

Petition to 'get rid' of Mike Hosking has more than 14,000 supporters

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SUPPLIED

More than 14,000 people want to "get rid" of TVNZ personality and Seven Sharp host Mike Hosking.

A petition to be sent to the Government demanding Mike Hosking be removed from television screens has now clocked up more than 14,000 signatories in just over a week.

Started by lawyer Dan Wayman the petition asks that Mike Hosking "be removed from public broadcasting at TVNZ".

Wayman, who describes himself as a New Zealand-enrolled barrister-solicitor who divides his time between New Zealand and Shanghai, where he works at the British Consulate, says he started the petition because he "just felt something needed to be done really".

SUPPLIED

Mike Hosking: "He just does not get it."

"[Hosking's] socially irresponsible comments are damaging to the New Zealand public, and especially as the face of the national broadcaster in the 7pm timeslot, being a family show, I think it's harmful for the next generation to receive those types of sentiments from Mr Hosking."

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The petition has certainly stirred up the passions of those signing, many of whom have felt compelled to contribute their own views on why they think Hosking should be "removed from public broadcasting".

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Mike Hosking with Seven Sharp co-host Toni Street.

Wayman said comments made by Hosking over the crowdfunding purchase of the Awaroa beach and over the New Zealand flag debate as examples of why the broadcaster should be removed from TVNZ.

More recently Hosking was in the news when a formal complaint was laid against him over comments he made on *Seven Sharp* about New Plymouth mayor Andrew Judd's proposal of a Maori ward for local government councils.

"I'd never personally attack him obviously, but he's completely out of touch with middle New Zealand," said Hosking at the time.

Wayman said: "It's the constant lack of empathy and dismissive comments of New Zealanders struggling, even following stories on *Seven Sharp* - he just does not get it, and I think it's harmful."

"He makes me ashamed and embarrassed to be a Kiwi," writes Nick Petraska of Waitakere.

"Mike doesn't represent New Zealand as a collective," says Hugo Gravelle of Auckland.

"I cannot bear to watch this man," says Janet Moore of Waiheke Island.

"As a nation we have to stand up for the underprivileged not put them down," says Helen Rhoces of Christchurch.

"Mike Hosking's style is the kind of broadcasting that has almost entirely put me off watching any television at all," says Emma Neale of Dunedin.

Hosking's outspoken style may have drawn criticism, but he also has plenty of fans - and Prime Minister John Key has previously defended the presenter for doing his job.

"In my experience it doesn't matter what the personal views are of the journalist - they'll ask the hard questions," Key said of Hosking last year.

Wayman hopes the petition will reach 20,000 signatures, at which time he plans to present it to TVNZ.

"The ultimate goal is to have a more appropriate face on the national broadcaster in the 7pm slot," he says. "That's the ultimate goal. I'm not worried about his radio career, but I think the platform that he's got (with *Seven Sharp*) - he's not the right person for that platform."

Hosking currently fronts *Seven Sharp* with Toni Street, as well as hosting the *Mike Hosking Breakfast* morning radio show on Newstalk ZB and writes a semi-regular opinion column for the *NZ Herald*.

Hosking got his start as a broadcaster in radio, working for Radio New Zealand in the early 1990s before going on to co-host *Morning Report* on National Radio with Geoff Robinson.

He started at TVNZ in 1997, co-hosting *Breakfast* up until 2004 with, variously, Susan Wood, Alison Mau, Liz Gunn and Kate Hawkesby, whom he married in 2009.

Asked for comment on the petition, a TVNZ spokesperson had this to say: "We welcome feedback on our programmes, which we get in the form of daily audience ratings, quantitative and qualitative market research, and direct feedback from viewers. Given we engage with around 2.5 million New Zealanders per day, we typically get a broad range of views expressed about our on-air and online content. There are a number of viewing options. *Seven Sharp* is the most watched show at 7pm."

- **Stuff**