

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/112
COMPLAINANT	J. Wood
ADVERTISER	Rainbow Youth
ADVERTISEMENT	Rainbow Youth, Radio
DATE OF MEETING	13 April 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The radio advertisement for Rainbow Youth featured two men having a conversation about their weekends. One man said he “went to a wedding, it was pretty gay” to which the other replies “I don’t think you’re meant to say that anymore”. It transpires that he had actually been to a wedding between two men, “Kahu and Brian”. The advertisement concludes with the message: “It’s only gay, if it’s actually gay. Find out more at rainbowyouth.org.nz.”

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

Complainant, J. Wood, said: “This advertisement attempts to pervert the use of language, in that it blatantly tries to classify the word ‘gay’ as offensive unless used exclusively to refer to people of homosexual disposition. It implies that if a person used it, for example, to describe another or others as having had “a gay old time”, that they are impugning and/or insulting the homosexual community as a whole. As a normal, heterosexual, and quite tolerant of the differences of others, I find that to be offensive and in fact, probably against the code of human rights in that it attempts to portray myself (and others like me) as being homophobic if we use the word in normal, everyday English.”

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 11, Rule 4, Rule 5; Code for People in Advertising - Basic Principle 3;

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concern the advertisement “perverts the use of language, in that it blatantly tries to classify the word ‘gay’ as offensive unless exclusively used to refer to people of homosexual disposition.”

The Chair noted the advertisement before her fell into the category of advocacy advertising under Rule 11 of the Code of Ethics and promoted an important message about the use of the word “gay” as a term for homosexual people being conflated with its offensive colloquial meaning of “foolish, stupid, or unimpressive”. The Chair noted that the Advocacy Principles require the identity of the Advertiser is clear and she said the inclusion of the website address and clear reference to the Rainbow Youth organisation met the identification requirement.

The Chair said the advertisement employed light-hearted humour to illustrate a shift in what is culturally appropriate with the aim of reframing everyday vernacular. The Chair said that this would be the take-out of the advertisement for most consumers and therefore the advertisement was not offensive.

The Chair said the advertisement made no comment on the use of the word “gay” in terms of the traditional meaning of “light hearted and carefree” or “brightly colored and showy”. The Chair said the advertisement was not in breach of the Code for People in Advertising or the Code of Ethics

Accordingly, the Chair ruled the complaint had no grounds 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.