

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/094
COMPLAINANT	R Scott
ADVERTISER	Progressive Enterprises Ltd
ADVERTISEMENT	Countdown Television
DATE OF MEETING	27 March 2017
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Countdown shows people doing their shopping at a Countdown supermarket. It also shows staff at Countdown doing their work, which includes helping with the “Food Rescue” charity.

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

Complainant, R Scott, said: Countdown advert promoting in-store donations to charities. I was very concerned to note that all the people shopping in the store were white skinned and all the people working in the store were brown skinned. This is clearly an example of casual racism which normalizes stereotypes and should not appear on New Zealand television. It is particularly harmful to Maori and Pacific Island youngsters as it promotes negative career aspirations for this group.

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

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concern that all the people shopping in the store were white skinned and all the people working in the store were brown skinned and that this was an example of casual racism.

The Chair agreed that the main people featured shopping in the store appeared to be “white-skinned” or European, but disagreed that all the staff depicted were “brown skinned”.

The Chair said that, on its own, featuring Europeans as the principal shoppers in the supermarket is not sufficient grounds to be considered a breach of the Code for People in Advertising or the Code of Ethics, as it is not likely to cause serious or widespread offence.

Therefore, the Chair ruled the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and there was no apparent breach of Basic Principle 4 of the Code of Ethics or Basic Principles 3 or 4 of the Code for People in Advertising. Accordingly, the Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint No Grounds to Proceed