

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/132
ADVERTISER	World Animal Protection
ADVERTISEMENT	World Animal Protection Television
DATE OF MEETING	14 April 2020
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for World Animal Protection shows images of different animals that have been neglected or maltreated. The text at the end of the advertisement says “Don’t let them suffer in silence. Become an Animal Protector. Call 0800 or text SHOUT to 898”.

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

There were two complaints about this advertisement:

Complaint 1: The advertisement is looking for a monthly donation but showing outdated, cruel animal scenes during day time. There is no need to show these videos during day time while children are watching, only as a motivational tool to get money. It appears from the World Animal website that these old cruel videos or pictures are not representing today’s actions. It all relates back to work done prior to 2000. I believe this is not fair to the viewers, it is misrepresenting the current action, and should certainly not be played during day time. It is even worse while everybody is at home due to the Covid-19 virus

Complaint 2: Frequent scenes of animal cruelty at all hours. I believe this to be most unsuitable for children, especially when isolated at home in the present circumstances

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Principle 2, Rule 1(g), Rule 2(e);

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

Principle 2: Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must be truthful, balanced and not misleading.

Rule 1(g) Fear and distress: Advertisements must not cause fear or distress without justification.

Rule 2(e) Advocacy advertising: Advocacy advertising must clearly state the identity and position of the advertiser. Opinion in support of the advertiser's position must be clearly distinguishable from factual information. Factual information must be able to be substantiated.

The Chair noted the Complainants' concerns the animal cruelty content of the advertisement was unsuitable viewing, especially given the current circumstances with many people being at home in lockdown, due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Chair referred to a precedent decision, 17/385, concerning the same advertisement. This complaint was also ruled No Grounds to Proceed. The following is an excerpt from that decision:

In considering the complaint, the Chair referred to precedent Decisions 17/087 and 15/154, which had dealt with similar advertising campaigns and said in part;

..."The Chair confirmed the advertisement for World Animal Protection was intended to raise awareness about the conditions some animals are kept in. While these images can be confronting, Advocacy advertising is provided for under Rule 11 of the Code of Ethics. The Chair noted the advertisement had been afforded a GXC (General Except Children) rating by the Commercial Approvals Bureau, which meant it may be broadcast at any time except during programmes which are intended specifically for children under the age of 13. "

Turning to the complaint before her, the Chair confirmed the advertisement had aired during the AM Show, which was not targeting children and therefore had played within the constraints of its afforded rating.

While acknowledging the distress the advertisement had caused the Complainant's child, she said that advocacy advertisements were allowed to be robust and provocative. As such she ruled that as long as the advertisement had played in accordance with its rating, there was no apparent breach of the Advertising Codes.

The Chair said the precedent was directly relevant to the complaint being considered, while noting that the relevant advertising codes have changed, since they were revised in 2018.

The Chair noted that according to information on the World Animal Protection New Zealand website there is substantial evidence to indicate that the incidence of animal cruelty is still an issue in 2020.

The Chair noted that in this case the advertisement had played on Choice TV during "Britain's Most Historic Towns", a programme which is not targeted at children.

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 calendar days of receipt of this decision.