

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/375
ADVERTISER	Plarium Global Ltd
ADVERTISEMENT	Raid Shadow of Legends Game Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	20 October 2020
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The digital marketing advertisement for Raid Shadow of Legends computer game on the Otago Daily Times website shows an animated female character lying on her stomach and aiming a bow and arrow across a river. The game is a fantasy, cooperative play, strategy game. The text in the advertisement says: "You're allowed to do anything you want in this game".

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

Complaint: The ad appeared below the news story at the above url, today, 15 August 2020. It is in breach of Advertising Standards Code, Principle 1, Rule 1c: "Advertisements must not exploit, degrade, denigrate, demean or objectify any person or group of people; Advertisers must not use offensive, degrading or provocative copy and/or images to attract attention or promote the sale of products or services; Sexual imagery or language must be appropriate to the audience and medium; Sexual depictions of people or groups of people may only be used to advertise relevant products and services."

The ad is offensive and degrading to women as it claims 'you're allowed to do anything you want in this game', while showing a pornographic style picture of a woman with an unnaturally large bum, which is barely covered by a flimsy skirt that shows her upper thigh, and she is looking away from the viewer. The clear implication is that in the game, you can get away with whatever you want to do to this woman. And the ad is using that as a hook to entice people to click the link. This image and sentiment is particularly insulting placed as it is under a news story about Chozyn Koroheke, who was murdered by her male partner. This kind of suggestive imagery and text contributes directly to a culture where men are encouraged not to respect women as equals, but see them as objects to whom you 'are allowed to do anything you want to'. Changing this is essential if NZ is going to make any difference to what the ODT elsewhere calls "statistics that make horrific reading" on family violence (<https://www.odt.co.nz/opinion/editorial/stand-against-family-violence>).

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 advertisement was offensive to women by showing a pornographic type image, while stating the game let you do anything you want.

The Complainant was also concerned about the placement of the advertisement in a news story about domestic violence.

The Chair noted the advertisement used an animated character from the multiplayer *Raid Shadow of Legends* computer game. While the Chair acknowledged the image of the female character showed exaggerated features which was not ideal, the advertisement needed to be viewed within the context of the game it was promoting rather than in isolation. The Chair said it was not uncommon to see examples of this kind of exaggerated caricature within the genre of computer games. She said *Raid Shadow of Legends* was a fantasy game of quests and battles where players are able to direct the characters to “do whatever you want.” The character depicted was fully clothed and aiming a bow and arrow in an action shot.

The Chair noted the placement of the digital advertisement next to an article about domestic violence. would not have been a deliberate placement or one that the Advertiser could control given that advertisements are placed automatically based on likely audiences. The Chair said the connection between the advertisement and the article would only be an issue if consumers had a similar consumer takeout as the complainant. Although the Chair acknowledged the genuine concern of the Complainant, she said in her view this would not be the most likely consumer takeout.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider whether the advertisement was likely to cause serious or widespread offence, in light of generally prevailing community standards. The Chair said that despite the Complainant’s objection to the advertisement, it did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence for most consumers or offend against generally prevailing community standards.

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.