

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/395
ADVERTISER	Chorus NZ
ADVERTISEMENT	Chorus, Television
DATE OF MEETING	10 September 2020
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The Chorus advertisement targets late adopters of fibre. Many users still on copper broadband experience problems around their internet connections freezing, responding slowly, pixilation or other side effects associated with a slow internet connection. By connecting to Chorus fibre these types of issues are a thing of the past which supports the tag line “It’s how we internet now.” The advertisement shows a group of friends who stage a ‘technology intervention’ for their friend Carl who is still on copper broadband. They introduce a Chorus technician named Sammy who is there to install fibre for Carl.

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

Complaint: The add "Fibre. It's how we internet now." (see YouTube link - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efc_A9rVSc4) which has been played on various TV channels and can be found on YouTube too shows a Chorus employee ready to install the fibre cable. The worker seems to be of Indian descend and his name is "Sammy", which is a racist term used in South Africa to describe men of Indian descend (see the Dictionary of South African English - <https://dsae.co.za/entry/sammy/e06217>). I personally believe this is totally inappropriate and unlikley to be a simple coincidence.

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 acknowledged the Complainant’s concern that the use of the name “Sammy” for the Chorus Technician character in the advertisement was inappropriate.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider the name “Sammy” in this context was likely to cause serious or widespread offence, in light of generally prevailing community standards.

The Chair acknowledged the genuine concerns of the Complainant but said the name of the Chorus Technician was incidental to the purpose of the advertisement – encouraging consumers to take up fibre internet access. While noting the Complainant’s concern with the reference to “Sammy” and its meaning in South Africa, the Chair said the majority of New Zealanders would not associate it with a racist or insulting term.

The Chair said the advertisement had been prepared with the due sense of social responsibility required and said 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 calendar days of receipt of this decision.