

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/285
ADVERTISER	Partners Life
ADVERTISEMENT	Partners Life Television
DATE OF MEETING	31 May 2021
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: This television advertisement for Partners Life insurance begins with a man reading the Three Blind Mice nursery rhyme. This reading is accompanied by a cartoon of the three mice. The narrator says "... Three blind tail-less mice, See how they fall, See how they fall. They all fall over because they're no longer stable, how will they work if they are not able, no job no cover means no food on their table three blind tail-less, insurance-less mice." In the very last scene of the cartoon one of the mice spies a trap, baited with a big piece of cheese. we see one mouse go through into another room to then come across a set mouse trap with cheese. The screen then goes black and we hear the sound of the trap snapping shut. The advertisement ends with the text "It doesn't have to be unhappily ever after. So, plan ahead. Partners life. Get it right."

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

Complaint: I was shocked when I saw the Unhappily Ever After campaign for Partners Life.

How irresponsible is it in these hard covid times where a lot of people have lost their jobs is it to be implacable that because a 'mouse' is injured out of work and struggling that he should take himself out into the cold to find a mouse trap and commit suicide. This ad is absolutely deplorable and is targeting vulnerable people. Completely unacceptable.

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 the advertisement shows a mouse committing suicide.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider whether the scene where the mouse is caught in the mouse trap, in this context, 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. The Chair said the advertisement is promoting life insurance, using the tale of the Three Blind Mice as a mechanism to illustrate how unfortunate events can occur.

The Chair said she did not agree that the likely consumer takeout of the mouse getting caught in the trap was the result of a suicide attempt. The Chair said it was more likely the mouse was attracted to the prize of the big cheese and didn't know getting caught in the trap was even a risk.

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.