

COMPLAINT NUMBER	19/311
COMPLAINANT	M Burke
ADVERTISER	Isuzu NZ
ADVERTISEMENT	Isuzu NZ, Television
DATE OF MEETING	7 October 2019
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for an Isuzu D-Max Ute shows a man taking his new ute “for a spin up in the hills”. As he is playfully manoeuvring the ute at speed in a paddock of potatoes he is heard laughing and saying “...Geez, wahoo, I love this truck”.

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

Complainant, M Burke, said: The name of "Jesus" was used inappropriately and disrespectfully. It was used how a common swear word may be used seemingly intending to emphasize how good the product was. This kind of inappropriate and disrespectful use of what is a holy name in the Christian religion is clearly discriminatory.

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

Principle 1: Social Responsibility: Advertisements must be prepared and placed with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

Rule 1 (c) Decency and Offensiveness: Advertisements must not contain anything that is indecent, or exploitative, or degrading, or likely to cause harm, or serious or widespread offence, or give rise to hostility, contempt, abuse or ridicule.

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concerns about the use of the word “Geez” in the advertisement.

The Chair referred to a precedent decision, 14/081, which was ruled No Grounds to Proceed. That complaint concerned a radio advertisement which contained the phrase: “Jesus Christ. Who would marry someone named Bruce?”

The Chair said while the use of the term “Jesus Christ” in the advertisement was offensive to the Complainant, in light of generally prevailing community standards, it did not reach the threshold to be likely to cause serious or widespread offence to the Rock’s target audience.

Turning to the complaint before her the Chair noted the word used in the advertisement sounded more like the word “geez”. The Chair acknowledged that while this word has a softer impact, it is still an abbreviation of the word “Jesus”.

The Chair noted that according to the Broadcasting Standards Authority 2018 List of the Most Unacceptable Words in Broadcasting the term “Jesus Christ” had dropped from a ranking of 14th in 2013 to 29th in 2018.

The Chair said taking into account generally prevailing community standards the advertisement did not meet the threshold to cause serious or widespread offense and had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility.

The Chair said the advertisement did not breach Principle 1 or Rule 1 (c) of the Advertising Standards 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.