

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/049
COMPLAINANT	P Fleming
ADVERTISER	Hastings District Council
ADVERTISEMENT	Hastings District Council, Radio
DATE OF MEETING	19 February 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The Hastings District Council radio advertisement advocated for a discussion on potential speed limit changes in the Hastings area and said in part; "We need your input, so please make sure you go to myvoicemychoice.co.nz, find out the roads affected and have your say today. The Hastings District Council really appreciates your feedback. Many thanks and God Bless."

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

Complainant, P Fleming, said: The ad was about having your say on speed limits in the Hawke's Bay and "we'd love to hear your say". It was finished off with "God bless". I thought the ad was really good until that last part. It's not really appropriate or cool to mention God. I mean most kiwis don't believe in religion anymore. So whoever's dumb idea it was to get Christian on us should leave their bible bashing to church etc.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 5, Rule 11.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern the advertisement used an inappropriate Christian salutation as the closing remark of its message.

The Chair said the advertisement was an advocacy message, addressing the important issue of road safety and speed limits. She said the "God Bless" expression used at the end of the advertisement was incidental to the message being conveyed and was the speaker's, (Councillor Henare O'Keefe) natural way of speaking rather than any religious message.

While acknowledging the offence caused to the Complainant, the Chair said in light of generally prevailing community standards, the advertisement was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence. The Chair ruled the advertisement was not in breach of Basic Principle 4 or Rules 5 or 11 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**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.