

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/075
COMPLAINANT	J Gibson
ADVERTISER	Wicked Campers
ADVERTISEMENT	Wicked Campers, Vehicle Signage
DATE OF MEETING	28 March 2017
OUTCOME	Upheld

SUMMARY

A Wicked Campers campervan sported two advertisements. One was a window sticker which read: 'Attention Thieves. Thou Shalt Not Steal. God Is Watching You Thieving Cunt'. In the right-hand corner of the sticker was the Wicked Campers logo and the website address: wickedcampers.com. The second advertisement, which was painted on the side of the van, was the message: 'Let's Throw a Cat on The Barbie'.

The Complainant said the window sticker advertisement used inappropriate language and was offensive to Christians and women.

The Complainant also said the painted message gave the impression that animal cruelty was acceptable or amusing.

No response was received from the Advertiser. There have been a number of previous complaints about this Advertiser, also with no response received.

Taking into account the wide range of people that could potentially view the advertisements, the Complaints Board said they had not been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society and were likely to cause serious or widespread offence.

The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Upheld.

[Advertisement to be removed]

Please note this headnote does not form part of the Decision.

COMPLAINTS BOARD DECISION

The Chair directed the Complaints Board to consider the advertisement with reference to Basic Principle 4 and Rule 5 of the Code of Ethics and Basic Principle 3 of the Code for People in Advertising. This required the Complaints Board to consider whether the advertisements were prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society; and whether they contained anything which in the light of generally prevailing community standards was likely to cause serious or widespread offence taking into account the context, medium, audience and produce (including services).

The Board was also required to consider whether the advertisements portrayed people in a manner which, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, was reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence on the grounds of their gender; race; colour; ethnic or national origin; age; cultural, religious, political or ethical belief; sexual orientation; marital status; family status; education; disability; occupational or employment status.

The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Upheld.

The Complaint

The complainant raised concerns about two advertisements on a campervan. A window sticker read: 'Attention Thieves. Thou Shalt Not Steal. God Is Watching You Thieving Cunt' and painted on the side of the van was the message: 'Let's Throw a Cat on The Barbie'.

The Complainant said the window sticker advertisement used inappropriate language and was offensive to Christians and women.

The Complainant also said the painted message gave the impression that animal cruelty was acceptable or amusing.

The Advertiser's Response

No response was received by the Advertiser.

The Complaints Board's Discussion

The Complaints Board again expressed its concern at the Advertiser's repeated refusal to respond to complaints and their refusal to engage with, and respect, the principles of self-regulation.

Taking into account the wide range of people that could potentially view the advertisements, the Complaints Board said they had not been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society and were likely to cause serious or widespread offence.

The Complaints Board ruled the advertisements were in breach of Basic Principle 4 and Rule 5 of the Code of Ethics and Basic Principle 3 of the Code for People in Advertising.

Accordingly, the Complaints Board ruled to Uphold the complaint.

Decision: Complaint Upheld

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

A Wicked Campers campervan sported two advertisements. One was a window sticker which read: 'Attention Thieves. Thou Shalt Not Steal. God Is Watching You Thieving Cunt'. In the right-hand corner of the sticker was the Wicked Campers logo and the website address: wickedcampers.com. The second advertisement, which was painted on the side of the van, was the message: 'Let's Throw a Cat on The Barbie'.

COMPLAINT FROM J GIBSON

I wish to complain about:

A) inappropriate language on a window sticker (i.e. words 'God is watching you thieving cunt). This is offensive to both Christians and women.

B) a large print message that gives the impression that animal cruelty is acceptable or amusing (let's throw a cat on the barbie).

Both are on a Wicked Campers campervan, registration DRN23 that was parked outside the Te Anau DOC centre on 11 February.

Are such crude and offensive messages really acceptable in NZ?

CODE OF ETHICS

Basic Principle 4: All advertisements should be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

Rule 5: Offensiveness - Advertisements should not contain anything which in the light of generally prevailing community standards is likely to cause serious or widespread offence taking into account the context, medium, audience and product (including services).

CODE FOR PEOPLE IN ADVERTISING

1. **Basic Principle 3:** Advertisements should not portray people in a manner which, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence on the grounds of their gender; race; colour; ethnic or national origin; age; cultural, religious, political or ethical belief; sexual orientation; marital status; family status; education; disability; occupational or employment status.

RESPONSE FROM ADVERTISER WICKED CAMPERS

There was no response from the Advertiser.