

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/200
COMPLAINANT	J de Heij
ADVERTISER	NZ Transport Agency
ADVERTISEMENT	NZ Transport Agency, Digital Marketing, Out of Home, Print
DATE OF MEETING	26 June 2017
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The NZTA billboards provided various quotes suggesting that the Waterview Tunnel would cut the travel time of Auckland commuters. The campaign also ran on Twitter, YouTube and in magazines.

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

Complainant, J de Heij, said: Isn't this considered propaganda. They also created videos. To me it looks like they promise something, that isn't true. They say or imply that the Waterview Tunnel will solve traffic problems, which it doesn't.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 11, Rule 2.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern that advertisements for the completed Waterview Tunnel amounted to propaganda and made untrue claims about its benefits.

The Chair confirmed the NZTA campaign was advocacy advertising, using individual's stories to show what could improve when the Waterview Tunnel is operating. Advocacy advertising is provided for under Rule 11 of the Code of Ethics, and allows robust expression of opinion as long as the advertiser is clearly identified. The Chair accepted the advertiser is clearly identified.

The Chair said the Advertiser, was presenting possible scenarios of the potential traffic relief the tunnel may provide. As the tunnel is not due to open until July 2017, the Chair said that most people would understand that these stories were aspirational and taking into account the advocacy rule, the advertisements were not likely to mislead or deceive consumers.

The Chair ruled the advertisements had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and there was no apparent breach of the Code of Ethics

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

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