

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	17/234
<b>COMPLAINANT</b>	R. Howell and C. Rist
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Greenpeace NZ
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Television
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	18 July 2017
<b>OUTCOME</b>	No Grounds to Proceed

**Advertisement:** The television advertisement for Greenpeace focused on the pollution of rivers stated, in part “New Zealand’s once pure rivers are becoming contaminated. In some places our drink water may be at risk. Intensive dairy farming is one of the major sources of pollution.

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

**Complainant, R. Howell, said:** The Greenpeace add showing at the moment is extremely misleading and I find it extremely offensive!! It does not meet the basic principles 2, 3 and 4. I believe it also breaches the following rules - 2, Truthful Representation, it does not in any way represent any truthful sound information and is derogatory misleading falsified scaremongering against Farming and mainly the Dairy Industry! 4, Decency, it clearly contains derogatory misleading information aimed at offending one of New Zealand's biggest industries! 6, Fear, it is clearly trying to implant fear into naive viewers who are likely to be misled by extremely exaggerated false information. (eg Farmers purchase their own pivots, government taxes are not used to purchase farmers pivots for irrigation) 11, Advocacy advertising, Greenpeace have not clearly stated that this is their opinion, one of a minority and frankly endanger the livelihoods of thousands of people and could encourage people into an unhealthy uninformed nutritional lifestyle. 12, Safety, encourages uninformed people to commit indecent acts "lets do something about it" it is well known they break and enter, trespass, damage and destroy businesses possessions, endanger livestock and potentially people's lives. It doesn't meet the code for environmental claims, particularly A, G and H. Greenpeace is a cult and this add clearly to a first time complainant is in breach of multiple standards and guidelines. Its endless pickings and whom ever decided it should have been aired needs to read the guidelines, rules, regulations, codes etc. To myself and multiple others I have spoken to this add was not looked upon with an unbiased view and is completely unacceptable!

**Duplicate Complainant, C. Rist, said shared similar views and said, in part:** the advertisement was “trying to turn the general public against farmers because they are not telling the full truth about water pollution... and they also show images of a protester with the hashtag #SICKOFTOMANYCOWS.”

**The relevant provisions were Basic Principle 4 and Rules 2, 4, 6, 11 and 12 of the Code of Ethics and Principle 2 and Guidelines 2(a), 2(g), and 2(h) of the Code for Environmental Claims.**

**The Acting Chair** noted the concerns of the Complainants that the advertisement gave a misleading impression of the farming industry's effect on the pollution of rivers.

Turning to the advertisement, the Chairman confirmed the advertisement, by Greenpeace, was in the category of advocacy advertising and was intended to raise awareness about Greenpeace's view on the contamination of rivers. She said both the identity and the position of the Advertiser were clear, in compliance with Rule 11, and therefore the advertisement should be reviewed in the context of advocacy advertising, which is advertising designed to express an opinion. As such, and in the interests of freedom of expression under Section 14 of the Bill of Rights Act 1990, a more liberal interpretation of the Code was appropriate

The Acting Chair noted the precedent Decision (16/400) about another Greenpeace advertisement dealt with comparable issues to those raised by R.Howell and C. Rist. In Decision 16/400 the Advertiser said, in part:

"The context of this advertisement is that there is an ongoing national debate of significant public interest around the use, management, regulation, allocation and pollution of water resources. One of the major issues is the harmful impact of intensive dairy farming on water quality and how that impact may be managed and reduced. This impact is widely scientifically documented and implicitly acknowledged by the dairy industry itself.

Greenpeace is an environmental advocacy organisation, funded by private donations from individuals and receives no government or industry funding. Based on substantive publically available scientific information, Greenpeace holds the view that industrial dairy farming is having a substantial negative impact on the health of waterways in New Zealand, and that the effects of planned irrigation schemes and projected expansion of industrial dairying will worsen impacts and further degrade water quality."

The Complaints Board agreed that the statements made in the advertisement considered in Decision 16/400 were general statements about the pollution of New Zealand rivers, which would not come as a surprise to most New Zealanders and the advertisement did not allege that the dairy industry alone was solely responsible for the pollution of New Zealand rivers.

Taking into account the findings in 16/400, the Acting Chair noted the advertisement before her said intensive dairy farming was *one* of the sources of pollution and, in the context of a message from an environmental organisation, it was unlikely to mislead people and had been prepared with a due standard of social responsibility.

Accordingly, the Acting Chair ruled there was no apparent breach of Basic Principle 4 or Rule 2 of the Code of Ethics and the complaint had No Grounds to Proceed.

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