

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	21/431
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Westpac Bank
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Westpac Bank Television
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	30 August 2021
<b>OUTCOME</b>	No Grounds to Proceed

**Advertisement:** The television advertisement for Westpac shows a child being excluded from joining three older boys in a treehouse, when they pull up the rope ladder. The child then befriends a "monster" and they build an amazing new boat treehouse together. Next time the child visits this new treehouse the three boys are in it. This time however they allow her to join them, probably because they are afraid of the monster, who is there too. The song "Stand by Me" plays in the background. The advertisement finishes with the Westpac logo and the text "Together Greater".

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

**Complaint:**

There is an ad we've seen on TVNZ for Westpac and it depicts a bunch of bullying kids alienating one kid who goes off and creates a fabulous tree house with a mythical friendly monster, but once complete the bullying kids take the treehouse over and only let the alienated kid who made the treehouse on once the monster turns up. Then they are all happy.

We find this horrifying! I thought we were trying to dissuade bullying being seen in a positive light. I realise whom ever made this ad didn't mean to show bullying and in such a positive way but it's not okay to normalise bullying. I hope i'm not the only one to complain.

Thanks for reading this. I hope it makes a little difference.

**The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(f);**

**Principle 1: Social Responsibility:** Advertisements must be prepared and placed with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

**Rule 1(f) Violence and anti-social behaviour:** Advertisements must not, unless justifiable on educational or social grounds, contain anything that condones, or is likely to show, violent or anti-social behaviour or damage to property.

**The Chair** noted the Complainant's concern the advertisement portrayed bullying in a positive way.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code requires the Chair to consider whether the interactions between the children in 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.

The Chair acknowledged that the younger child faced adversity when the older children prevented her from accessing the old treehouse. The Chair said this story is a metaphor for

the role the Westpac Bank can play in their customer's lives. With the unexpected strength and support from her new friend the girl is able to create a new and exciting boat treehouse.

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](http://www.asa.co.nz). Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision. The substantive appeal application must be lodged with the ASA within 21 calendar days of receipt of the written decision.