

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/495
ADVERTISER	BCITO
ADVERTISEMENT	BCITO, Television
DATE OF MEETING	21 September 2021
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The BCITO television advertisement is formatted as a documentary and shows a father coming to terms with his son becoming a tradesman. It begins by showing the parents "interviewed" and the father saying, "it's a phone call every parent dreads". The advertisement cuts to a shot of the father receiving the call. He drops the phone and says, "it's Michael... he's... qualified". The advertisement then shows the father dealing with the news - throwing his son's clothing out of the window, pushing his ice cream into a promotional poster, kicking a traffic cone at a building site. After talking with a man in a high-vis jacket, he comes back into the house, hugs his son and says "I just needed a bit of time". The advertisement shows the text "The trades won't hold them back. Will you?", and then ends with the BCITO logo and URL, with the text "Trade up to a construction apprenticeship".

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

Complaint 1:

For an industry known for its homophobic issues it's pretty upsetting to see them making "coming out" look like a joke. Not sure what can be done, but the trauma people have round coming out or choosing not to, is not a joke. Its heartbreaking to think the ad went through so many hands before airing and no one adequately considered how awful this is for the community it's trying to profit on in its references

Complaint 2:

The advert played by BCITO (same advert) clear is a play on a person 'coming out' as Gay. It is stacked with inuendo. As a parent of a gay son, who struggled to come out, this advert is offensive. Gay people suffer from enough discrimination now, This is making fun of them. The advert played is this one. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9YdpqYhRe8>

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 Complainants were concerned the advertisement was offensive to make light of the struggle faced by some choosing to reveal their sexual identity.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and said the likely consumer takeout of the advertisement was it was attempting to use humour and irony to promote the option of a

career in the trade and construction industry. The Chair noted this advertisement was the continuation of a previous advertisement following an apprentice through from announcing he wanted to be a 'tradie' through to becoming qualified. The Chair agreed that parallels were implied between announcing the son's career choice and "coming out" in the sexual sense.

The Chair noted that the focus of the advertisement was on the reaction of the parent to news which he initially takes to be negative. The Chair said during the advertisement's narrative arc, the father works through his own preconceptions and prejudices and comes to the realisation that he is proud of his son's career path.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider whether the implied comparisons made in the advertisement to sexual orientation, was likely to cause serious or widespread offence in light of generally prevailing community standards, in this context. The Chair said that despite the Complainants' objections to a serious subject being used in this way, the positive outcome meant it did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence for most consumers.

The Chair said the advertisement 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: Complaints **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 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.