



PRESS RELEASE

Contrary to a media report, the Coalition for Better Broadcasting does not support Mike Hosking to moderate TVNZ’s leader’s debates.

12 August 2017

[Stuff](#) quotes the CBB from [a 2014 blog](#):

“So top marks to Mike Hosking for keeping his views to himself”.

But the next sentence reads:

“The problem was, we already knew what his views were. No amount of poker-face could stop us seeing John Key and David Cunliffe through the Hosking lens.”

The thrust of that blog is still relevant four years later as the increasingly immoderate Hosking is announced to moderate between Bill English and Jacinda Ardern.

“Hosking can pretend to turn his bias off, just as he turns it on,” says CBB Director, Myles Thomas. “He can control his expressions and challenge both politicians

equally.

"But merely by being there his previous, frequently expressed views are present, and the audience are reminded of them every time we see him.

"Ardern will say something and the camera cuts back to Hosking listening. In that instant, our perception of her comment is shaped by his impassive expression.

No matter how hard Hosking tries to remain neutral, he taints everything that Ardern says and strengthens everything English says.

"And with no studio audience, Hosking's influence is stronger still. He's our surrogate, the sounding board, the viewer's guide on how to react to what's being said. And everyone knows what he's thinking because he chooses to tell us every morning, noon and night."

The Coalition for Better Broadcasting finds it deplorable that TVNZ choose such a biased moderator for what is a very important piece of political theatre. It's also quite shocking that TVNZ lets him broadcast his views every weeknight on Seven Sharp, without any balance whatsoever.

Myles continues, "If there was a brilliant broadcaster who frequently proclaimed the policies of Labour and the Greens, denounced Bill English, and was in favour of pay equity, Māori sovereignty and helping the poor with old-fashioned socialism – would TVNZ use them to moderate the debates? Not likely.

"If they did, those who currently dismiss the criticism of Hosking would be protesting the loudest. And the CBB would join them because we believe there should be no political bias on publicly funded media in New Zealand."

Ends

Note the CBB is in the process of changing its name to the Better Public Media

Trust. Keep an eye out for the BPM Trust.

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