

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/148
COMPLAINANT	G Abel
ADVERTISER	Westpac Bank
ADVERTISEMENT	Westpac Bank Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	15 May 2017
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The Westpac 'Online Saver' advertisement, www.westpac.co.nz, details the Online Saver account and quotes 'Earn even higher interest" with a Bonus Saver account.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, G Abel, said: I believe that the advert (for Online Saver & Online Bonus Saver accounts at Westpac does not meet Principle 2 of the Code. I have tried to call this matter to the attention of Westpac NZ Head Office but, apart from a standard reply, they have no interest in taking my point.

My point is that under TIPS, there is no way they should be stating: Earn even higher interest by running an Online Bonus Saver account with your Online Saver account

It is just conceivable that the rate of 0.10% on the Online Saver is competitive I haven't researched other bank offerings but to say even higher is to manipulate the English language towards falsehood. There is no way 0.10% is a rate of interest so they cannot use the term even higher for the other offering.

They could say Earn higher interest by running an Online Bonus Saver account with your Online Saver account You may say this is pedantic but I say it breaks the code or the spirit of the code and Banks should be held to the highest standards and not claim munificence when it is far from the case.

The relevant provisions were Code for Financial Advertising - Principle 1, Principle 2.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern that the wording "even higher" when applied to current low interest rates is misleading.

The Chair said that consumers were well aware of the current low interest rates on offer and as such the Advertiser was entitled to use the wording "even higher" if offering a rate which was greater than their already competitive rate. The use of 'higher' in this case being a relative term.

The Chair's view was that the advertisement did not reach the threshold required to breach the Code for Financial Advertising.

Accordingly, the Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**