



TCN 9 Sydney

Represent viewpoints fairly

Complaint

On 23 July 2003 the ABA received a written complaint alleging that, in a broadcast of a segment in the program 'A Current Affair' on 21 May 2003, the licensee of TCN 9 had failed to present factual material accurately and to represent viewpoints fairly because:

- the segment failed to use any female examples of non-payers of child support
- the licensee ignored additional information (including that alluded to by the Minister in his interview)
- the producer and staff did not adequately research the story and, as a result, it lacked accuracy.

The complainant also alleged that the broadcast of the segment unfairly identified individuals in order to sensationalise and make generalisations about males and that it portrayed males in a negative light by concentrating on the concept that fathers do not support children.

Decision

The ABA determined that, during a broadcast of 'A Current Affair' on 21 May 2003 TCN Channel Nine Pty Ltd (the licensee):

- breached Code sub-clause 4.3.1 by failing to fairly represent the viewpoint of one of the people named in the report
- did not breach Code sub-clause 4.3.1 in its presentation of factual material
- did not breach Code sub-clause 4.3.7 in its identification of two other people named in the report and
- did not breach Code sub-clause 4.3.10 in its portrayal of males.

Regarding the breach finding, the ABA was of the view that the program contained comments from others and a re-enactment that purported to represent a person's views. There was no evidence that the person concerned had been offered the opportunity to comment.

Action taken

The licensee advised that its actions would include forwarding and discussing the report with the previous Executive Producer of 'A Current Affair' and the producer and reporter at the time of the broadcast of the program. The licensee advised that it had already provided a copy of the report to the current Executive Producer of 'A Current Affair', the producer and reporter in the story. 