

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/098
COMPLAINANT	J. Tofilau
ADVERTISER	Westpac Bank
ADVERTISEMENT	Digital Marketing, Television
DATE OF MEETING	6 April 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The Westpac Bank television advertisement tells the story of a man called “Joe”, who is shown jumping off a diving board into a pool. When Joe hits the water, he is transformed into his younger self. The advertisement says in part: “For years, Joe has wanted to go back and change a couple of things about his life. That he didn’t jump of the high diving board when he was a kid, and that he didn’t start saving sooner.” The advertisement concludes with the message: “Westpac. We’ll help grow your savings, so you can grow in life.”

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

Complainant, Joe Tofilau, said: This ad depicts a Polynesian/Maori man who is overweight and says he has always wanted to “save” money but never did until now. The implication is that Polynesians/ Maori’s are not good at saving which is offensive, insensitive and degrading. Saving is an issue across all nationalities in NZ not just brown skinned people.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 5; Code for People in Advertising - Basic Principle 3, Basic Principle 4;

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concern the advertisement implied Polynesian or Maori people are “not good at saving which is offensive, insensitive and degrading” as saving is an issue for all nationalities.

The Chair considered the nationality of ‘Joe’ in the advertisement was inconsequential to the message that it is never too late to think about saving money rather than any deliberate cultural reference about those who are not good at saving. While the Chair acknowledged the Complainant’s interpretation, and the offence the advertisement had caused them, she said the advertisement was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence to most people.

The Chair said the advertisement was not in breach of Rule 5 and Basic Principle 4 of the Code of Ethics or Basic Principles 3 and 4 of the Code for People in Advertising. Accordingly, the Chair ruled that 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.