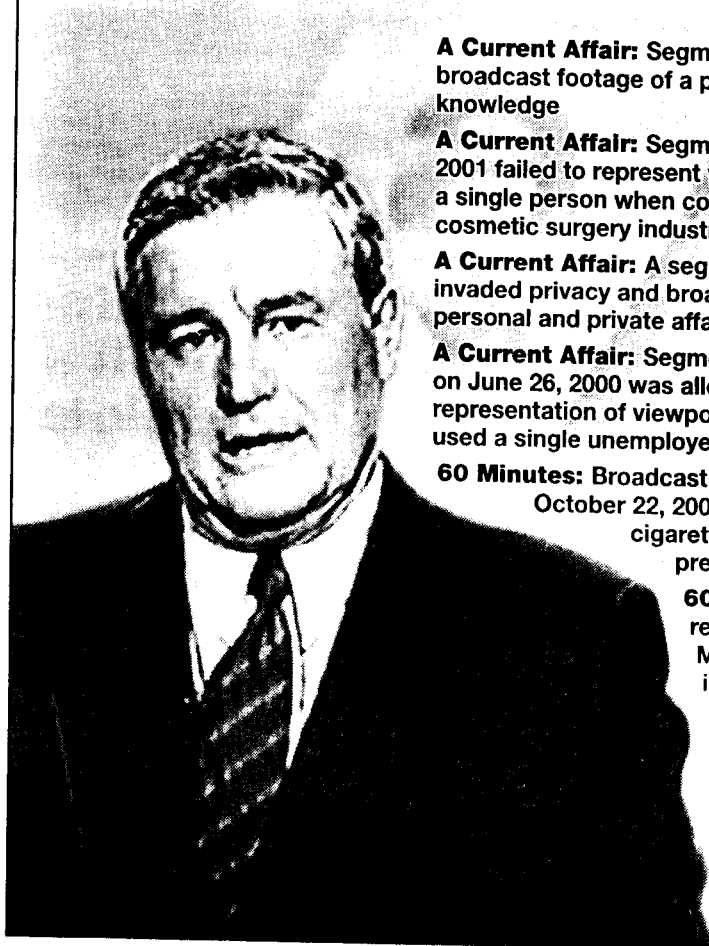


The TV shows we love to hate

Examples of broadcast breaches



A Current Affair: Segment on August 6, 2001 filmed and broadcast footage of a person in their home without their knowledge

A Current Affair: Segment on plastic surgery in August 2001 failed to represent viewpoints fairly, unfairly identified a single person when commenting on the behaviour of the cosmetic surgery industry

A Current Affair: A segment broadcast on May 28, 2001 invaded privacy and broadcast material relating to personal and private affairs

A Current Affair: Segment called 'Work versus Welfare' on June 26, 2000 was allegedly inaccurate, an unfair representation of viewpoints, failed to correct errors, and used a single unemployed person to represent a group

60 Minutes: Broadcast interview with Russell Crowe on October 22, 2000 which showed him smoking a cigarette in breach of regulations preventing tobacco advertising on TV

60 Minutes: Richard Carleton report on Middle East conflict in March 2001 was allegedly inaccurate and unfair and the station ignored the complaint

60 Minutes: Segment about suicide bombers in Israel on August 19, 2001 failed to present factual material accurately, failed to correct significant errors of fact

Current offence

By MARK PHILLIPS

A CURRENT Affair is the most complained about program on television.

It just beat its Nine Network stablemate *60 Minutes* and the Seven Network's flagship current affairs program, *Today Tonight*, for the dubious title in the Australian Broadcasting Authority's annual report for 2001-2.

Eight complaints about *ACA* were investigated last year and the program was found to have breached broadcasting codes or regulations on five occasions.

The breaches included invading privacy with hidden cameras and microphones, unfairly representing viewpoints, inaccuracy and failing to correct errors. One of the privacy breaches involved filming a person in their home.

60 Minutes and *Today Tonight* each had six complaints against them investigated and were found to have breached regulations three times.

There were multiple complaints against *60 Minutes* when it broadcast an interview with

Australian actor Russell Crowe during which he lit and smoked a Marlboro cigarette.

The complaint alleged the program broadcast a tobacco advertisement and was referred to Health Minister Kay Patterson.

The two other breaches by *60 Minutes*, for accuracy, fairness and failure to correct errors, were about segments on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

Today Tonight was in trouble for inaccuracy, invasion of privacy, misleading re-enactments and denigrating women.

The ABA investigated three complaints each against *Big Brother* and *Today*, but found no breaches occurred.

Nine's *Footy Show* in Sydney was punished once for sex and nudity, and its *Sunday* program was criticised for inaccuracy.

Nine had the most complaints investigated against it with 31, followed by 16 against Ten, and 12 against Seven.

Nineteen complaints were investigated against the ABC, SBS, pay television and community television, with the ABC being

found to have breached regulations three times and pay-TV channel Austar once.

The ABA completed 163 investigations in 2001-2, a 4 per cent rise over the previous year.

But it found only 71 breaches of the broadcasting code of practice and 20 of licence conditions.

Thirty-seven of the breaches were by commercial television stations, six by commercial radio and 41 by community radio.

On commercial radio, it was Melbourne's 3AW which clearly offended listeners the most.

It was investigated seven times by the ABA in 2001-2 but was found to be in breach of regulations only once, when an angry caller to drive time broadcaster Steve Price — who has since moved to Sydney's 2UE — dropped the "f-word" on air.

Melbourne station 3MP was also in hot water over a complaint stretching back to the 1999 state election about interviews with several leading Liberal Party politicians that were not identified as political broadcasts.