

Nova notes concerns

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RADIO station Nova FM has admitted that a discussion on the breakfast show about having Adolf Hitler as a dinner party guest was “ill considered”.

The incident, on December 4 last year, was part of a segment in which presenters Tommy Little and Dani Venn considered celebrities who they thought would be interesting to invite to a meal, with one of the hosts suggesting the Nazi leader

According to the Anti-Defamation Commission (ADC), which said it received a number of complaints, “Apparently jocular comments were made that table conversation might include asking why he killed so many people.”

Writing to Nova’s general manager Helen Davies, the ADC’s executive director Geoffrey Zygier said, “The ADC is not suggesting that these comments were necessarily made with ill intent. However, more than 50 million people perished in World War II ... Many of these people are Australians whose descendants do not find this a matter to joke about, but rather offensive and hurtful. I kindly request that this perspective be brought to the presenters’ attention and that they be advised to be more careful in regard to listeners’ sensibilities.”

While the radio station denied any breach of the Commercial Radio Codes of Practice, Davies acknowledged that discussing Hitler in the segment was “ill considered and the resulting comments lacked finesse”.

“In hindsight,” she added, “different dinner guest options could have been used.”

The station has since brought the ADC’s concerns to the attention of both presenters, as well as the programming team who were advised to be more sensitive to listeners’ views in future.

ADC chairman Dvir Abramovich said although the incident was low on the scale of offensiveness, it was constructively addressed nonetheless.

“Nova recognised the complaint as having merit, gave considerable thought to the potential effects on customer relations and used this situation as an educational opportunity for its staff.

“I believe this is a win-win result that demonstrates the importance of making our voice heard,” he said.

PHOEBE ROTH

ADC executive director Geoffrey Zygier.