

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/006
ADVERTISER	Richmond Vehicle Testing Station
ADVERTISEMENT	Richmond Vehicle Testing Station Print
DATE OF MEETING	1 March 2021
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The Richmond Vehicle Testing Station print advertisement showed a picture of a Donald Trump (former President of the United States) look-alike. The text beneath him said: "This Corona thing... I don't see what the fuss is about. It's a great car, Toyota really nailed it with that one." Make sure you guys nail it with your WOF from us..."

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

Complaint: Dear Sirs

May I respectfully draw your attention to a copy of the enclosed advert printed recently in THE WAIMEA WEEKLY a free paper published in RICHMOND.

I am appalled by this advert and find it absolutely dreadful that they can "joke" about this terrible pandemic that has taken the lives of many people worldwide. All in New Zealand have fought so hard to keep covid at bay and so far we have been very fortunate.

I do not know if there is any action you can take but would ask you please to do so if possible. Thank you.

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 humour used in the advertisement was inappropriate in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chair agreed with the Complainant's comments about the seriousness of the COVID-19 (Corona virus) pandemic and the need for responsible advertising.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider whether the use of a Trump look-alike, with the text "This Corona thing... I don't see what the fuss is about", in this context, was likely to cause harm or serious or widespread offence, in light of generally prevailing community standards.

The Chair referred to one of the Guidelines for Rule 1(c) which state:

Humorous, satirical treatment of people and groups of people are natural and accepted features of societal relationships and may be acceptable, provided they are not likely to cause harm or serious or widespread offence.

The Chair said the play on words using the dual meanings of the word “Corona” – the name of a Toyota car and the name of a virus, as spoken by “Trump”, was intended to be humorous by making fun of Mr Trump. It was also to encourage consumers to use the services of the Richmond Vehicle Testing Station.

The Chair said that despite the Complainant’s objection to the advertisement, it did not reach the threshold to cause harm or serious or widespread offence for most consumers.

The Chair said the advertisement had been prepared with the due sense of social responsibility required and 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.