

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	21/455
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Department of Internal Affairs
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Three Waters Television
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	13 September 2021
<b>OUTCOME</b>	No Grounds to Proceed

**Advertisement:** This television advertisement for the Government's Three Waters campaign was presented in a cartoon style with a voiceover in Te Reo Māori, and with English subtitles. The English translation of the te reo Māori includes the following: "Imagine Aotearoa without good water... That's why we're working with councils to make sure it doesn't happen for real... grouping them together to keep everybody on the path to better all round water". Animated people, fish and insects are then shown in a variety of situations smiling and interacting with light blue water. The text at the end of the advertisement said "Better water is for everyone - He Puna Wai, He Puna Ora. Find out more at ThreeWaters.govt.nz" Also shown were the Three Waters and New Zealand Government logos.

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

There were two complaints about this advertisement.

**Complaint 1:** I'm complaining about the latest Three Waters advertisement that is represented in Maori / Te Reo language only with only English subtitles, taking absolutely no consideration to the majority of the country whom do not speak this language. It is racial, and in blatant preference to Maori culture and racially forceful to non Maori culture and those who do not speak nor understand the language. We are a diversified country with white European and Maori culture and it is extremely preferential toward one race and not the other and highly disrespectful and ignorant to those living here who are of a different culture, speaking different languages. Very insensitive and I'm sure I am not the only person who feels this way toward an advertisement that is clearly preferential and one sided.

**Complaint 2:** 3 waters advertisement was entirely spoken in the Maori Language with subtitles. Was not acceptable for the sight impaired.

**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 racial and in blatant preference to Māori culture.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider whether the use of te reo Māori 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 te reo Māori is an official language of New Zealand and the advertisement included a full English translation, in the form of sub-titles.

The Chair noted the difficulties for the sight impaired in reading text on television advertisements. The Chair said an all-English version of this same advertisement was also screened, as part of this same campaign, with the voiceover in English.

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 with notification of the intent to appeal lodged within 14 calendar days of receipt of the written decision. The substantive appeal application must be lodged with the ASA within 21 calendar days of receipt of the written decision.