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Broadcaster did enough after women described as “heifers”

Sufficient action was taken by the broadcaster after radio host Rachel Smalley described some women as “heifers” and a “bunch of lardos”, the Broadcasting Standards Authority says.

In a decision released today, the BSA also declined to uphold a complaint that the comments breached the good taste and decency standard.

Ms Smalley made the comments on Newstalk ZB on 2 April 2014 during an advertisement break when she thought she was off air. She was responding to the statement that the average New Zealand woman weighed 72 kilograms.

The broadcaster, The Radio Network, upheld the complaint that the comments breached the discrimination and denigration standard of the Radio Code of Broadcasting Practice. It did not accept that the good taste and decency standard was breached.

The complainant referred the good taste and decency complaint to the BSA and also alleged that the broadcaster had not taken sufficient action following Ms Smalley’s comments.

In its decision the BSA said that it understood that some listeners found the comments objectionable but did not think they reached the high threshold needed to find a breach.

“This was not a calculated or deliberate attack; these comments were off the cuff and never intended to go to air. Both the host and the broadcaster promptly apologised, and we think it likely that the resulting embarrassment of the host and the station and any negative reaction from the public were sufficient to prevent a repeat in future,” the BSA decision said.

Ends

The full decision is available at www.bsa.govt.nz

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