

COMPLAINT NUMBER	19/231
COMPLAINANT	A Owen
ADVERTISER	Ecosa NZ
ADVERTISEMENT	Ecosa NZ YouTube
DATE OF MEETING	8 July 2019
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The YouTube video advertisement for Ecosa NZ Mattress is titled “Every Mum is a Superhero. Every Hero has a Secret – Ecosa Mattress.” The advertisement is presented by a self-declared “Supermum” as she goes about her work. When she spots two boys playing on the floor, she says “If you boys don’t get some heavy-duty carpet cleaner happening I’ll have both your knee caps!”

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

Complainant, A Owen, said: Abuse to children and using a new bed as the excuse, isn’t appropriate at all and I find it disgusting that it’s been allowed to be created.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(f); Children and Young People Advertising Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(b)

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concerns the advertisement depicted abuse to children.

The Chair referred to Rule 1(f) which says “Advertisements must not...contain anything that condones, or is likely to show violent or anti-social behavior...” and Rule 1(b) “Advertisements must not condone, encourage or unreasonably feature behavior that could be dangerous to copy, unless the purpose of the advertisement is to discourage such behavior”.

The Chair also referred to a precedent decision 18/047, which was ruled No Grounds to Proceed. In the radio advertisement for the Garden Hotel Restaurant a man is cooking dinner for his partner. He wishes her “Happy Valentines Day” and the woman is heard saying: “Oh Greg, I didn’t know you could cook”. Next we hear her say “Beans on toast and instant pudding! - Does our love mean nothing to you?” A crashing sound and a male voice groaning can be heard. The voiceover says: “The DIY approach probably won’t go down well this Valentine’s Day, but a candlelit dinner at the Garden Hotel Restaurant definitely will.”

In that complaint the Chair took into account that the Advertiser sought to use light-hearted humour to promote its establishment. She said that while the tone of the advertisement was less than ideal and did not present the woman in a good light, it was not possible to say whether any actual violence took place or whether the plates were smashed on the floor and the man simply groaned in disappointment.

The Chair said that in this limited context, the woman’s actions did not meet the threshold to condone violent behaviour towards men. When taking into account generally prevailing community standards, the Chair said the advertisement was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence.

Turning back to the complaint before her the Chair said this advertisement too is using light-hearted humour and hyperbole to convey its message. The “Supermum” character is depicted juggling the “un jugglable” as she deals with the everyday challenges of domestic life, including such unglamorous things as the baby peeing on her and ‘someone’ farting in bed. The Chair noted the “Supermum” character does react strongly when she discovers the two boys may have made a mess on the carpet, as illustrated by her response: “If you boys don’t get some heavy duty carpet cleaner happening I’ll have both your knee caps!” The Chair said the likely consumer takeout of this comment is that it was deliberately “over the top” scolding, and not meant to be taken literally.

The Chair said taking into account all of the above, in the context of a light-hearted and humorous advertisement, the woman’s comment did not meet the threshold to show violent, anti-social or dangerous behavior.

The Chair ruled the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility and was not in breach of Principle 1 or Rule 1(f) of the Advertising Standards Code or Principle 1 or Rule 1(b) of the Children and Young People Advertising Code.

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.