

# Complaint handling by commercial television stations

The Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2004 requires each commercial television broadcaster to report to Free TV Australia, within 15 working days of the end of each quarter, the number and substance of written complaints alleging specific breaches of the code. Free TV Australia provides a consolidated report to ACMA.

Commercial television stations reported 246 written complaints about matters covered by the code in the second quarter of 2006, 8.2 per cent less than the previous quarter, and 38 per cent less than the same quarter last year. One reason for this is the large decrease in *Big Brother* complaints compared with last year.

## COMPLAINTS UPHELD

There were no program items that stations agreed breached the code for this quarter, compared with 13 complaints (relating to four broadcast items) upheld in the previous quarter.

## COMPLAINTS NOT UPHELD

Programs receiving the highest number of complaints (not upheld) were:

- *Ten News at Five* (Network Ten)—13 complaints, mostly concerning perceived bias and/or inaccuracy in reporting and comments considered to be inappropriate
- *Seven Nightly News* (Seven Network)—13 complaints, mostly

concerning perceived bias and/or inaccuracy, discrimination in reporting and graphic footage considered to be inappropriate for the time zone

- *TV Week Logie Awards* (Nine Network)—12 complaints, mostly concerning coarse language considered to be inappropriate and one complaint about comments considered to be racist
- *Big Brother Daily Show* (Network Ten)—10 complaints, mostly concerning sexual references, nudity, language and adult themes considered unsuitable for the time zone
- *Today Tonight* (Seven Network)—10 complaints, mostly concerning

graphic footage in a story about P&O cruises and perceived bias and/or inaccuracy

- *Sunrise* (Seven Network)—nine complaints, mostly concerning perceived discrimination by the use of the word 'Porn', coarse language considered to be inappropriate for the time zone and comments considered to be racist
- *WIN News* (WIN Television Network)—eight complaints, related to a single story about Ballarat Psychiatric Services, which contained comments that were considered to be biased.

## COMPLAINTS MADE TO COMMERCIAL TELEVISION STATIONS ABOUT PROGRAMS, APRIL-JUNE 2006

	Bias/ inaccuracy	Classification	Commercial general	Commercial placement	Commercial time	Complaint handling	Discrimination	Privacy	Program general	Upsetting material	Total	%
Children	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.4%
Comedy	0	10	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	0	18	7.3%
Commercial	0	19	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	25	10.2%
Current affairs	8	8	0	0	1	0	6	0	0	1	24	9.8%
Documentary	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.8%
Drama	0	12	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	13	5.3%
Information	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.8%
Light entertainment	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	4.1%
Movie	0	13	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	16	6.5%
Music video	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	1.6%
News	18	14	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	38	15.4%
Program promotions	0	31	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	35	14.2%
Reality	0	24	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	26	10.6%
Sport	0	9	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	15	6.1%
Unspecified	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	5	2.0%
Variety	0	7	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	12	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
%	10.6	65.9	0.8	2.0	2.8	0.4	13.8	0.4	1.6	1.6	100.0	

Source: Free TV Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2004: Complaints Summary April to June 2006

**ACMA INVESTIGATIONS FINDINGS, APRIL-JUNE 2006**

Call sign	Program/issue	Substance of complaint	Code/licence condition applicable to breach finding
<b>BREACH FINDINGS</b>			
<b>COMMERCIAL TELEVISION</b>			
<b>New South Wales</b>			
TCN Sydney	<i>A Current Affair</i>	False/misleading claims in relation to references to sampling of chickens for bacteria and result found	Accuracy
<b>COMMUNITY RADIO</b>			
<b>New South Wales</b>			
2BCR Sydney	Sponsorship and Management Practice	Broadcast of advertisements and exceeding five mins of sponsorship announcements per hour	Broadcasting advertisements and sponsorship announcements in excess of five minutes per hour*
2RES Sydney	<i>Monika Geetmala</i>	Broadcast of advertisements.	Broadcasting advertisements
<b>Tasmania</b>			
7THE Hobart	<i>Serbian Program</i>	Vilification and factual inaccuracy	Complaints handling
<b>Western Australia</b>			
6AR Perth	Management Practice	Membership and participation issues; lack of local and indigenous content (former ABA commenced section 170 investigation 14 April 2005)	Continue to represent community of interest and encourage community to participate in station operations and selection of programming*
<b>NO BREACH FINDINGS</b>			
<b>COMMERCIAL TELEVISION</b>			
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>			
WIN Southern NSW/ACT	<i>A Current Affair</i>	Invasion of privacy of an individual interviewed in a 'vox pop' style segment	Use of material relating to personal or private affairs, or which invades an individual's privacy
CTC Southern NSW/ACT	<i>Channel Ten News</i>	Coarse language during weather report	Exercise care in selecting material
<b>Queensland</b>			
TVQ Brisbane	<i>Channel Ten News</i>	Incorrect vocabulary used by weather person in describing rainfall measurements	Factual accuracy in news or current affairs
STQ Regional Qld	<i>Sunrise</i>	'Joke of the Day' content inappropriate for audience	Exercise care in selecting material for broadcast
QTQ Brisbane	<i>A Current Affair</i>	Factual inaccuracy and misrepresentation of viewpoints, no response from station	Present factual material accurately, represent viewpoints fairly, complaints handling
TNQ Regional Qld	<i>Johnnie Walker Classic – Golf</i>	Sexism in commentary	Provoke or perpetuate serious dislike, exercise care in selection of material, complaints handling
<b>Victoria</b>			
HSV Melbourne	<i>Prison Break</i>	Number of advertisements per hour	Scheduling of non-program matter
ATV Melbourne	<i>The 2005 International Comedy Festival (promotion)</i>	Promotion broadcast during <i>Australia's Brainiest Kid</i> contained sexual reference inappropriate for the likely audience	Classification of sexual behaviour and sex and nudity in G

COMMUNITY RADIO			
<b>New South Wales</b>			
2GLF Sydney	Management Practice	Cancellation of programs of a person with a disability	Represent community interest*, encourage community participation*, policies to oppose prejudice
2SER Sydney	Management Practice	Station operating as part of a profit-making enterprise in broadcasting the <i>Dhanak</i> program	Not operate as part of a profit-making enterprise*
<b>Queensland</b>			
4RHI Gold Coast Qld	Management Practice	Board should not be considered suitable to hold the licence as they act in their own interests rather than those of the station or its licence	Suitability *
<b>Victoria</b>			
3JOY Melbourne	Sponsorship and Management Practice	Sponsorship limits per hour	Broadcasting advertisements*
3JOY Melbourne	Sponsorship and Management Practice	Entire broadcast was an advertisement or sponsorship announcement for Melbourne Queer Film Festival and contained advertisement for Volkswagen	Broadcasting advertisements*
<b>Western Australia</b>			
6PCR Fremantle WA	Management Practice	Licensee not adequately representing the community interest that it represented at the time when it was allocated the licence	Representing community interest*
<b>ABC television</b>			
ABN NSW	<i>ABC News</i>	Language during a report on the Falconio murder trial was broadcast	Language
ABN NSW	<i>ABC News</i>	Pro-Israel bias in news reporting about the Middle East and no response to one of three complaints	Impartiality and balance and respond to complaints
ABV Vic	<i>Midday Report</i>	Inaccuracy in references to a company and no right of reply accorded to the company	Accuracy, balance and impartiality
<b>SBS television</b>			
SBS Perth	<i>Speaking in Tongues</i>	Offensive material – animal cruelty and vilification of Catholics	Religion, violence and classification categories
SBS Brisbane	<i>The Movie Show</i>	Excerpts from the film <i>Palindromes</i> contained sexual and other adult references that were allegedly too strong for PG and the program allegedly failed to display a consumer advice symbol	Sex and nudity, classification symbols and classification categories
<b>INVESTIGATIONS TERMINATED</b>			
<b>Subscription television</b>			
<b>Victoria</b>			
Fox TV Melbourne	<i>The Simpsons</i>	Language and sexual references in G-classified episode	Complaint withdrawn by complainant

All potential breaches were of a code of practice unless otherwise indicated: \*potential breach of a licence condition or the Broadcasting Services Act 1992.