

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/015
COMPLAINANT	P Griffith
ADVERTISER	Trivago New Zealand
ADVERTISEMENT	Trivago Television
DATE OF MEETING	3 February 2020
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Trivago shows a woman with grey hair paying a hotel staff member \$120 for a night's accommodation. Next to her, another woman, with dark brown hair, is paying \$95 for a night's accommodation. The dark-haired woman, who appears to be younger, says the Trivago website helped her find the cheaper price.

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

Complainant, P Griffith, said: A Trivago hotel accommodation advert has been screening many many times over the last 2-3 weeks now (I have details of some other screenings) in both a short and a long version.

My complaint is that this advert is ageist, especially against older women, who are apparently not knowledgeable about how to get the best price. The ad shows two women at a hotel check-in counter, one portrayed as old (gray hair pulled back into a bun; reference to Gold card discount; gets a poorer deal) and the other a much younger woman with long dark hair who knows it all and gets a better deal. She explains how Trivago works to the older woman, ending "try it sometime" before quickly turning away, leaving the older woman looking inadequate including her inability to engage with modern technology and/or manage money. (The shorter version of the advert doesn't include the reference to the Gold Card, but it's the same message.)

The sheer repetitiveness of the screenings (probably up to around 10 times in an evening) reinforces a negative ageist perception of older women. Unfair--and possibly bordering on discriminatory under the Bill of Rights Act.

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 the advertisement is ageist.

The Chair said the advertisement was not discriminating against the elderly or demeaning them, instead it was promoting the potential financial benefit available to those who are aware of, and use, the Trivago website. The Chair said this website is available to any age group.

The Chair said the advertisement did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence.

The Chair noted the Complainant's issue regarding the frequency of the advertisement but said the number of times the advertisement was played is not a matter the Advertising Standards Authority has jurisdiction to consider. This is a matter for the broadcaster and the Advertiser.

The Chair said the advertisement had been prepared with the due sense of social responsibility required and ruled it was not in breach of 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.