



Media Release

9 April 2015

BSA: Context critical for good taste and decency complaints

The Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) has released seven new decisions this week.

Two of the complaints which were not upheld alleged a breach of the good taste and decency standard.

One concerned language on the late-night *The Paul Henry Show*. Paul Henry commented on a recent incident involving an apparent tourist who had reportedly driven with a kayak attached sideways to the roof of his car. Henry called him a 'bloody twat' and lamented New Zealand's 'politically correct' attitude towards tourists.

The Authority said that in the context of a late-night programme with an adult target audience and Mr Henry's well-known presenting style, which can be provocative, the language did not breach the good taste and decency standard.

The other complaint related to a news item which showed footage of an Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) match that featured a New Zealander.

The Authority did not agree with the two complainants that the item was excessively violent. In the context of an unclassified sports news item about a UFC fight, the footage was not unexpected or gratuitous.

"People will have different attitudes about matters of taste. However, the context of the broadcast is always crucial to deciding whether to uphold a complaint about good taste and decency", BSA Chief Executive Karen Scott-Howman said.

"Contextual factors can vary, but usually include the programme classification, the time of broadcast, and audience expectations of the programme and the channel or station", said Scott-Howman.

The BSA upheld one of the seven complaints. This is roughly consistent with the percentage of complaints that have been upheld by the BSA so far this financial year (since July 2014) – around ten percent.

The upheld complaint related to a broadcast by a radio station of details of a disputed business debt between the station and the complainant's company. The Authority viewed the broadcast as a misuse of airtime, as the station neglected their responsibility as a broadcaster to preserve individuals' right to privacy. The Authority ordered the radio station to pay compensation for breach of privacy to the complainant and costs to the Crown.

ENDS

The full decisions referred to in this release are available at www.bsa.govt.nz

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ABOUT THE BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

The Broadcasting Standards Authority is an independent body that oversees the broadcasting standards regime in New Zealand. We do this by determining complaints that broadcasts have breached standards, by doing research, and also by providing information about broadcasting standards.

We are essentially an appeal body, which is why complaints generally go to the broadcaster first (with the exception of privacy issues and election advertisements).

The Authority Board has four members – Peter Radich (chair), Mary Anne Shanahan, Leigh Pearson and Te Rau Kupenga.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- In the 2013/14 financial year the BSA received 149 complaints and issued 99 decisions
- Of the decisions issued, 74% were about television broadcasts and 26% were about radio broadcasts
- The programmes most complained about were news, current affairs and factual programming

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