

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/295
COMPLAINANT	B Morrison Simón
ADVERTISER	Bridgestone Tyre Centre
ADVERTISEMENT	Bridgestone Tyre Centre, Addressed Mail
DATE OF MEETING	1 November 2018
OUTCOME	Settled – advertisement to be changed

Advertisement: The Bridgestone email advertisement has a banner saying "Triple AA Smartfuel Discounts*" The asterisk small print saying *Participating stores only." The advertisement also says "Triple fuel discounts have been extended for an extra week! Swipe your AA Membership card at a participating Bridgestone store and get triple fuel savings."

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, B Morrison Simón, said: 10/10/2018, I had a new tyre fitted by Bridgestone, Thorndon Quay, Wellington, on the premises, after reading the AA Smartfuel email, that I would qualify for discounted fuel. After having the tyre fitted, I was told that branch of Bridgestone Tyres was not a signatory to the deal, and few were. I rechecked the email, and in microscopic letters on the add banner, I found Participating Dealers Only. The size of the limiting print was deceptive to my mind, and should have been, at least, legible.

The Advertiser, Bridgestone Tyre Centre, said in part:

When we promote an offer through the AA Smartfuel program, we believe we take the necessary steps to ensure consumers are aware that the offer is available through participating stores. We note 72 out of 127 stores in our network of Bridgestone retail stores participate in the AA Smartfuel program.

In this case, the advertisement clearly makes a reference to "participating stores" in two places; the header banner as well as directly under the header in the opening paragraph. We note that the second reference to 'participating stores' is in full sized text and includes a blue underlined URL link to make it as clear and easy as possible for consumers to click through to check the list of participating stores.

As an additional measure, because we usually communicate these offers via email from AA Smartfuel to their member base, we limit these emails to towns and cities in New Zealand that contain or are near a participating Bridgestone store. This was the case of this October promotion that the complainant is referring to and is designed to ensure that anyone interested in the offer, has an option of a participating store near them.

Whilst we believe we have taken all necessary steps to ensure that this point is understood by consumers, we certainly do not want to confuse or mislead anyone. This is the first complaint of this nature we have received about these communications and we are happy to

amend future header banners to enlarge the 'participating stores' text as an additional measure.

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

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern the small print in the advertisement, limiting the offer to participating stores only, was deceptively small.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had agreed to enlarge the 'participating stores' text on header banners for future advertisements.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending future advertisements, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled – advertisement to be changed**

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.