

COMPLAINT NUMBER	19/006
COMPLAINANT	M Smith
ADVERTISER	Public Trust
ADVERTISEMENT	Public Trust, Print
DATE OF MEETING	28 January 2019
OUTCOME	Settled – advertisement removed

Advertisement: The Public Trust print advertisement promoting its Personal Assist service featured in the *Australian Woman's Weekly*. The advertisement showed a clock containing the headline "On average it takes 1.7 hours per day to care for a loved one over 65." The text of the advertisement said: "Get back quality time with your loved one with personal Assist. As they get older everyday tasks and life admin become more difficult for them to manage. Personal Assist is designed for this situation. A personal adviser can step in and manage and coordinate everything from help with day-to-day household tasks, financial and property admin, to moving home. Give your parents what they really want, time with you. Because only you can give them you."

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, M Smith, said: This is the first complaint I have ever made, My hackles raised as soon as I read this advt. I find it offensive on many levels. It implies that any one over age 65 is going to struggle with day to day life and be unable to manage alone and worse still are so much of a burden that their children should employ someone else to assist them. Those over 65 are depersonalised by the wording "As they get older" and "difficult for them to manage". The advt states each individual over 65 requires 1.7 hours a day care, I assume this data includes everyone in NZ particularly those in full time residential care to reach this statistic. If this is the case it is misleading as those folk would be under the umbrella of their resthomes. They do not state the parameters of their statistic.

They further marginalise those over 65 by suggesting that children should step in and set up this service taking away life control from their parents. Are they seriously saying children of the elderly who wouldn't otherwise spend time helping out their parents with small day to day things are suddenly going to start spending quality time with them (I think not). As this advt was placed in AWW (demographic reader female 24-59) it is designed to strike in their guilt zone and I think this is unacceptable manipulation. I am not over 65.

The Advertiser, Public Trust, said in part:... "The Public Trust 'Personal Assist' advertisement was created to appeal to a specific audience – the sandwich generation. These are individuals who find themselves actively caring for older family members while still fully engaged in raising their own children. Our research found this group to be stretched timewise and emotionally.

The intention of this advertisement was to highlight the impact this dual caring role can have and how Personal Assist can go some way to alleviate the pressure associated with being a caregiver.

It was never the intention of Public Trust or Ogilvy to offend, demean or degrade people over the age of 65.

The use of the term ‘over 65’ in this advertisement was a reference to the age group surveyed in our research and the age a person may be classified as older or elderly. This is consistent with the classification used by Statistics NZ and a common classification within aged care communications.

There was never any intention to cause fear or distress with this advertisement. We are not claiming that the service should be used by everyone with family members over the age of 65. Rather, the advertisement aims to convey that Personal Assist can assist with the specific situation whereby an elderly family member needs help with administrative tasks.

Both Public Trust and Ogilvy acknowledge that the headline could have been written with greater sensitivity. We have taken this feedback on board and will endeavour to take more care when referring to age in future advertisements.

We would also like to note that we have no intention of running this advertisement again. It was only ever intended to be used for a short period of time and in a limited number of publications.

We are sorry for any negative feelings that this advertisement may have caused, particularly as the service is fundamentally designed to improve quality of life. In fact, Personal Assist is gratefully received by hundreds of families around New Zealand, with older New Zealanders and their children telling us how invaluable the service is to them..."

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(c), Rule 1(g);

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concerns the advertisement is offensive and insulting to those over the age of 65 and manipulative towards those who have retirement age parents. The advertisement does not provide any substantiation for the statistics quoted.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had provided evidence of a revised advertisement copy which referenced the Advertiser’s research to validate the claim within the headline. Due to Publisher error this revised copy was not the version used in the publication.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser was not intending to run the advertisement again and agreed it will endeavor to take more care when referring to age in future advertisements.

Given the Advertiser’s co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in agreeing not to run the advertisement again in its current form, 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 removed**

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.