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Eli Templeton

By email: [fyi-request-24091-a04239ff@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-24091-a04239ff@requests.fyi.org.nz)

9 October 2023

Dear Eli Templeton

### Official Information Act request dated 11 September 2023

We refer to your email dated 11 September 2023 requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the **Act**) about TVNZ's checking and verification for its news programmes. Your request contained five queries, which are addressed below.

1. *What checks exist to prevent unauthorised or unchecked editing by a single lone wolf journalist?*

TVNZ's editorial systems require the intervention of at least two employees before stories can be published or broadcast.

However, no system is foolproof. Every time a piece of content is made available to viewers, there is one person responsible for taking the final step in making the content available. A rogue employee with the final responsibility to upload content (be it digital or broadcast) may still subvert the process and make their own editorial decisions, or upload content that has not gone through the correct sub-editing process. TVNZ has experienced journalists in these roles of responsibility.

The newsroom has a strong 'refer-up' culture where team members are highly encouraged to raise any questions/concerns directly with NCA leadership as soon as possible.

2. *Has TVNZ enacted any changes to the way it broadcasts and reports news in response to the RNZ controversy?*
3. *Have there been any official internal reviews carried out into TVNZ news's editorial processes since the RNZ controversy? If so, can they please be released to the public.*

The following paragraphs respond to both requests 2 and 3.

Yes, there was an internal review.

TVNZ's News & Current Affairs department has a syndication arrangement with RNZ under which TVNZ licenses articles and photographs that originate from RNZ. TVNZ was not directly affected by RNZ's altered articles as it did not run any of

them; wire copy from wire agencies is excluded from TVNZ’s syndication arrangement with RNZ, and any RNZ-authored articles published on TVNZ platforms automatically expire after 30 days. However, TVNZ management felt it was prudent to appoint its General Counsel to conduct a review into newsroom practices, particularly as TVNZ has its own licensing arrangements with wire agencies, to ensure that all was being done to prevent a similar situation arising at TVNZ.

On 12 June TVNZ’s General Counsel (then Brent McAnulty) was appointed to conduct an internal review into the editorial controls within TVNZ News and Current Affairs.

The review found that TVNZ’s editorial systems are robust and fit for purposes. It suggested recommendations to strengthen the good practices already evidenced within NCA.

The additional steps the NCA team has implemented in the way it broadcasts and reports news are:

- a second pair of eyes to review content written by senior broadcast editors and producers; and
- a full review with a second pair eyes of all wire copy-sourced content prior to publication.

As at the date of your request, TVNZ was awaiting completion of an addendum to the review. Once that is finalised, TVNZ will make the review publicly available.

4. *Can the organizational chart of how TVNZ online news is part of the wider organization please be released? Are there any news teams excluded from being under the management of the Head of News? for example: under a Content or a Commercial arm (see page 19 of RNZ review)*

All news teams come under the management of the Executive Editor, News & Current Affairs. A simplified version of the organisational chart is included below.



5. *How many full-time staff are currently employed primarily for the purposes of reporting and editing for TVNZ's online news website? I would like this number to exclude managers or contributors/opinion columnists and only focus on frontline journalists. (page 27 of RNZ review)*

As at the date of your request there were 19 full-time staff employed primarily for the purposes of reporting and editing for TVNZ's 1News.co.nz website. There were seven full-time staff employed primarily for the purposes of reporting and editing for TVNZ's Re: news. Social media and Re: staff are not included in this number.

We trust this response assists with your query. If you are dissatisfied with TVNZ's response to your request, section 28 of the Act sets out the circumstances under which you may seek review or further investigation by the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely

Official Information Requests Team  
TVNZ