

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/276
ADVERTISER	Trade Me Limited
ADVERTISEMENT	Trade Me Limited Television
DATE OF MEETING	24 May 2021
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Trade Me Property shows a woman and a man attending an open home. When the man openly voices the questions he has about the property, the woman has the answers straightaway. This is because she is accessing the Trade Me Property website on her phone.

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

Complaint: This Trademe Property ad appears in 3 versions. There is a long 30 second version, in which the white male shows complete idiocy on a number of counts in respect to buying property. There seems to be shorter versions (15 seconds and eight seconds approx.), with the same characters, but with reducing instances portrayed of white male stupidity. The point is that the shorter versions feed off the long version and a viewer is expected to link to the long version mentally.

Specifically, I take the strongest possible exception to the portraying of the white male in the ad, as a thorough-going idiot. The Maori or Pasifika woman shown has all the answers and pointedly offers them in response to the white male's complete lack of knowledge.

I have no objection to mixed race scenarios and understand these serve marketing purposes. But beyond the white male idiot portrayal, the question I want an answer to is: 'Would Trademe commission an ad and pay for screen time, if the white male had all the answers and the Brown female was shown as the "Dunce"'.

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 concerns about the way a white male is portrayed in the advertisement.

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

The Chair said the advertisement is promoting the Trade Me Property website. The reason the woman knows more about the property they are visiting is because she is reading the information on her phone, thanks to the information provided by Trade Me.

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.

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.