

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/241
ADVERTISER	Department of Internal Affairs
ADVERTISEMENT	Keep It Real Online, Television
DATE OF MEETING	24 June 2020
OUTCOME	Settled – advertisement amended

Advertisement: The Department of Internal Affairs television advertisement promotes its new campaign, Keep it Real Online. During the advertisement, a boy carries his laptop and a bowl of food which he drops onto the ground when he sees the people at the door. On the lid of the laptop, various stickers are seen, one of which is an okay hand symbol.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complaint: Hi there, whilst watching Normal People on TVNZ On-Demand on 8/6/2020 the Keep It Real Online-Pornography ad came up which clearly shows a sticker on the child’s laptop showing a white supremacy hand symbol. This ad is also on Youtube and I took a screenshot of the image in question which occurs at 0.49 minutes into the advertisement. It is very concerning that this made it through the approval process as the hand symbol has been well documented as being co-opted by white supremacist groups as a way of communicating their views-including when the ChCh mosque shooter appeared in court. Please investigate and ensure that this part of the advertisement is either removed or covered over with a sticker that is not objectionable.

The Advertiser, Department of Internal Affairs, said:

Thank you for your letter dated 26 June 2020 alerting us to the complaints you have received about our ‘Keep it real online’ campaign, specifically the hand sticker in the television advertisement focused on pornography.

We wish to advise that we have already **amended** this ad.

Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(c)

Under this Rule, “Advertising must not contain anything 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 complainant refers to a hand sticker seen briefly during the ad which shows “a white supremacy hand symbol”.

We understand that the meaning attributed to this hand gesture started as a hoax. We removed the sticker from our television ads on 15 June 2020. The accompanying videos were updated on the Keep it real online YouTube page on 26 June 2020.

Note that we are unable to update the video on social media platforms not controlled by the Department of Internal Affairs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information about how we’ve amended this ad.

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 concern the computer sticker which features in the advertisement was potentially objectionable.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had taken action to amend the advertisement by removing the image of concern.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the advertisement, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board.

The Chair ruled the complaint was settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled – advertisement amended**

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.