

**THE REAL
DEAL:
EXPERIENCES
OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS
REALITY TV
TE MAHI TŪTURU:
NGA PŪKEKOTANGA
ME NGA WAIARO KI NGA
WHAKAATA
MOTUHENGA**

THE REAL DEAL: EXPERIENCES OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS REALITY TV TE MAHI TŪTURU: NGA PŪKEKOTANGA ME NGA WAIARO KI NGA WHAKAATA MOTUHENGA

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FINDINGS OF RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY
MOBIUS RESEARCH AND STRATEGY LIMITED

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

It is the role of the Broadcasting Standards Authority to determine complaints about alleged breaches of the Codes of Broadcasting Practice. In order to do this more effectively we undertake research into issues that arise in the adjudication of these complaints. 'Reality' television forms the landscape for this research project.

Reality shows make up only a small number of the total complaints received by the BSA, but the complaints received tend to relate to an individual's privacy and to fairness, issues that affect individuals in a powerful, and personal, way.

Reality programmes come in many types. For example, there are programmes where cameras are welcomed into the lives of famous, or not so famous, people; programmes in which participants compete for a prize or goal; and 'slice of life' programmes that aim to capture events as they happen.

For this research the BSA was interested in examining a section of these 'slice of life' programmes where people had not agreed, up front, to take part. In these shows people find themselves 'caught up' in the filming. Filming may take place in a public or private space and by obvious or hidden cameras. We chose programmes of this nature because these are the ones that are most often complained about. The reason for this is obvious: shows that rely on capturing people 'unawares' clearly raise issues not raised by shows people have willingly entered into.

This Report

There are broad learnings for us from the report.

Responses by viewers

Reality programmes of this nature are primarily seen as entertainment by viewers. However, they also function to provide information or to educate people, including education about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

There is a degree of confusion among members of the public concerning issues of privacy. Some misunderstanding relates to their rights (i.e. the rights of the public when they are filmed and if that footage is broadcast) and some relates to the rights of the producer or broadcaster of the programme (i.e. their rights to film and broadcast). This is especially true when filming takes place in a public place and there was even

confusion over what constitutes a 'public place'. This confusion colours the public's perceptions about what is 'appropriate' or 'fair'.

Viewers recognise that filming by hidden camera carries an extra degree of risk to the subjects. Viewers are equally able to weigh the public interest in broadcasting hidden camera footage. There were mixed views on whether pixellisation should be used to disguise the identities of those filmed; some felt it was a good thing, some felt it was unnecessary, especially if someone was 'guilty'. The BSA's position on pixellisation is well set out in its decisions and this report would not alter this.

Responses by participants

As with viewers, there was a degree of confusion and lack of knowledge amongst participants about their rights to privacy. This primarily relates to the rights around filming (both overtly and covertly) and whether the footage could be broadcast without their consent.

It is preferable if participants are aware of the probability or even possibility of being on television. Clear efforts are made to ensure no participants are 'surprised' by the broadcast and the BSA encourages these efforts to be as exhaustive as possible.

Recommendations

The report makes several recommendations. Some of these relate to matters within the control of production companies and broadcasters. For the BSA the key recommendation is that the public would be well served by clear, accessible information about the issues raised by this report, particularly around rights to privacy, filming and broadcast.

Conclusion

The BSA has no opinions about the inherent value of reality television. Our job is not to judge programming quality, but to apply the standards in the Codes of Broadcasting Practice to the shows that have been complained about. We hope this report will encourage further debate and discussion about the issues contained within.

1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In the past the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) has determined a variety of complaints relating to reality programmes. Such complaints most typically cite issues such as alleged breaches of privacy or unfair treatment. There is, however, very little local research in this area and as a result the BSA undertook a focused project examining the experiences of members of the public filmed as part of reality programmes, as well as exploring perceptions of, and attitudes towards, reality programmes from the perspective of those who watch them.

The definition of 'reality television' covers a wide range of programmes and the issues relating to appearing on such shows are equally vast. For this project, the focus (in terms of those taking part) was on people who may not willingly choose to participate in the programme. This narrowed down the focus to programmes where people are 'caught up' in the filming or filmed without their consent and/or knowledge. While there are a number of programmes that fit this criteria (for example, *Target*, *Police Ten 7*, *Border Patrol*, *Coastwatch*, *Piha Rescue* and *Fair Go*) it was not possible to include all of them in the research. For the purposes of this project, therefore, three programmes were selected: *Target*, *Coastwatch* and *Piha Rescue*.

This report presents the results of the research conducted.

2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the research were to:

- Gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of people taking part in reality programmes, and
- Explore the perceptions of, and attitudes towards, these programmes from the perspective of the people that watch them.

3 METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative project comprising one-on-one in-depth interviews with people taking part in reality programmes, and focus groups with the people that watch them.

It was originally intended that interviews also be conducted with each programme's producers and/or representatives from the relevant broadcaster. However, the producers and broadcasters of each of the three programmes declined to take part. Nevertheless, copies of a draft version of this report were sent to those parties and some chose to provide feedback.

Sample structure

Approach
20 one-on-one in-depth interviews with people who have been filmed without their knowledge and/or consent as part of a reality programme <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 <i>Coastwatch</i> participants• 8 <i>Piha Rescue</i> participants• 5 <i>Target</i> participants
Four focus groups with people who watch <i>Coastwatch</i>, <i>Piha Rescue</i> and <i>Target</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Audiences of each of the three programmes aged 18-25 years2. Audiences of each of the three programmes aged 26-49 years3. Audiences of each of the three programmes aged 50+ years4. Audience of each of the three programmes aged 26-49 years, Hawke's Bay

A note on the target demographic for TV ONE and TV3

It should be noted that the target demographic for the channels on which these reality programmes play is 25-54 years. The participants in Group 1 (18-25) largely fall outside this demographic, and therefore reference to this group throughout this report, and the examples of their verbatim comments, should be considered in this context.

The specific ages of participants in Group 3 (50+) were: 50, 50, 53, 53, 55, 56, 58, 63 and 70 (i.e. four fall within the target demographic and five do not). Again, comments should be considered in the context of the target demographic.

All research was conducted in Auckland, with the exception of one focus group in Hawke's Bay. All groups were two hours in duration. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to one hour in duration.

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 AUDIENCES OF REALITY PROGRAMMES

Attitudes towards the three reality programmes, *Coastwatch*, *Piha Rescue* and *Target* – an overview

The key reason why people watch these reality programmes is that they enjoy them and they want to be entertained. People also recognise that, in addition to the entertainment value, these programmes also offer some educative benefit. They are all, to varying degrees, seen as informative and as having content that helps people make decisions/choices in their day-to-day lives, including as a beach-user or water-user, a boat-user, a fisher, a consumer, an employee, or an employer or business owner.

People also recognise that each of these programmes employs different methods to achieve the outcomes they are seeking, and most people are of the opinion that many of the methods employed are necessary, both in terms of the entertainment and the educative value.

Many people do, however, face a dilemma when thinking more deeply about the entertainment and educative value, weighing it against the methods employed or the way in which the programmes are sometimes structured or participants depicted (and they note that this is not something they typically do while watching or being entertained by these programmes). It is clear, from more in-depth discussion, that the issues around privacy and fairness are complex and that conclusions around public value, the desire to be entertained and how the rights of individuals should be taken into account, are not easy to come to.

In general, this research has demonstrated that people are more comfortable with the approach taken as long as it involves *other people* (i.e. not them).

'It's human nature' (Focus group participant, 26-49 years)

But even so, most people acknowledge that this is what reality television is all about and what audiences have come to expect of it – it's supposed to be real.

'I guess you probably think it will never happen to me' (50+ years)

Focus group participants were asked why they watch each of these programmes, what they like about them, their views on public value, and for any other general comments/opinions they had, before being shown excerpts from the shows. The feedback to these questions is outlined below in relation to each programme (programmes are discussed in alphabetical order).

Coastwatch

As with the other two programmes, *Coastwatch* was seen as having both entertainment and educative value. In terms of entertainment, people spoke of enjoying:

- Seeing New Zealand scenery
- The fishing content (for people who fish) and
- The reactions and excuses of those people caught doing things they shouldn't be doing, such as catching fish that are too small or fishing over-quota. Audiences want to see people being caught red-handed (this is entertaining) and want to see their reactions.

'What's the point in watching if there's no climax?' (18-25 years)

'... you get the real idiots up there that you can have a real good laugh at'
(26-49 years)

'It's funny watching them trying to get out of the situation' (18-25 years)

In terms of educative and/or public value, *Coastwatch* is seen as:

- Exposing people who believe they have a right to take what they want (i.e. making examples of people in the hope that it will discourage other similar behaviours)
- Educating fishers to ensure that they are aware of the regulations they need to comply with
- Demonstrating that these regulations are being 'policed', and
- Informing the general public about the steps that are being taken to protect the New Zealand marine environment and educating them about the need to do so (whether they take part in marine activities or not).

'It's great to see how laws are actually enforced' (50+ years)

'It's very educational for fishermen and others, because this is something you're not normally exposed to' (26-49 years)

'I think it's quite good because it makes us realise that stuff goes on that we don't know about' (50+years)

The way in which people are portrayed in Coastwatch

Focus group participants felt that *Coastwatch* simply shows people as they are and that no attempt is made to make people look bad or appear worse. While people who are caught having behaved inappropriately were described as coming across as *'thieving bastards'* (26-49 years) or *'arrogant'* (18-25 years), there was a strong view that this is actually what they are, rather than what the programme is attempting to depict them as.

'I think the show is very fair with them and that's the whole point of reality TV. The three shows that [we're going to view tonight], I see all three of them ... they're all different, they're entertaining but it's real' (26-49 years)

'There's lots and lots of frames so you know that it's one complete shot ... so they're not editing it ... to make people look worse than they are' (26-49 years)

Prior to viewing the *Coastwatch* excerpt, most focus group participants were generally in agreement that showing the faces of those people who have behaved inappropriately was acceptable, and that if you are going to break the law or abuse the regulations, then you have no rights. Note, however, that there was considerable confusion over the *actual rights* or otherwise of people filmed without their knowledge and/or consent, and this is discussed in more detail later in this report.

'Effectively what they're doing is breaking the law, it's illegal to take a smaller fish' (18-25 years)

There was, however, recognition that *Coastwatch* also shows people who have done nothing wrong (i.e. those who are obeying the regulations). While the entertainment value in watching bad behaviour is high, it was also considered important for programmes such as this to demonstrate balance by showing that not everyone disrespects the marine environment.

'They do show a lot of honest fishers ... this is good, so the show is not just focusing on the entertainment' (26-49 years)

Piha Rescue

Piha Rescue was also seen as having entertainment and educative value. The entertainment value of *Piha Rescue* is to do with:

- The fact that it is a very 'Kiwi' programme and that it is 'local' (at least to Aucklanders)
- The fact that it is fast-paced and action-packed
- Getting to know the lifeguards' 'characters' and what they go through
- Possibly seeing someone you know (or for a minority, themselves) on TV, and
- Seeing the 'silly' behaviour of some people.

'I watch because I know people that work there' (18-25 years)

'It's local, you might see someone you recognise' (26-49 years)

'I have them on when I see them' (26-49 years)

'I watch it for the memories and all the rescues are the real deal' (50+ years)

'It's a beach we know' (26-49 years)

'To see myself on TV' (18-25 years)

'I'm sure people watch it just 'cause they like to laugh at the silly people'
(18-25 years)

'Also highlights the volunteers and the lifeguards ... I've got a husband in emergency services and we appreciate what people like that do' (50+ years)

'I find it quite entertaining, watching the stupidity of some people' (26-49 years)

The educative and/or public value of *Piha Rescue* is to do with:

- Educating users of Piha about the potential dangers of being in the water
- Educating new migrants about the potential dangers of New Zealand beaches (there was a view that new migrants are often shown getting into trouble at Piha)
- Educating New Zealanders in general (non-Aucklanders, non-Piha users) of potential water dangers.

'Educates you about the dangers that are out there' (18-25 years)

'It's not relevant to just Piha Beach, it's about water safety' (26-49 years)

[You think] *'Oh god that could have been me and maybe I can learn from it and not do something like that'* (50+ years)

The way in which people are portrayed in *Piha Rescue*

As with *Coastwatch*, most people felt that *Piha Rescue* portrays events as they are actually happening and people as they actually are *on the day*. The nature of the programme, however, means that people (those being rescued) can come across as having made poor choices.

'The actual people being rescued I think most of them are portrayed as pretty dumb' (26-49 years)

'Naïve' (26-49 years)

'I don't think [the show] portrays them as naïve ... [they do it themselves]'
(26-49 years)

There was a view among some, however, that there are times when people are not shown in the most flattering way and that the programme should be mindful of this during the editing process.

'The only thing I don't like is when they're pulling people out of the water, their pants are falling down ... I think it's mean on the person' (18-25 years)

'They just need to be respectful I think' (18-25 years)

One person (26-49 years) also raised a concern regarding times when the rescue has resulted in a more emotional reaction from the person being rescued (or from other family members), and that (the likely desire for) privacy should be respected.

Under these circumstances, there was a view among some that permission would necessarily have been sought before broadcasting this footage – although again, people struggled with issues around the right to privacy and the very nature of reality television (the desire to be entertained and the educative value of seeing real-life rescue situations from the reasonably minor to the extreme). Several people mentioned the fact that some of those who have been rescued are interviewed afterwards, which implies consent to be shown on national television. Overall, there was a perception across all four groups that people filmed on *Piha Rescue* have given their consent to be on television.

'And they're interviewed again so they know they're being filmed ... so they're really giving the OK' (50+ years)

'If I was being filmed I'd like to be asked before it goes to air, 'are you OK with this?'' (50+ years)

'If they give permission then that's cool' (18-25 years)

'Yeah, I would want to give my consent' (50+ years)

'But that's the thing, it's reality TV' (18-25 years)

Some in the 50+ focus group felt that the programme presents people in a sympathetic manner – note that this was mainly because of the commentary which was seen as fairly matter-of-fact. The commentary used in each of these programmes plays a key role in perceptions of fairness (this is discussed later in this report).

'Very sensitive really, they're very mindful that they don't get too close or personal or too personal ... and families that have been filmed, they never say, 'oh that stupid wuss in the rip there'' (50+ years)

'The empathy they give to other cultures, there's no racism' (50+ years)

Many of the focus group participants visited Piha Beach and all were aware that there could be cameras there during their visit. None said they would avoid Piha because of the cameras, but some said they might try to avoid being filmed while there. Several people in the focus groups said the programme has made them avoid going to Piha Beach, not because of the cameras, but because of the water dangers. Once again, people faced a dilemma when weighing up how they feel as viewers against how they would feel as participants.

'If I saw a camera I'd be hiding ... because all of my friends would be giving me stick' (26-49 years)

'I wouldn't want to be on TV in my bikini' (26-49 years)

'It's human nature [to want to see it but not be in it] – you're not sure until you're put in the situation yourself' (26-49 years)

Target

Target was also seen as having both entertainment and educative value. The entertainment value was mainly to do with the use of hidden cameras and the behaviour this exposes – people were particularly titillated by the more extreme behaviour.

'Particularly the secret cameras ... you know where they have the painters going through drawers?' (26-49 years)

"It's entertaining isn't it?" (50+ years)

'It's fascinating' (Hawke's Bay)

The educative and/or public value of *Target* was to do with:

- Informing and educating consumers about the merits of different products and services, and
- Raising awareness among consumers about the questions they should be asking of service providers and the expectations they should have.

Target was also seen as providing a valuable service to consumers in terms of helping consumers who may have been treated badly by a service provider, and in terms of keeping service providers honest. Note that much of the focus of the initial *Target* discussion (raised by focus group participants) was on tradespeople.

'Keeps tradesmen honest' (26-49 years)

'Naming and shaming' (50+ years)

'Gives consumers more power and more knowledge about what they're buying' (26-49 years)

'It kind of represents New Zealand society, the public rather than just businesses' (18-25 years)

"It's about quality and quality of services and keeping people honest" (50+years)

'I love that programme, it just makes you aware of who to look out for and you know, tradesmen and that ... I'm a bit of a tradesman myself' (Hawke's Bay)

The way in which people are portrayed in Target

As with the other programmes, there was a view that people on *Target* are portrayed as they actually are, and this was particularly the case where a hidden camera was involved. When asked about their views on hidden cameras at this stage of the discussion, most people were in favour. The general view here was that if a person is doing nothing wrong, they have nothing to be worried about – however, if they are behaving inappropriately, then they 'deserve what they get'.

'He did the crime' (26-49 years)

'This is him being caught on Target once, but what else has he got up to?' (26-49 years)

'Well you deserve it, you do the crime you gotta do the time' (26-49 years)

'The ones where they're selling cigarettes and alcohol to underage kids, I have no problem with that' (18-25 years)

'It's totally wrong and they should be portrayed that way' (18-25 years)

'But they should be doing their job properly though' (18-25 years)

As with *Coastwatch*, *Target* was also felt to offer 'balance' in terms of also showing people doing their job properly and behaving appropriately, and to have a benefit for the 'good' companies included in the programme.

There were three key concerns raised regarding *Target*, however. The first was to do with the impact of one bad employee on the business employing them. People felt that businesses may sometimes suffer because of the actions of one person (in particular, the more extreme behaviour inside the *Target* house) – behaviour that the business may never have suspected would occur. This created debate, however, with some people providing a counter-argument that businesses are given an opportunity to respond, and others suggesting that this may point to a wider cultural/training/management problem within the business (particularly where tradespeople are not performing job tasks appropriately or to a high enough standard).

The second concern raised by some was to do with a perception that the *Target* house is sometimes staged to catch people out, and the third concern was to do with the commentary on *Target*. People felt that the commentary is sometimes very negative, including in circumstances where a person is performing their job well (i.e. that sometimes small or inconsequential behaviours can be picked on).

'They do focus on the negatives' (26-49 years)

'When they commentate it, they seem to be really negative and then they get an 8 and a half out of 10 ... why was that talked about so negative?' (18-25 years)

'One thing I do find often is they can be a good tradesman ... and they pick at something really, really minor, which most of us wouldn't even care about and mark him 9 of 10 ... [when it should be a 10]' (Hawke's Bay)

Privacy, hidden cameras and pixellising faces – an overview

During discussion of the specific excerpts a number of issues were raised with respect to privacy, hidden cameras and obscuring the faces of those being displayed (known as 'pixellisation'). These issues are discussed with reference to each of the excerpts but the key points covered are also discussed separately in the following three sections.

Awareness of rules governing privacy

Considerable confusion was evident regarding the rules and regulations to do with privacy. This was the same across all four focus groups. Many people were under the impression (other than where a hidden camera is used) that permission had probably been sought. This was particularly the case for *Coastwatch* and *Piha Rescue*.

There was very little awareness regarding the rules about filming in a public place and under what circumstances permission to film is necessary. Some people were aware that permission is not required if filming takes place in a public place (but note here that definitions over what is and isn't a public place were somewhat confused). Some people (a minority) thought that permission *would be required* if filming was happening in a public place.

As can be seen by the verbatim quotes below, there is a view that *permission is sought* before someone (except perhaps in the case of *Target*) can be shown on national television.

'Yes [permission is sought], because I wouldn't want to be filmed on a street or beach or wherever and then being shown on national TV' (26-49 years)

*'Yes of course because that's the Human Rights Act' [re: *Piha Rescue*] (Hawke's Bay)*

'As far as the Privacy Act goes you do have to have some sort of anonymity' (26-49 years)

'There's got to be some ability to go back to them and say, 'look you were filmed'' (50+ years)

*'But I think they have to seek permission. I'm sure all of those people have actually agreed to [have] taken part in that programme' [*Coastwatch*] (50+ years)*

'Unfortunately I think the Privacy Act overrides the educational [benefit]' (50+ years)

'I think these programmes have more footage than they can show, so if someone says no I don't want to be on, there'll be someone else who's happy to' (50+ years)

'They do ask for permission don't they? 'Cause you can't show their face without it, you'd have to blur it' (18-25 years)

'There are cases where I wouldn't want to be filmed myself, if it's really stupid behaviour ... and that makes me think that they might not get permission from everybody' (50+ years)

'I'd say ideally show their faces, but legally I think they have rights' (50+ years)

Everyone did believe, however, that permission would be required if filming was occurring in a private place (specifically, in their own homes).

One of the confusing factors with regards to permission was why some people's faces are blurred out in some reality programmes. Some people thought that this was because they hadn't given permission, while others recognised that it may be because of impending legal action (although this was more the case for *Police Ten 7* than for the three programmes under discussion as part of this research).

Many focus group participants were surprised to learn that permission is not required (generally but depending on the circumstances) if filming occurs in a public place. Others acknowledged, however, that if permission *were* always required, that few people would actually give it.

'If they do have to get permission I don't think many people would say yes'
(26-49 years)

'At the end of the day, if you had to seek permission, you wouldn't have any shows' (26-49 years)

In the context of this discussion, when asked for their opinions on whether or not permission should be sought, views were mixed but leaned towards 'no permission'. The main reasons for this were to do with the perceived nature and purpose of reality television and the fact that people who behave inappropriately (on *Coastwatch* and *Target*) have no rights with respect to privacy. Attitudes regarding permission for *Piha Rescue* were more confused because most people assumed permission is sought, and the interviews after some rescues imply consent.

'I think it's fair, that's the way it is. E.g. like on the news you shouldn't have to ask permission because we're learning things' (26-49 years)

'I suppose reality TV is reality TV' (26-49 years)

'If they're breaking the law then they should probably lose their right to privacy'
(18-25 years)

'No I don't think [they have any rights] if they're up to something like that'
(50+ years)

Prior to more in-depth discussion around specific excerpts, the general view with respect to people who are behaving appropriately or doing a good job *on these two programmes* was 'why wouldn't they want their faces to be shown?' – particularly in the case where there may be some commercial advantage.

Attitudes towards hidden cameras vs filming with camera not hidden

People were of the opinion that there is a place for hidden cameras in reality television and particularly in the context of *Target*. The general view was that if *Target* didn't use hidden cameras in the *Target* house (or in some other locations) actual behaviour would not be represented and the public value for consumers would be negatively impacted on. In this respect, if hidden cameras were not used in *Target*, the programme simply wouldn't work.

'It shows people how they actually are, it's not dramatised' (18-25 years)

'If it's reality TV it should obviously be as real as it can be' (18-25 years)

Several people across the focus groups worked in retail or other service roles and their view was that hidden cameras are not really very different to mystery shopping (albeit one can result in an appearance on national television). The rationale here was that if you are in a workplace, you are required to behave in a certain way and to do the job you are paid to do – and if you don't (as already highlighted) you forfeit your right to privacy (i.e. it's 'your lookout'). These same people felt that if they had been doing their job well, as already mentioned, they may be embarrassed but they would not necessarily object to having their faces shown on national television. Note that none had ever been in this situation however.

'I wouldn't have a problem with it because when I'm at work, I'm at work and that's part of my job' (26-49 years)

'It's just like everyday society, it can happen to anyone' (18-25 years)

'If I was doing my job properly and I've done nothing wrong then it shouldn't bother me' (26-49 years)

'I guess it's just like being a mystery shopper' (18-25 years)

'I think they'd be quite happy with what they saw' (in-home cleaner, 50+ years)

In the case of *Coastwatch*, where cameras are always in full view, the opinion was that people being filmed are given an opportunity to adjust their behaviour accordingly. In other words, that they can control how they are depicted on national television. Again it came back to bad versus good behaviour: if someone has been caught behaving inappropriately, then they have brought the situation on themselves and have forfeited their rights – but they still have the opportunity to present themselves in the best way they can.

Attitudes towards blurring/pixellisation of faces

Attitudes towards the blurring or pixellisation of faces were mixed. There were three key views here:

1. That people behaving badly/not doing their job properly (*Coastwatch* and *Target*) should not have any rights with respect to privacy but that people behaving well/doing their job properly should have a choice over whether their faces are shown or not
2. That people behaving badly have no rights and people behaving well should be proud/pleased to have their faces shown, and
3. That reality television would not be reality television if faces (regardless of the circumstances) were not shown.

A minority (and they were primarily in the 50+ group) thought that there should be choice for everyone.

Several people also felt that, under certain circumstances, the pixellisation of faces can impact negatively on the way the person being pixellised is viewed. This is because people make an assumption that pixellisation is done for a specific reason – i.e. because the person is in fact guilty or there are more serious charges pending.

'It would have made it seem worse ... like [he was] a danger to society'
[*Coastwatch* excerpt] (18-25 years)

Again, some people could not understand why, if a person is doing their job well, they would want to have their face pixellised. Others acknowledged, however, that even under these circumstances, they would not want their faces shown.

'I understand the public place issues but personally I wouldn't want to be on TV'
(26-49 years)

'It seems like you should have a choice' (26-49 years)

'If you're doing a good thing you do want people to see you' (26-49 years)

'If every face was blurred out, it wouldn't be as good as not blurred out because it's kind of a distraction' (18-25 years)

'I think [not pixellising] makes it seem more real' (18-25 years)

'There's no reason why their faces should be blurred out' [if doing a good job]
(18-25 years)

'They should be proud' (18-25 years)

'Well I'd want to be shown, it's good PR for [the tradesperson] and he should pick up work' (50+ years)

'Yeah I reckon [show them] because that's giving them an 'up there' sort of status' (Hawke's Bay)

Overall, across the four focus groups, the older (50+) group was more in favour of pixellisation where a hidden camera is used (regardless of the behaviour of the person being filmed).

'I don't think the cookie jar or the photo album ... that they should be shown, it's petty stuff' (50+ years)

'If it was me and I was doing someone's housework and was being filmed I would feel that that was an invasion of my privacy' (50+ years)

'It's not quite my business to see who it is' (50+ years)

Attitudes towards specific reality programme excerpts

Three programme excerpts were shown to participants, two from *Target* and one from *Coastwatch*. These excerpts had all been the subject of BSA complaints. No excerpt was shown to participants for *Piha Rescue* because no appropriate excerpts of *Piha Rescue* (i.e. for which complaints had been made) were available. While the discussion at this point in the focus groups centred around the excerpts that were available, *Piha Rescue* was also discussed where appropriate (i.e. in the context of public interest, fairness and the right to privacy).

Both *Target* excerpts were shown to two of the four groups. Only one was shown to the other two groups due to time constraints.

Segment one: Coastwatch (fishing outside of legal area, undersized fish)

Ministry of Fisheries staff members (in a boat) approach two boats in the Marlborough Sounds. Interactions with people on each boat form the basis of this story – a woman on boat one and a man on boat two. The main focus of the interaction is on fishing in restricted areas. The woman and her family on boat one were not found to have been fishing in a restricted area, while the man (and another person) on boat two had been, albeit unknowingly. The second boat was also found to have caught undersized fish.

This excerpt was shown to all four focus groups.

Public interest

Focus group participants felt that there was public value in both parts of this excerpt in terms of the educational/public value of *Coastwatch* – i.e. educating people about how they should be behaving and exposing people who have not behaved according to the regulations (whether knowingly or not). The consensus view was that the public value here outweighs the right to privacy of the individual participants in this excerpt – both people who were the main focus (the woman in the first segment and the man in the second). The subject matter, the protection of New Zealand’s coastal and marine environment, is considered to be more important than these individuals’ privacy rights, *‘so long as it’s done fairly’* (26-49 years).

Right to privacy

As has already been discussed throughout this report, the focus group participants tended to take a somewhat black-and-white view in terms of people’s rights to privacy. The general feeling among most is that if you break the law/disobey regulations/ behave inappropriately, then you forfeit your right to privacy. In the case of the man in the *Coastwatch* excerpt, the view was that because he had taken undersized fish he fell into this category. This is despite the fact that most people agreed that he came across as having made an honest mistake with respect to fishing zones.

[Filming was fair enough] *‘because of the undersized fish’* (18-25 years)

‘He’s broken the law, it’s as simple as that’ (26-49 years)

Few of the focus group participants thought that the permission of the two main subjects in this excerpt should have been sought. In particular, the woman (and family) in the first part were not seen as having done anything wrong and therefore the view was that they should not have had any problem being filmed and shown on national television. Note that even if they had objected, the focus group participants were still of the opinion that the public good or value here was more important.

'No need to have got her permission because it was in the public's interest to see this' (26-49 years)

'She didn't do anything wrong anyway' (26-49 years)

'She didn't seem distressed at all, didn't seem agitated and had lots of opportunity to present [herself]' (50+ years)

One person raised a query regarding whether being on a private boat equates to being in a private place – *'well they were on their own boat, so it's like being filmed in your own house'* (26-49 years) – but most other people agreed that the Marlborough Sounds would be a public place whether you were on your own boat or not.

Fairness

The people shown in both parts of this excerpt were considered to have been treated fairly by the *Coastwatch* programme. This perception of fairness was to do with both the 'stating of the facts' style of the voice-over and the fact that they were aware that they were being filmed and therefore had every opportunity to adjust their behaviour accordingly. The way in which the voice-over is used in *Coastwatch* plays a strong role in perceptions of fairness and impartiality. In terms of awareness of being on camera, however, it was acknowledged that the participants in both segments had had no choice in the matter.

'You really don't have anywhere to run if they're coming at you with a camera' (26-49 years)

The man in the second part of the excerpt was felt by most to have come across credibly and as someone who had made an honest mistake. The voice-over played a part in this portrayal.

'The voice-over is very impartial – he doesn't express any emotion, he doesn't imply, 'oh they're guilty'' (26-49 years)

'It's factual' (26-49 years)

'I think he was portrayed how he is, they didn't put any slant on it at all' (26-49 years)

'Pretty fair how they portrayed him' (26-49 years)

[Came across] *'as a normal guy who made an honest mistake'* [out of zone fishing] (26-49 years)

'It was fairly neutral, it wasn't judgemental' (Hawke's Bay)

'He knew he was being filmed so he could act appropriately and he could control his behaviour if he wanted to and portray himself how he wanted to be portrayed' (18-25 years)

The excerpt was also seen as providing balance between people who have obeyed the regulations and people who have not – whether they disobeyed the regulations knowingly or not was considered irrelevant – *‘rather than just nailing everyone who’s on the take’* (26-49 years).

Pixellisation of faces

The majority view here was that there was no need for the faces of these two people to be pixellised. As already discussed, the man had broken the rules by catching under-sized fish, and the woman (and family) had done nothing wrong and provided balance in the piece. Even if the woman had wanted her face to be pixellised, most focus group participants didn’t think it should be. This is because she was felt to have *been treated very fairly* by the programme and the protection of the marine environment was considered to be extremely important (i.e. the public good aspect here is strong).

‘Yeah, that’s the whole point of the programme, show them’ (18-25 years)

‘I wouldn’t blur it out unless it’s illegal ... or if there are charges pending’
(26-49 years)

‘I think that if he had his face blurred it would make him look even more dishonest’ [why?] *‘because it means he’s too afraid to show his face – 99.9% of the audience don’t know who he is anyway’* (26-49 years)

‘I bet that second man would have asked to have his face to be blurred out for sure’ [why?] *‘because he was caught red-handed’* (50+ years)

‘If he didn’t want to be filmed, he should not have been there [in the restricted area]’ (Hawke’s Bay)

Some people did feel, however, that the content of the piece was not serious enough to warrant showing the man’s face. There was some discussion in all four groups around the issue of what is a *serious enough topic* and what isn’t (in all three excerpts). Most took a black-and-white approach to this and were of the opinion that any activity that breaks regulations or any inappropriate behaviour should be ‘punished’ (i.e. by exposing the person), while others (a minority) tended to take a more sympathetic approach.

‘Because he’s portrayed in a bad light and it’s not a serious enough thing’
(Hawke’s Bay)

Most, people said that if it had been them (if they had been in the position of the woman) they would have been comfortable being on national television. As with each of these programmes, the underlying theme for other focus group participants was that it’s acceptable to show other people’s faces (but ‘not mine’).

‘If it was personally me, I wouldn’t want my face shown’ (26-49 years)

‘But if it’s other people, it’s fine’ (26-49 years)

‘I wouldn’t like it if I was him’ (Hawke’s Bay)

Segment two: Target (Qantas)

This was a hidden camera trial, which focused on the check-in process for Qantas. A female passenger approached a Qantas staff member to check in for a Qantas flight. This segment focused on key aspects of the interaction between the two and the Qantas staff member's responses to the customer's questions. A written quote was displayed on the screen saying 'get the bags up here' when he actually said 'can I get the rest of the bags on please'.

This excerpt was shown to Groups 1 (18-25 years) and 2 (26-49 years).

Public interest

The majority of focus group participants did not feel that there was any public value in this excerpt. The general view was that because of the length of the segment (a short one given the actual time it can take to complete an entire check-in process) and the fact that it represented the actions of only one of very many Qantas employees, that it would have no impact on consumers' choice of airline.

'There's nothing educational or public value in that' (26-49 years)

'You're not going to not fly Qantas because of one guy' (26-49 years)

Focus group participants struggled more with the concept of public good versus right to privacy here than they did with the *Coastwatch* excerpt.

'There's no public good, it's entertainment that outweighs his right to privacy, it sells' (26-49 years)

'I don't know if the two [public good/privacy] are related in this issue. I don't believe you should have to get permission but there's no public good either' (26-49 years)

There was a view among some (a minority) that perhaps there would be some public benefit in terms of Qantas improving their training procedures as a result of this, but this was rejected by most other focus participants in terms of a public good argument. However, *even if* there was no perceived public interest, focus group participants did not feel that the Qantas employee had any privacy rights in this context.

Right to privacy

Focus group participants were in agreement that the Qantas employee was being filmed (albeit unknowingly) in a public place (an airport) that was *also* his workplace. The view among most here was that because it is a workplace and he is in a customer service role, he does not have any rights in terms of privacy. Furthermore, an airport was considered to be a 'very' public place in which he would have been seen (and possibly heard) by many other people.

'He's not in his own home, he's in a place of paid employment' (26-49 years)

'Because if you've got a business you can put security cameras in the business' (26-49 years)

'Hundreds of people are seeing him anyway' [in an airport] (26-49 years)

Fairness

Many focus group participants *initially* felt that he came across as rude and uninterested in the customer and in the job he was being paid to do, and that he was not treated unfairly by *Target* because he was being filmed by hidden camera and the way he was presented by the programme was the way he actually was. Note that there was agreement that a hidden camera was appropriate here given that if he knew he was being filmed it is likely that he would have behaved differently.

[He was portrayed] *'Exactly how he presented himself'* (26-49 years)

[Hidden camera?] *'It's good, shows the real side of him'* (26-49 years)

'Because you wouldn't have got the real service from Qantas if you walked in there with a ruddy great camera' (26-49 years)

However, the issues to do with fairness created some debate within each focus group. A number of people felt that he had been treated unfairly by the programme because:

- The segment was too short to fully represent the check-in experience – and people were sceptical about the way in which it had been edited. Note here, however, that people recognised that it is not always possible to show an entire service interaction on a programme such as *Target*.

'The Qantas guy is different, that's like one second' [versus the caregivers] *'that's the whole day'* (18-25 years)

'They've edited it down to make it seem worse than it is' (26-49 years).

- The incorrect subtitles (once people were told of this) were felt to impact on the credibility of the programme and to significantly alter the 'mood' of the interaction (i.e. because he actually did say please).

'That's bad' (26-49 years)

'... that impacts on the integrity of the show' (26-49 years)

'Trying to portray him in a bad way' (26-49 years)

'If I see something with subtitles, I expect it to be every word that's spoken' (26-49 years)

- The commentary from the actress at the beginning of the segment was felt to be overly negative and to be 'setting' the scene to create a negative overall impression.

The use of commentary in this *Target* excerpt was seen as very different to the way in which commentary was used in the *Coastwatch* excerpt – with one playing a key role in setting the scene and influencing perceptions of the interaction, and the other providing factual, impartial comments. Note that this was also raised unprompted at the beginning of the groups by participants in terms of what they don't like about *Target*, and overall there appears to be a preference for more neutral commentary.

'I think they didn't start off very fair' (26-49 years)

'They sort of built you up to it' (26-49 years)

'I think it was fair that he was shown on TV but I don't agree with the Target comment that was behind it ... because she's putting something in other people's heads' (18-25 years)

'I thought it was quite harsh on him, like he could have just had a bad day [or a] bad customer beforehand' (18-25 years)

'There's no issue with privacy but I don't think he was portrayed 100% fairly' (26-49 years)

Pixellisation

Most people were of the opinion that pixellisation was not necessary here. This was primarily because he was being filmed in a public place (which was also his workplace). As with the other excerpts, however, there were some people who said that if it had been them, they would not have wanted to have their face shown, and others who were of the opinion that if the job is being done properly, then the person being filmed has nothing to hide.

'He's in a public place, he's on the clock' (26-49 years)

'If that was me I would have been 'shame on me, stink', but too bad' (26-49 years)

'I don't like it because I'd hate it if it was me' (18-25 years)

'I reckon they should have some choice' (18-25 years)

Segment three: Target (caregivers)

This was a hidden camera trial in the *Target* house, which involved the filming of four caregivers from four different companies, employed to care for an elderly woman for a four-hour period. Each caregiver was asked to complete a series of tasks throughout their working day and was given instructions regarding the elderly woman, which they were required to follow.

This segment was filmed four years ago. Focus group participants were not informed of the age of any of the segments they were shown, however.

Public interest

All focus group participants felt that there was public interest or value in this excerpt. This was mainly because it involved a personal service (caregiving) and one that most often takes place in a private home. The public value here was to do with reminding consumers that caregiver services can vary considerably and that they (the consumer) should take adequate steps to ensure that they ask the right questions of caregiver services and make the most informed choice. This excerpt was seen as having strong educative benefit for people across New Zealand and not just in the city where this segment was filmed. In other words, the public benefit was not seen as simply being about providing ratings for the four companies included here. This was also a very emotive topic for people, in that it involved services provided to the elderly.

'We've all got old people' (18-25 years)

'If you have an elderly person it tells you to ... check for references, so is not just about the [specific] companies here either' (18-25 years)

'Still public good even if outside of Auckland ... an eye opener' (26-49 years)

'Lots of people have got elderly relatives or people in that situation, and they're really vulnerable' (Hawke's Bay)

There was agreement that there was public value in showing the work of all four types of caregivers (broadly speaking, two that provided a high-quality service and two that had some service issues). As already discussed, providing balance in programmes such as *Coastwatch* and *Target* is considered to be important.

'The good ones kind of give you standards' (26-49 years)

'If they put just the bad people up there I wouldn't want to put my nana with anyone, I'd stay home' (26-49 years)

Right to privacy

Once again, most focus group participants felt strongly that if a person is in a work role, and particularly a client/customer service role, (unless in their own home) they do not have any privacy rights and the use of a hidden camera is acceptable. This is particularly the case if a service provider is undertaking work in a private home.

'It's in the public interest because we want to see how people actually work, naturally work' (18-25 years)

'The minute they step inside someone else's home they have no right to privacy' (26-49 years)

'They're providing a service' (26-49 years)

'No this is a customer service industry and they're being paid' (26-49 years)

'Because if you've done wrong you should be shown and if you've done good you'd love to be shown' (Hawke's Bay)

The fact that this 'home' was in fact the *Target* house was considered irrelevant – *'the caregiver doesn't know this'* (26-49 years).

There were mixed views on the issues regarding privacy between the two (broad) types of caregivers. Some people were of the opinion, as outlined above, that being filmed while being paid for work done is fair enough and that the public good of the information provided outweighs individuals' right to privacy (regardless of the quality of the service provided). However, others felt that the 'good' caregivers should have been able to choose whether or not they wanted to have their faces shown on national television. Most people felt that the 'poorly' performing caregivers (in particular, caregiver four who was shown as having performed most poorly) had no rights in this respect.

Fairness

The majority view here was that all four caregivers were treated fairly and were treated in exactly the same way by *Target*. They had all been required to perform the same tasks and were all rated on the same scale.

'There was a good balance' (26-49 years)

'I think they did it in a fair way. They had a scale that they rated them all against' (26-49 years)

Two key fairness issues were raised during the discussion, however. Firstly, that the commentary was overly (and inappropriately) negative in some instances and that the *Target* presenter was 'trying to find' negative things to say. This was mainly the case in terms of the better-performing caregivers who were felt to have been unfairly criticised for some of the things they did, such as leaving the front door open.

'I wish they had showed, stated what was happening without that lady's comments every two seconds, it's so unnecessary' (18-25 years)

Some people also felt that caregiver one, who had performed many tasks well, was unfairly picked on for the food she ate during her time in the *Target* house. While people agreed that she should not have done this, some felt that the eating episodes were focused on too often and that the commentary here was unfair ('she's looking after herself'). The younger group (18-25 years) and the older group (50+ years) were the most sympathetic towards this caregiver.

'The one that was eating chips, you feel bad, she was just having a little snack' (18-25 years)

'Other things she did were good but the voiceover said 'she's just looking after herself'' (18-25 years)

'I think it was definitely in the public interest, the only bit I wasn't really OK with was the first caregiver, how she came across as a bit of a pig, because they showed every clip where she was eating food and if it was me I'd be a bit mortified' (18-25 years)

'She shouldn't have done that [eating] but when you look at the service itself, she was alright wasn't she?' (50+ years)

'She was warm and friendly, she was OK' (50+ years)

Most people in the other groups were more unforgiving in their opinion of this caregiver and felt that she had been treated fairly (and no differently to the other caregivers), but that she had crossed the line between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and as a result of this forfeited her right to privacy.

Pixellisation

There were mixed views on pixellisation. Again, people felt that the 'good' caregivers had nothing to be embarrassed about and should not be concerned about having their faces shown. Others felt that because they had been 'good' caregivers they should be given a choice about having their faces pixellised.

'To be honest if that was me and I'd done a good job, I'd be like yeah ... [show me] because people would be like 'I want that lady'' (18-25 years)

'Everyone wants praise for doing a good job' (18-25 years)

'I still think she should be asked' (18-25 years)

Most people were of the opinion that the more poorly performing caregivers should not have their faces pixellised.

'If they're not doing their job properly or not looking after an elderly person, they should be shown' (18-25 years)

'It's different here because it's a personal service they're offering, they're dealing with trust', 'You need to see the relationship between the client and the caregiver' (Hawke's Bay)

Once again differences in opinion were evident when focus groups participants were asked what they would want to have happened. Some people were concerned about the fact that hidden cameras had been used for the entire time the caregiver was in the house – *'I'd feel violated'* (26-49 years) – while others fell back on the at-work argument – *'I don't think I'd feel violated if I was in my place of work, in home obviously you would'* (26-49 years).

When the subject of pixellisation was raised in the context of this discussion, participants were told that *Target* now pixellises the faces of people filmed by hidden camera in the *Target* house. Some participants, in fact, were aware of *Target's* pixellisation practice and noted that the excerpt differed from episodes they had seen more recently.

4.2 PEOPLE TAKING PART IN REALITY PROGRAMMES

The experiences of people filmed as part of these three reality programmes varied considerably. Overall, there was more negativity towards the filming process from those who had been filmed as part of *Piha Rescue*, than from those filmed as part of the other two programmes. Note, however, that the people who had been filmed as part of *Coastwatch* had not been identified or presented as having behaved inappropriately. People on *Coastwatch* who had been caught breaking the law did not come forward to be interviewed during the research recruitment process. One person who had been on *Target* admitted to having behaved inappropriately; the other four had behaved appropriately.

Coastwatch

Seven people who had been filmed as part of *Coastwatch* were interviewed. All seven were aware that they had been filmed because *Coastwatch* does not use hidden cameras and the camera was visible to them. Three had been rescued or assisted in some way, and four had been filmed while out fishing/just having returned from fishing/scallop diving etc.

Initial awareness of having been filmed

As already mentioned, all seven were aware that they were being filmed at the time the filming was taking place. The *Coastwatch* camera crew were visible on the [Ministry of Fisheries, Coastguard, Maritime Police] boat or were visible around the port area (where filming took place on land). All seven had the impression that the cameras were already filming when they were first approached. Four of these people said they felt that perhaps filming could have started after the *Coastwatch* people/cameraman had introduced themselves and informed them that they may appear on national television (although none raised any objections to the camera already being on). When asked, none were sure of the actual regulations regarding filming in a public place or whether there is any need to ask permission or inform the person being filmed first.

There appeared to be a difference in process, however, between those filmed while being rescued or given assistance (by the Coastguard), and those filmed where the focus was on fishing regulations. Those filmed because of a rescue or where assistance was needed do recall being introduced to the *Coastwatch* cameraman/crew (although none could recall if a Coastguard staff member did the introductions or whether the *Coastwatch* cameraman/crew introduced themselves). They did note, however, that the filming was already underway when the introductions were made. One person could recall being asked to sign a consent form, but the other two were unsure. Both noted, however, that they had raised no objections to the filming taking place. Both said that they simply went along with what was happening – the rescue and the filming of the rescue – and did not think to question how and when the footage might be used. Both also said that they had no specific concerns about being filmed given the nature of the situation they were in (not life-threatening and/or they weren't doing anything wrong).

'They introduced the camera crew ... actually I'm not sure who did the introductions but someone did'

'I definitely signed a consent ... it was a one page document and I remember reading it'

Where the filming was related to fishing regulations, all interactions were with the [relevant organisation] and not with any member of the *Coastwatch* filming crew. None could recall if the *Coastwatch* filming crew introduced themselves at the beginning or during the filming process (the general consensus was that they did not); however, most said they thought that the *Coastwatch* crew mentioned who they were *after* the filming/interaction had been completed. During the research interview, two of these people made the assumption that introductions were not made early on in situations such as theirs, just in case the *Coastwatch*/fisheries team managed to capture someone breaking the regulations, in which case they would probably want to also 'capture' their reactions to being approached in the first place. Both of these people also watched *Coastwatch* and, like the focus group participants, said they enjoyed watching people's reactions to having been caught behaving inappropriately/breaking regulations.

There was no recollection of any consent being sought, but none of these four people had asked for the camera to stop filming or asked any questions about the purpose of the filming while it was occurring. Three out of the four said that they had been aware *Coastwatch* was filming in the area at the time. There was a general view that they would have liked to have a bit more information about the likelihood of actually appearing on national television and possibly receiving a phone call or email prior to the broadcast letting them know that their segment was going to be screened.

'I heard that they were in the area and then when I saw them on the wharf I thought yep that must be them'

There appears to be some inconsistencies in the way in which *Coastwatch* approaches potential programme participants and also in the process they follow (when and how they introduce themselves and whether or not a consent form is signed). It is impossible to know, however, if *Coastwatch* does treat different people/situations differently, or whether people who have been filmed simply have different levels of recall.

Experience of having been filmed

None of the seven people interviewed for this project was concerned about the filming that was taking place during their interactions with the [relevant organisation]. The general view was that the cameraman acted in a respectful way during the filming process, by standing back (i.e. no one thought that the camera had been too close to their faces/to them). Two people (who had been rescued/assisted by the Coastguard) said that the cameraman had appeared to be careful in terms of who he was filming and had not aimed the camera at other family members (including children) who were also on board.

'The guy holding the camera was very respectful of my family's privacy ... he stood back from the action. I felt that he was filming my interaction with the Coastguard'

The three who had been rescued/assisted were directly (and very briefly) interviewed by the cameraman. All were comfortable with the questions and the filming process here.

'I'm totally all about water safety ... I'm happy to promote it'

Post-filming experiences

After being filmed all seven were comfortable about the prospect of being on television, although they would like to have known when this might occur. The general view here was that they either had nothing to be embarrassed about (including those that had been rescued or assisted) or that they had done nothing wrong. The people that had been rescued/assisted did note that if they had been rescued for a particularly 'stupid' action then they may have felt differently about being filmed and being shown on national television.

'We didn't have anything to be concerned about'

'It was more entertaining than anything else'

'The kids were quite excited about it ... are we going to be on TV?'

Post-broadcast experiences

Five saw the segment they were on and two did not. All felt that they had been fairly represented and were comfortable with the footage shown.

Piha Rescue

Eight people who had been filmed as part of *Piha Rescue* were interviewed. Seven were aware that they had been filmed (at least at *some stage* during the filming process) because *Piha Rescue* does not use hidden cameras; one had not been aware that she had been filmed.

- Five were regular visitors to Piha Beach and had been aware that filming does sometimes take place there, and
- Three were less regular visitors, and of those, *one had not heard* of the programme *Piha Rescue* and was unaware that filming sometimes takes place.

Initial awareness of having been filmed

Seven people had got into difficulty while swimming/boogie boarding at Piha Beach and had been rescued by Piha surf lifesavers. One person had been filmed while sunbathing on the beach.

During each of the seven rescues, the Piha Surf Lifesaving vessel had been sent out to 'pull' them from the water:

- Five had been aware that they were being filmed during the time that they were being rescued (on the boat) (or had at least noticed the cameraman/camera), and
- Two only became aware of the filming once they were back on the beach (however, these two people *had in fact also been filmed* on the boat).

'I didn't know I was being filmed, I didn't see the camera or anything'

'I didn't know that they were filming on the boat because I didn't see a camera then'

The five that had been aware that they were being filmed said that they had noticed there was a camera crew or at least a cameraman on the boat (there was some confusion over how many camera crew/*Piha Rescue* programme crew were actually on the boat) but that during this filming process no one had spoken to them or introduced themselves or mentioned the programme *Piha Rescue*. However, four of these people said that when they had been pulled from the water they had not fully registered or thought about the consequences of being filmed on the boat even though they acknowledged seeing a cameraman. Two said that they were in a particularly distressed state – exhausted from their ordeal and also concerned about other swimmers still in the water.

'I got filmed on the boat but no one said anything'

'There was a camera but to be honest I wasn't really taking it in'

The two people who had not been aware that they were being filmed on the boat became aware of the filming only when back on the beach when they were approached by a cameraperson and asked questions about the rescue and how they felt. Both said they answered the questions because they had just got back on the beach, had been approached immediately and had not had time to think about what was happening. The key theme here was that getting in danger in the water, being rescued and pulled onto the boat, being taken back to shore and getting off the boat, all happened so fast that they had not had time to collect their thoughts or to fully take in what was actually occurring in terms of being interviewed. Both said that they had been shocked about what had happened to them and had simply not considered who might be interviewing them and for what purpose. For this reason they said they answered all of the questions and asked none themselves.

'When I got off the boat, a camera approached me and asked me questions'

'They were pretty basic questions, like how do you feel ... and then it finished and I went down the beach with my friends'

The one person that had been filmed sunbathing had not been aware that she was being filmed until the programme was broadcast (it was also used in programme advertising).

'We were just lying on the beach and they filmed us and zoomed in on us'

None of the seven aware of the filming had been told that they were being filmed as part of *Piha Rescue* and none recalls giving their consent. The two that were interviewed on the beach said that they may have come across as having consented to being interviewed (i.e. by taking part) but in hindsight would not have done so. Once again, they said that the speed with which the rescue and subsequent interview had taken place didn't allow them enough time to think clearly about the consequences of what was occurring.

'By the time I was rescued I was feeling quite relieved so I made a joke ... but I wasn't asked for permission which was really weird because I thought they had to ... it happened so fast and then they walked off'

'There was no actual discussion between me and the camera crew ... they didn't say what the purpose of the filming was'

Experience of having been filmed

The general theme here was that those who had been rescued were not in a position to fully take in what was occurring in terms of filming (either on the boat or on the beach) – most had been in varying levels of distress in the water and were more concerned with getting to safety and/or their friends/family members who were still in the water, or had been extremely relieved about having made it back to the beach.

'I got pulled on the boat but there was another young boy, about eight, even further out'

'I was just so glad to be on the beach'

Once on shore, four of those who were aware that they had been filmed on the boat said that they were approached by someone with a 'clipboard' (or something similar) who then asked for their name and address and asked them to sign 'something'. None was sure who this person was (whether part of the *Piha Rescue* programme or a surf lifesaver) and none was able to remember whether they introduced themselves or mentioned the *Piha Rescue* programme at this stage. None recalled receiving a copy of anything they signed. This lack of recall indicates that either the person approaching them had not introduced themselves clearly or explained the purpose of what they were doing, or that people in situations of extreme stress are not necessarily aware of their own actions.

'When I got to the beach there was someone waiting with a clipboard and asking me for my details and asking me to sign something ... I was just glad to be out of the water'

'I was in shock, I didn't really know what was happening'

'I didn't know what I was signing'

'It all happened so fast and I didn't get a copy of anything ... they got all of us to do it'

Post-filming experiences

None of the seven that had been rescued had given any thought to the fact that they might appear on national television as a result of the filming during and after their rescue. The key theme here was that they were (to varying degrees) in shock after their ordeal and were simply relieved to have been rescued – with this sense of shock and relief taking precedence over what might happen in terms of a future broadcast. Furthermore, the actual show on which they appeared aired some time after the filming [people estimated weeks and/or months later] and they said they had forgotten that any filming had taken place. Note again that no mention of the programme *Piha Rescue* had been made during the period of filming (or not that anyone could recall) which may have impacted on the link they made between the filming and the programme, despite most being aware that filming for *Piha Rescue* does take place at Piha Beach. The speed at which these events occur, along with the context of the filming, appears to have a strong influence on people's level of comprehension of what has actually occurred.

'I didn't even think it would be on TV, it didn't even cross my mind'

'Next thing you know, a few weeks later you're on TV'

The person filmed while sunbathing had not been aware of the filming.

Post-broadcast experiences

All had been surprised when the programme was actually aired:

- One had been watching *Piha Rescue*
- Seven had not and six had been texted/telephoned during the broadcast by friends telling them that they 'were on TV' and one had been seen on *Piha Rescue* by her parents.

'I wasn't home and my parents saw me on Piha Rescue'

'My phone started going, texting'

'My friends texted me and it was like 'oh my god you're on TV''

'It's like 'what the heck?''

All seven of those who had been rescued said that they felt embarrassed about appearing on national television because of the circumstances under which they had been filmed (i.e. having to be rescued). Most had told no one (or only a small number of people) that they had got into trouble at Piha Beach and had had to be rescued. The reason for this was a strong feeling of embarrassment at having been in that situation.

'I felt like a real idiot, it's kind of embarrassing'

'My friends gave me heaps, I was embarrassed'

'For weeks, even to this day, people mention it'

'It made me look like an idiot when it was just a freak wave and we were only in knee-deep water so it's not like I was swimming out being stupid'

'It was so clear you could see exactly who I was'

The person who had been filmed sunbathing was more annoyed than embarrassed and felt that the filming itself and the zooming in of the camera was unnecessary. She also felt that her privacy had been invaded at a time when she could not have reasonably expected to have been part of the *Piha Rescue* programme (i.e. she wasn't being rescued and there were no rescues taking place in the vicinity). She felt very strongly about the camera zooming in on her in her bikini and considered this to be inappropriate and somewhat voyeuristic. She was particularly frustrated because *Piha Rescue* used the footage to advertise the programme, so she was not on national television once, but multiple times.

'I was annoyed because we were having our personal moment ... and they also showed us on the ads'

For three of those who had been filmed being rescued, the impact of having been shown on national television had more significant consequences (than embarrassment). None of the three had told their parents that they had been rescued at Piha, and one, whose parents were overseas, had not told them that she had even visited Piha Beach. This person was a young Middle Eastern woman who had not only

been filmed being rescued but had also been filmed in a bikini and with friends who were all male. She described her mother as being distraught at seeing the footage (her daughter in a bikini and with all male friends) and her father as being very angry with her. This had had an impact on the level of trust her parents placed in her and she felt very strongly that she had let them down. Her parents were ashamed of her behaviour (not the rescue, but of her appearance and the company she was keeping), and were particularly concerned that other family members and members of their wider community might also have seen the footage. The girl herself explained that as a young, single Middle Eastern woman she was aware she had behaved in a way that was extremely inappropriate and insensitive to the beliefs of her parents and culture. The situation was made worse because she had not given any thought to the fact that she may be on national television and therefore had had no opportunity to explain the situation to her parents beforehand.

The other two who were rescued and had not told their family members also said that there were more serious consequences for them at home. Both said that their parents were very angry with them for what they saw as having taken unnecessary risks at Piha Beach, and the experience has made it more difficult for them to visit Piha because of parental pressure not to do so. Both sets of parents also felt that there had been a breach of trust and this caused them to question other aspects of their behaviour.

'I was in a bikini, I'm Middle Eastern so I wouldn't want people to see me this way ... then she [mother] saw me with all of these guy friends ... my mum got quite upset and was really shocked'

'The worse thing was that my parents and my partner's parents didn't know that we'd been rescued ... our parents were furious that we'd been in that situation'

'I don't go out there anymore because of the rescue and the filming, and there's family pressure not to go to Piha'

Consent and awareness of privacy rights

None of these people was aware of their rights with respect to being filmed in a public place, and all said that they felt they should have been asked for their consent. Five said they would not have given it, two said that they *probably* would have.

'It's fine, I just ... now when I look back I think it would have been good if they had got my consent'

'I would want to maybe have a look at what they filmed'

'I would have said no'

'I didn't know my rights about being on TV'

'If I had my face pixellated and my voice disguised then yeah, OK'

None said that they had considered making a complaint about the filming – most said they would not have known who to make the complaint to. One said that she preferred to simply 'move on'.

Target

Five people who had been filmed as part of *Target* were interviewed – four were tradespeople and had been filmed in the *Target* house, and one worked in a shop. All five *had not been aware* that they had been filmed because they had been filmed with hidden cameras.

Initial awareness of having been filmed

Three people became aware of having been filmed when they (if self-employed) or their employer were written to by *Target*. One person (a tradesperson) only became aware when he returned to work the following day and his employer, who was not the same employer he had been with when he had been filmed, informed him. The previous employer had telephoned the new employer and told him what had occurred. This tradesperson had behaved inappropriately in the *Target* house. He was subsequently fired from his new position. He accepted that his behaviour in the house was inappropriate even though he had done his job properly/done the work he was paid to do.

Target was asked to provide their formal policy on how they communicate with those who are the subject of hidden camera filming. The production company that produces the programme advised that:

Target contacts all the companies whose staff or contractors that have been filmed without their knowledge in the *Target* houses. The companies are requested to advise all the individuals filmed and they are given the option to have their faces pixillated.

Some individuals do not ask for their faces to be pixillated, usually because they have performed well in the trial. If for some reason *Target* does not get a response from the individual filmed they are pixillated as a matter of course. The only exception to this protocol is if *Target* believes that it is in the public interest for a person filmed to remain unpixillated. *Target* always identifies companies by name.

A key issue here is that while *Target* may write to the employer/organisation explaining what had occurred and inviting a response, it is left up to the employer to pass on the information to the employee in question. Obviously *Target* cannot be responsible for ensuring a third party passes on information; however, it does represent a potential risk to those being filmed – that they may be unaware of have being filmed until the actual broadcast.

One person (a tradesman) found out that he'd been filmed because he was watching another episode of *Target* and thought he recognised the *Target* house. He emailed *Target* to ask them if he had been the subject of hidden camera filming and *Target* replied to him the same day stating that he had. *Target* also told him what his scores had been and that they had not yet decided if they would use the hidden camera footage (they did eventually use it).

'I found out because I was watching TV and I saw this house, and it looked familiar and I saw the address ... I emailed Target to verify it'

Three other tradespeople filmed were also made aware of the scores/results of their hidden camera trial in the letter they/their employer received from *Target*. Note that all of these tradespeople received a positive overall rating from *Target* (and this impacted on their attitudes towards being filmed which were generally positive).

'Once you get that feedback you kind of know you're OK and then it's just waiting for it to be on TV'

'I was like, oh no how embarrassing but at least I did OK'

The fifth person, in the shop, had not been aware of the filming until the segment was shown on television. He didn't personally see it, but was told about it by a friend (this segment involved selling goods to an underage person). He had also behaved appropriately by asking for identification and was comfortable with the process.

Experience of having been filmed

None of the five people filmed for *Target* had been aware of the filming and therefore were unable to comment on their experiences during the filming process. Three of the tradespeople commented, however, that the possibility that they might be on *Target* enters their mind every time they are left alone in a customer's house. They said that they have also noticed that customers are considerably less likely to leave them alone now.

When the tradesman who recognised the house first realised he'd probably been filmed, he said that he became apprehensive about what might be shown. Even though he felt confident that he had completed the work to a high standard (and had not behaved in any inappropriate manner) he was concerned that there may be aspects of his work or behaviour that may be 'picked on' by *Target*.

'I felt confident that I did a good job ... but was a bit apprehensive 'cause they try to pick on funny things'

All of those who had been filmed said that they felt that what was broadcast was a fair reflection of what had actually occurred. While the tradesman who had acted inappropriately acknowledged his behaviour, he was also critical of the *Target* house, however, and felt that he had been unfairly 'set up' to fail. He was unable to explain (at the time to his family) why he had behaved the way he did – and the subsequent reaction from his family, he felt, implied that this was behaviour that they did not associate with him in his private daily life. He was extremely concerned that his behaviour on *Target* created an impression among extended family members that he was morally deficient and that 'stupid' behaviour in this one instance would impact on his relationships going forward. The broadcast and his subsequent job loss had a significant impact on his wife who he described as devastated.

While he had behaved inappropriately, there may have been an opportunity to reduce the impact of what occurred if he had at least been informed prior to the broadcast that it was going to be aired.

Attitudes towards hidden cameras and pixellisation

Four of those filmed for *Target* were of the opinion that hidden cameras are acceptable because people should be doing the job they are paid to do and not behave in an inappropriate manner. The tradesperson who had behaved inappropriately opposed the use of hidden cameras. The tradespeople interviewed were also of the opinion that *Target* tries to trip people up by 'planting' items throughout the *Target* house which might be tempting to look at (photo albums, letters, photographs, computer screens left active with specific types of images etc). While aspects of this were considered to be unfair, the tradespeople also acknowledged again that tradespeople should be ignoring these 'temptations'.

'They do things that tempt you ... attractive customer, repairs in her bedroom, the computer screen's on [the tradesperson could see personal images], not normal stuff'

Views of pixellisation were mixed among the five people interviewed here. The one tradesperson who had behaved inappropriately indicated that pixellisation would have made no difference to the outcome for him. Another said that *Target* telephoned him around one week before the broadcast and asked if he would like his face to be pixellised. He declined because they had already told him that he had a high score.

'I said no because of the good review I got'

Others generally felt comfortable with their faces being visible given that their work had been considered to be of a high standard or they had not broken the law (in the case of the retail assistant). There was a view, however, that pixellisation *should be offered* to tradespeople who have performed well on *Target*. They also recognised that even for those who have not performed well there could be impacts for other people, in particular other family members, including children. For this reason, the consensus was that faces should be pixellised where a hidden camera is used, regardless of the behaviour of the individual, unless that person requests otherwise. This is a very different view to that of the focus group participants who were very black-and-white in terms of who should and shouldn't be filmed and/or pixellised.

Post-broadcast experiences

Post-broadcast experiences were negative for one person (as identified above). However, he has moved on to a new career and is doing well at that. Post-broadcast experiences for the others were positive, although they did admit to being somewhat embarrassed about their television appearance and also said they received some 'hassles' from friends, colleagues and family members. Three of the tradespeople agreed that *Target* had been good for business – and this was particularly the case for the owner-operator businesses (of which there were two).

One tradesperson in particular uses his *Target* score in his advertising and said that he noticed an increase in calls/business in the weeks following the programme being broadcast.

'I watched, it was quick ... good advertising ... the phone went crazy for the next couple of weeks'

'It's free advertising ... things can be a bit tight in the trades'

'I'm thinking of calling them [Target] and suggesting a 'best of' Christmas special'

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from this research that the attitudes of people who watch reality programmes (in most instances) can be different from the attitudes of those who are caught up in them (depending on context and the behaviour being filmed). However, while viewers acknowledge that reality programmes are both entertaining and educative, the 'reality' is that if they weren't entertaining, people probably wouldn't watch them simply for their educative value. The entertainment value comes from watching how 'other' people behave in a variety of situations (including where a hidden camera is used and/or situations that are embarrassing or where people have been 'caught out' doing something they shouldn't).

Despite taking a somewhat voyeuristic interest in other people's behaviour, the contradiction most people face when considering reality programme issues is that most wouldn't want it to be them. Most people, however, give little or no thought to the possible wider consequences for some of the people who may be caught up in reality programmes, and also tend to take a rather black-and-white (and moralistic) view of behaviour when weighing up public good issues.

A key finding in this research is also that the general public appears to have a very low level of understanding of the rules and regulations regarding privacy and filming in public places. Many people taking part in the focus groups, for example, made the assumption that permission is sought by *Piha Rescue* before broadcasts are made. This assumption is further confirmed by the fact that those who have been rescued often take part in interviews on the beach (implied consent); however, it is clear from the interviews with people who have been rescued that there are wider contextual issues that come into play in these circumstances.

While there are clear rules around filming people in public places that broadcasters must adhere to, and while the public will always want to be entertained, there can sometimes be more serious implications for people who are filmed and broadcast without their knowledge and/or consent. While consent may not actually be required, there may be ways in which to mitigate some of the 'risk' that some people face because of having been filmed, without compromising the needs of the broadcasters and the entertainment needs of the general public. We note, however, that most of the people taking part in this research who were filmed by hidden camera did not generally experience any significant adverse affects, and that several found the experience beneficial to their businesses.

Recommendations for consideration

- Educate the general public about rights to privacy and the rules regulating filming in a public place. This appears to be an area of considerable confusion.
- Standardisation of the filming process for each reality programme – there appear to be many inconsistencies in people’s experiences of having been filmed, in particular for *Coastwatch* and *Piha Rescue* (for example, in terms of whether and when introductions are made or whether any form of consent/form is signed).
- Introduce a process whereby people who have been filmed for reality programmes are adequately informed of what has occurred (whether a hidden camera was used or not) and that the footage may be broadcast. If possible, provide an estimated timeframe for broadcast and/or follow up with an email informing them that the footage will be broadcast, for example, in the next week/fortnight/month. This may go some way towards assisting people in preparing/informing friends, family members, colleagues and employers about the situation if required.
- In the case of *Target*, inform individuals as well as organisations caught up in hidden camera filming. It cannot be relied upon that organisations will inform the employee of what has occurred (particularly if that employee is no longer employed by the organisation). Once again, a process such as this would give people the opportunity to prepare others for any issues that may arise as a result of the filming.

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