



COMPLAINT NUMBER	15/515
COMPLAINANT	R. White and Others
ADVERTISER	I Love Ugly
ADVERTISEMENT	I Love Ugly Website
DATE OF MEETING	8 December 2015
OUTCOME	Settled

Complaint: The online advertising campaign for I Love Ugly men's clothing retailer promoted its range of men's jewellery (www.iloveugly.net.nz). Various images showed a man, wearing I Love Ugly rings, with his hands on different parts of a woman's naked torso, including her breasts and crotch.

Complainant, R. White, said: "I object to the use of a naked women being touched in a sexual way in order to tell men's jewellery products. This contravenes point #5 of the Code for People in Advertising. Not only is the sexual appeal of a woman being used to sell a product which is unrelated to sex, but the relationship depicted is exploitative and degrading. The woman remains naked throughout the campaign, while the man is fully clothed. The man is clearly in control, the woman subservient, always passive, never active.

I strongly believe that this imagery serves to reinforce damaging attitudes towards women, promoting the view of women's bodies as passive objects. I'd like to see this imagery removed from I Love Ugly's website and other marketing or advertising collateral."

Duplicate Complainants shared similar views.

The Advertiser, I Love Ugly, said: "We acknowledge the complaints received by the Advertising Standards Authority in relation to the series of images published on our website, www.iloveugly.co.nz and other social media channels. We take complaints of this nature extremely seriously.

Please be advised there was absolutely no intention to cause offence to any members of our prospective audience and we regret if the images were received in this way.

We take great pride in the standard of advertising we deliver, and have established brand guidelines and advertising sign-off processes which are designed to assist compliance with the Advertising Codes of Practice. In these circumstances, our internal policies were adhered to and the appropriate sign-off received.

As an organisation, we constantly strive to evolve and challenge our audience, while staying true to our established brand and tenacious worldwide followers. However, causing offence to our audience is counter-productive and does not fit with the brand message we are trying to deliver

We believe the series of images took into account the prospective consumers of the I Love Ugly clothing range and wish to express that these were not intended to degrade, or objectify woman in any way.

Nevertheless, we have reflected on the concerns of the complainants and decided to rectify the issue by removing the series of images to which the complaints relate from all I Love Ugly marketing channels.

In order to mitigate the risk of further complaints, we will undertake a review of our procedures and policies to assist compliance with the Advertising Codes of Practice. I Love Ugly strives for a 'best practice' approach and intends to lessen the opportunities for advertising complaints in the future.

I Love Ugly has never received a formal complaint from the Advertising Standards Authority in the past. This is an isolated incident.

Provided the affected individuals who took offence accept our sincere apology and steps to rectify the issue, we expect this matter can be resolved amicably without need for further correspondence.”

The relevant provisions were Basic Principle 4 and Rule 5 of the Code of Ethics and Basic Principles 3, 5 and 6 of the Code for People in Advertising.

The Chairman noted the Advertiser had removed the images involved in the campaign and had apologised to Complainants for the offence the advertisements had caused. She also noted the Advertiser said they would undertake a review of its procedures and policies to assist compliance with the Advertising Codes of Practice for future advertisements.

In light of the self-regulatory action taken by the Advertiser, the Chairman ruled it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. Consequently, she ruled the matter was settled.

Chairman's Ruling: Complaint **Settled**