

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	20/155
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	New Zealand Defence Force
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	New Zealand Defence Force, Television
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	28 April 2020
<b>OUTCOME</b>	No Grounds to Proceed

**Advertisement:** The New Zealand Defence Force television advertisement promotes army recruitment by showing a montage of day to day activities in the army. The advertisement begins with a soldier saying "I've always had this self doubting thing. I would always think, I'm not tall enough, I'm not fast enough, I'm not strong enough. But then you never know until you try something." The advertisement ends with the tagline 'Want to live a life with purpose?' followed by the NZ Army logo, '175 years of service' and a website address.

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

**Complaint:** During the 20th of April, Monday airing of Q&A, beginning at 9:15, in one of the commercial breaks there was an advertisement for army recruitment with the core message, "Feeling worthless? Join the Army". Now, I do not have the ad on me, verbatim, but, I feel like this is an ultimately predatory message targeting those with severe depression and a sense of helplessness. In the middle of a pandemic, where mental health is a growing concern, it presents a message that is not only predatory but abusive, in an effort to get you to enlist. The only message people who feel like they are worthless should be receiving is to seek help from a professional therapist.

I would like to request a review of this ad and hopefully a pulling of it from broadcast.

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

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

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

**The Chair** noted the Complainant's concern the advertisement sent a predatory message targeting vulnerable people.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and said there was no mention of worthlessness in the script. She said the voiceover talked about self-doubt and the concept of not knowing what can be achieved until you have tried.

The Chair said the likely consumer outtake of the advertisement encourages those who are looking for a rewarding career to consider the army as an option.

The Chair said the tagline “Live a life with purpose” referred to the scope of important work undertaken by the Defence Force in protecting New Zealand’s interests.

The Chair said the advertisement was not in breach of Principle 1 or Rule 1(g) 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](http://www.asa.co.nz). Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.