

15 September 2014

## **Broadcaster's right to express climate change views defended**

The Broadcasting Standards Authority has declined to uphold complaints that comments about climate change made by broadcaster Mike Hosking were inaccurate and misleading.

Mr Hosking made his comments in a monologue at the end of TV One's *Seven Sharp* on 1 April 2014.

He said that according to a 2,600-page, 32-volume Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, "we are going to climate hell in a handcart. That's, of course, if you believe them, which as it turns out, I don't".

He also questioned making predictions about the climate in 86 years time, "if the Met Service struggles with the accuracy of a five-day forecast".

Four viewers complained that the comments were misleading and inaccurate. In particular, they objected to his comparison between short-term weather forecasting and climate science.

The BSA said that Mr Hosking's comments were clearly his personal opinion, as opposed to statements of fact, so were not subject to standards of accuracy.

The Bill of Rights explicitly protected freedom of expression including the right to express opinions even if they are considered by many to be wrong, or unpopular.

"The accuracy standard must be applied in such a way as to impose the minimum restriction on free speech, and can only be applied to inaccurate material statements of fact," the BSA decision said.

The BSA said that in its view the complainants' arguments read too much into Mr Hosking's comments.

"Viewers would have realised that this monologue was an expression of his opinion, and would not have taken the comments as an authoritative conclusion on the topic," the BSA said.

### **Ends**

The full decision is available at [www.bsa.govt.nz](http://www.bsa.govt.nz)

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