

9 June 2014

## **BSA declines to uphold Kōhanga Reo Trust's complaint**

The Broadcasting Standards Authority has declined to uphold a complaint made by Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust Board against Māori TV's *Native Affairs* programme.

In its programme on 9 September 2013, *Native Affairs* reported concerns about the governance and management of the trust – including allegations that the trust had been improperly providing loans to trustees and senior managers, and misspending public funds.

The BSA declined to uphold the trust board's complaint that the broadcast was inaccurate, unbalanced and unfair.

The significance of the issues to the target audience, the broadcaster's freedom of speech and that of the disaffected whānau who were interviewed had to be balanced against the potential harm to the trust, the BSA decision said.

The broadcast carried very high public interest and was a legitimate investigation of the financial activities of the trust and its subsidiary, Te Pātaka Ōhanga, the BSA found.

Public organisations like the trust that were funded by, and served, the public, had to be subject to public scrutiny, the BSA decision said.

The programme largely consisted of the opinions of those interviewed, and the trust was given a fair and reasonable opportunity to respond to the claims made. *Native Affairs* made more than eight attempts to obtain an interview, and the key parts of the trust board's written response were sufficiently summarised and fairly presented throughout the item, the decision said.

"Investigative programmes of this kind have an important role in a democratic society. ... Those who may be the subject of an investigation must accept that when they stand off and decline to engage, it is less likely that the positions they want to express will be able to be expressed in the way that they want," the decision said.

**Ends**

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

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