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Comedy programme did not breach standards, says BSA

The Broadcasting Standards Authority has not upheld a complaint against the comedy show *A Night at the Classic*, finding that although it contained coarse language, it was on late at night with clear warnings and was correctly classified.

A complainant alleged that the programme, broadcast at 10pm on TV One in January contained unacceptable language and blasphemies.

In considering whether the programme breached standards of good taste and decency and responsible programming, the BSA acknowledged that some viewers dislike and are offended by the language used in the programme.

Research conducted by the BSA in 2010, *What Not to Swear – The Acceptability of Words in Broadcasting*, showed that some of the words used in this programme were considered unacceptable by most people.

“As such, the use of these words can only be saved by the context in which they were broadcast. This includes both the narrative context for example the storyline or the premise of the programme, and of more importance here, the external context, such as the time of broadcast, the programme’s classification, the target audience and the use of warnings.”

The programme was classified Adults Only, was broadcast one hour and 30 minutes after the AO watershed, had clear visual and verbal warnings for coarse language and sexual material and was preceded by another AO programme.

“The approach developed by the Authority is to require broadcasters to give viewers sufficient information to regulate their own viewing behaviour. This places a degree of responsibility on viewers to inform themselves about the viewing choices they make.

“We are satisfied that in this instance viewers were provided with ample information to make an informed choice whether or not to watch the programme, and that for anyone who chose to continue watching, the level of content would not have been unexpected.”

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

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