

COMPLAINT NUMBER	19/011
COMPLAINANT	E Broadmore
ADVERTISER	Pink Triangle Press- Squirt
ADVERTISEMENT	Pink Triangle Press, Out of Home
DATE OF MEETING	22 January 2019
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The billboard advertisement for an online dating service for gay men, Squirt.org, featured two men wearing unbuttoned shirts and an image of a mobile phone showing the website. The text says Hookups = Squirt.org. Visit www.squirt.org to hook up today.”

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

Complainant, E Broadmore, said: This ad is for a male dating app, however I believe the imagery and font make this an unacceptable ad for a public location. I have young children and this ad raises difficult questions for parents.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 4, Rule 5;

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concern the imagery and wording in the advertisement was unacceptable for a billboard advertisement in the location.

In considering the complaint, the Chair referred to Decision 14/658, which was for a similar advertisement from the same Advertiser and was ruled no grounds to proceed by the previous Chair of the Complaints Board.

That Decision said in part:

...“As a preliminary matter, the Chairman noted under current New Zealand legislation she was not able to rule directly on the use of the name itself when it was used to refer to a product of the same name in an advertisement.

Looking at a copy of the billboard, the Chairman said nothing in the image itself was offensive. The Chairman was also of the view the term “hookups,” did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence in light of prevailing community standards.

Therefore, while she acknowledged the offence the advertisement caused the Complainant, the Chairman said the Advertiser was entitled to advertise its service, and the image of two men together in an advertisement for adult entertainment placed in a suburban street did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence.

When addressing the Complainant’s concern over the visibility of the advertisement to children, the Chairman said and nothing in the image itself was explicit or

provocative and therefore, its placement did not breach the requirement for advertisements to observe a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society. Therefore, the Chairman said there was no apparent breach of the Advertising Codes...”

In considering the complaint before her, the Chair said that despite the billboard advertisement being available to an unrestricted audience, there was nothing explicit in the image it featured. With regard to the wording, she said most children would be unlikely to associate the word ‘squirt’ with any sexual connotation and as noted in the previous decision, the Advertising Standards Authority does not have jurisdiction over the name of a product or service.

The Chair said taking into account context, medium, audience and product (service), the advertisement and its placement did not meet the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence or offend against generally prevailing community standards.

Therefore, the Chair ruled 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.