

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/452
ADVERTISER	Vote Safe NZ
ADVERTISEMENT	Vote Safe, Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	24 September 2020
OUTCOME	Decline to Adjudicate

Summary of the Chair's Decision

The Chair declined to adjudicate the complaint.

Description of Advertisement

The YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWdliNtl5Z0&t=3s> is accessed on the Advertiser's website, www.votesafe.nz. It is a 3.36 minute video with Vicki Walsh telling her story of terminal illness and euthanasia and detailing her views about the upcoming End of Life Choice Referendum.

Complaint: The advertisement by "votesafe" presents an emotive story of a woman who was diagnosed with a terminal illness, but survived 10 years after her diagnosis. It does so in an attempt to discourage voters from voting "yes" in the referendum for the "End of Life Bill".

I believe this advertisement is misleading, and that votesafe are not doing their due diligence in making their advertisements clear and explicit in their intent. Throughout the video, on their website, and on quiz style advertisements they have on Facebook, as well as the URL they have purchased of "votesafe" they project the image of being an impartial party offering information to help voters vote safely/from an informed place.

However, in reality they are incredibly biased, are only communicating cherry-picked information and do not clearly communicate that they are not an neutral or official organisation. They also do not clearly communicate accurate information regarding the scope, intent and procedures of the Bill they oppose.

It is my belief that if they are going to continue to show these advertisements, they should clearly state that they are an anti-euthanasia organisation, and are not an independent party associated with "safe voting".

Information from the Advertiser

The Advertiser confirmed the video content was not paid advertising.

Relevant Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Guidelines

The Chair referred to the [ASA Guide on Election and Referenda Advertising](#) which states the ASA deals with "complaints about paid election advertising in media not covered by the [Broadcasting Standards Authority Election Programmes Code](#) ... The ASA will decline to adjudicate on complaints about posts on branded social media pages (referred to as organic posts) or websites from political parties, candidates, and election-related advocacy groups." This includes Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok etc.

Chair's Ruling

The Chair declined to adjudicate the complaint.

The Chair noted the post was confirmed as unpaid content on the Advertiser's website www.votesafe.nz.

Chair's Ruling: Decline to Adjudicate

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. **NOTE:** Under the fast track process one month prior to the Election, appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within three (3) calendar days of receipt of this decision.