

COMPLAINT NUMBER	19/419
COMPLAINANT	V Hoeberechts
ADVERTISER	SKY Television
ADVERTISEMENT	SKY TV Television
DATE OF MEETING	29 October 2019
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Sky Sport shows a man being told to leave a work meeting after it has been identified by the attendees that he “farted”. “You’re out Dennis” said his colleague, before Dennis gets up and leaves the room. Following this there is a voiceover in the style of a sports commentator which says “And is he gone? You better believe it. That is a ripper”. The advertisement ends with the text “Sky Sport Now.”

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

Complainant, V Hoeberechts, said: Sky Sport Now advertisement content: It appears several staff members are gathered for a work meeting and Dennis is shown to have ‘farted’ and is then angrily told by another staff member to leave the meeting.

I believe that this advertisement breaches the Advertising Standards Code, Principle 1: Social Responsibility (Rule 1(c) - Decency and Offensiveness) for the following reasons:

- 1.) It degrades, demeans, and objectifies ‘Dennis’ for a normal bodily function that all humans have and thereby continues and or reinforces society’s stereotypical thinking concerning natural bodily functions. This stereotypical thinking can have dangerous effects in society by preventing some people from seeking medical advice about their bodily functions (if something goes wrong) because they feel ashamed and or will be ridiculed by others.
- 2.) It embarrasses ‘Dennis’ and he slinks out of the meeting ashamed.
- 3.) It is bullying - a group of people have decided that “Dennis’ must leave the meeting and due to their condescension and disgust ‘Dennis’ leaves.

Bullying in NZ is a major problem and advertisements like this only continue the cycle.

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

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.

Rule 1 (f) Violence and anti-social behaviour: Advertisements must not, unless justifiable on educational or social grounds, contain anything that condones, or is likely to show, violent or anti-social behaviour or damage to property.

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concerns the advertisement was not socially responsible and portrayed bullying in response to a normal bodily function.

The Chair said the advertisement uses dramatic parody and humour. The employee in a meeting scenario is treated as if he were a sportsman on the field, who has been “sent off”.

The Chair said the general consumer takeout was unlikely to be that the advertisement promoted bullying.

The Chair acknowledged the Complainant’s genuine concern about the behaviour in the advertisement, but said it did not reach the threshold to breach Principle 1, Rule 1(c) or Rule 1(f) of the Advertising Standards Code and had been prepared with a high standard of social responsibility to consumers and society.

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.