



Investigations

GTV 9 Melbourne

News/current affairs—accuracy, complaint handling

Complaint

On 20 December 1999, the ABA received a complaint concerning the program '60 Minutes' broadcast on GTV 9 Melbourne on 7 November 1999 and promotions for the program broadcast in the preceding week.

The complainant alleged that a segment in the program 'Welcome to Television' concerning the introduction of digital television in Australia, and promotions for the program, were inaccurate. The complainant was also dissatisfied with the response by the station.

Relevant codes of practice

The Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice provides:

News and Current Affairs Programs

4.3 In broadcasting news and current affairs programs, licensees:

4.3.1 must present factual material accurately and represent viewpoints fairly, having regard to the circumstances at the time of preparing and broadcasting the program;

...

4.3.11 must make reasonable efforts to correct significant errors of fact at the earliest opportunity.

...

4.5 In broadcasting a promotion for a news or current affairs program, a licensee must present factual material accurately and represent featured viewpoints fairly, having regard to the circum-

stances at the time of preparing and broadcasting the program promotion, and its brevity. A licensee is not required by this clause to portray all aspects or themes of a program or program segment in a program promotion, or to represent all viewpoints contained in the program or program segment.

In regard to the handling of complaints, the code provides:

Time Limits on Responses to Code Complaints

7.9 Where a code complaint is made about material broadcast by a station within thirty days of its broadcast, the licensee must provide a substantive written response.

Decision

The ABA determined that the licensee of GTV 9 Melbourne, General Television Corporation Pty Ltd, breached clause 4.5 of the code by failing to present factual material accurately in the program promotion for the Welcome to Television segment of '60 Minutes'.

The ABA also determined that the licensee had breached clause 7.9 of the code by failing to provide a substantive response to the complaint.

Action taken

GTV stated that it did not agree with the ABA's findings under clause 4.5 of the code, but made no submissions. The ABA notes that this is the first breach of this clause by GTV and will take no further action about this matter.

