



The ABA found a map depicting Tasmania forestry reserves was misleading, and accordingly the ABC did not present factual content accurately.

The ABA also considered the code requirement that demonstrable errors will be corrected in a timely manner and in a form most suited to the circumstances.

The ABA found that the ABC acknowledged the error and corrected the inaccuracy in a timely manner by posting an accurate depiction of Tasmanian forest reserves on the *Four Corners* website.

The ABC also acknowledged the error in its *Public Report on Audience Comments and Complaints*.

In light of the ABC's actions in correcting the inaccuracy, the ABA does not propose to take any enforcement action in relation to the breach on this occasion.

Code provision

The relevant provision of the ABC Code of Practice 2002 is:

4.1 Every reasonable effort must be made to ensure that the factual content of news and current affairs programs is accurate.

Demonstrable errors will be corrected in a timely manner and in a form most suited to the circumstances.

The complaint

On 7 May 2004 the ABA received a complaint regarding a *Four Corners* report broadcast by the ABC on 16 February 2004.

The complainant considered that the program exhibited 'blatant bias' throughout. However, the complainant stated that he wished to 'confine [his] complaint to the subject of the location and size of reserves that are 'off-limits to loggers'.

The program

The *Four Corners* current affairs report entitled 'Lords of the Forest' reported on the forest industry in Tasmania, and aired claims regarding policies being applied to logging, especially in relation to the clear felling of old growth forests and wood-chipping. Among the issues aired in the program were allegations that:

- 80 per cent of trees harvested in Tasmania end up as woodchips
- the Tasmanian forestry industry is woodchipping at a rate never seen before
- wood-chipping, as the dominant use of logging in Tasmania, was unduly influencing forest policy

- forestry policy may be having a detrimental effect on water supply and
- the culture of the Tasmanian forest industry and regulatory bodies is one of intimidation and lacks transparency.

Assessment

The ABA sought a tape of the relevant program segment from the ABC and comments in regard to the program's compliance with clause 4.1 of the code. The ABA was of the view that the broadcaster failed to present factual material accurately and that the ABC breached clause 4.1 of the ABC Code of Practice. The code requires that material that is factual must be presented accurately, that is, in conformity with the truth and free from error or defect. This does not mean that all factual material must be presented, but rather that what is presented is in itself accurate and not misleading. The ABC has acknowledged that the map displayed during the report was inaccurate.

The ABA, having viewed the material in context agrees that inclusion of this particular map led to an inaccurate representation of areas of Tasmanian forest in reserves. ☒

ABC TV: Stateline (Victoria)

Factual accuracy and balance

The complaint

On 12 January 2004, the ABA received a written complaint regarding the *Stateline* program broadcast on ABC TV. The complainant claimed that the program contained factual inaccuracies and that it was not balanced and impartial.

Stateline is a weekly current affairs program that aims to provide political analysis and insight into local issues.

Decision

The ABA determined that by broadcasting the Victorian edition of the *Stateline* program on 15 August 2003, ABC TV breached clause 4.1 of the ABC Code of Practice by reporting that:

- all approvals had been granted for the Portland Wind Farm Project to proceed and

- 120 wind towers would be constructed on three capes.

The ABA found that the report was balanced and impartial.

Action taken

ABC TV has acknowledged one of the factual inaccuracies and has apologised to the complainant. ☒