media Release

19 December 2017

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### **Seven Sharp presenter's comments about voting for Māori Party inaccurate and misleading, BSA finds**

The Broadcasting Standards Authority has upheld a complaint that comments made by Mike Hosking on *Seven Sharp*, about who was eligible to vote for the Māori Party, were inaccurate and misleading and breached the accuracy broadcasting standard.

On 23 August 2017, in the lead up to the 2017 General Election, the presenters of *Seven Sharp* discussed *Vote Compass*, a TVNZ tool available to assist voters to make voting decisions. In this discussion, Mr Hosking asserted that only those enrolled in a Māori electorate were able to vote for the Māori Party, when he said to his co-presenter, "...you can't vote for the Māori Party because you're not enrolled in the Māori electorate".

The following evening, 24 August 2017, Mr Hosking attempted to clarify his comment, saying, "the fact that anyone can vote for [the Māori Party] as a list party I automatically assumed we all knew given we have been doing this for 20 years... and it went without saying. So hopefully that clears all of that up."

The Authority upheld a complaint that Mr Hosking's comments were inaccurate and misleading, and that the alleged clarification broadcast on 24 August 2017 was flippant and too general to correct the inaccurate information for viewers. Voters not enrolled on the Māori electoral roll can cast a party vote for the Māori Party, or vote for one of the 18 Māori Party candidates representing general electorates in the 2017 General Election.

In reaching its decision, the Authority recognised the high value and public interest in political speech during the election period, but emphasised the importance of ensuring audiences were accurately informed about election matters. It said Mr Hosking's inaccurate comments were presented at a critical time, when voters required accurate information to enable them to make informed voting decisions.

"This was an important issue, particularly during the election period, and had the potential to significantly affect voters' understanding of the Māori roll and of New Zealand's electoral system", it said.

In considering whether orders should be made, the Authority commented on the important and influential role held by programme hosts and presenters, particularly during the democratic election process.

"The incorrect statements made by Mr Hosking were presented at a critical time, when voters required accurate information to enable them to make informed voting decisions. In

this case, the flippant apology provided did not reflect a genuine appreciation for the important role of media during this time.”

The Authority determined it would be appropriate for the broadcaster to publicly acknowledge the breach of the accuracy standard to its audience by way of a broadcast statement on air. The Authority directed that the statement be broadcast before the 2017 summer holiday break.

ENDS

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

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The items were broadcast on 23 and 24 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](http://www.bsa.govt.nz)**