

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/322
COMPLAINANT	S Butler & others
ADVERTISER	Vodafone NZL
ADVERTISEMENT	Vodafone NZL Television
DATE OF MEETING	1 October 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Vodafone My Flex Prepay shows a woman sitting in her car with the words “The future according to Nicole” written across the screen. The woman appears to be in traffic and is talking to her partner on speaker phone. He says “The kids are going nuts, how far away are you?” She says “Sorry babe, it’s bumper to bumper”. She then turns to the camera and says “Family life chews through the minutes... and describes the My Flex Prepay Plan she has with Vodafone which includes “a chunk of data for me” When she hears a child’s voice say “I need go toilet” she says “Ooh, movement, bye”, and ends the call. The advertisement moves to a wide shot and shows the woman parked at the beach eating a cupcake and watching content on her phone. The advertisement ends with the Vodafone logo.

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

Complainant, S Butler, said: I object to the lady telling lies about where she is - stuck in traffic - but looking out at the beach. She lies to her family. This is no role model & is something that should not be advertised as "normal" behavior.

Complainant, B Allen said: I find it very interesting that Vodafone has an advert with one partner is on the phone to "Kev" and lies to him on where she is at the time. Is Vodafone teaching our children that lying is alright if you want time off and not go home to the children and help look after them! I consider this advert to be in very poor taste and I think it is not a joke. Vodafone should look seriously at their advertising supplier and maybe their moral standards!

Complainant, I Patterson said:

The reason for my objection to this advert is that it promotes falseness as a means to achieving an objective and this is wrong. I have counted 6 incidents of lying in the space of about 30 seconds and it is clearly not a good look for Vodafone or the person presenting it. The advert starts with a car parked in a car park but the person presenting the detail makes out that the car is stuck in traffic and this is wrong. The add then proceeds with further deceptions and there may well be more than I have detected all culminating in me actually not believing in what was said in the first place.

The advert appears in prime time when we are doing our records of both the Antique road show and the news. This is not a good influence on younger viewers and does not put forward a good way of going about things we should not allow television to be promoting lies and deception in advertising. Even films have to provide disclaimers that the representations are fictitious and any reference to real people is purely coincidental so this should be provided here if Vodafone cannot be honest about what they present what else is false with what they do.

Complainants C Lea and C Henderson shared similar concerns that the advertisement supporting lying to partners and children.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4 and Rule 4.

The Chair noted the Complainants' sincere concerns the advertisement showed a woman lying to her partner and children while taking time for herself. The Complainants considered it was not appropriate to show this type of behaviour in an advertisement.

The Chair referred to Rule 4 of the Code of Ethics which requires that Advertisements not contain anything which clearly offends against generally prevailing community standards taking into account the context, medium, audience and product.

The Chair said "The future according to Nicole" scenario in the Vodafone My Flex advertisement showed a woman making the most of her journey home from work to take time out for herself, in the same way that she used the flexible prepay plan in a way that best worked for her. In her view, the scenario in the advertisement was intended to be light-hearted and did not meet the threshold to breach Rule 4 or the required standard of social responsibility under Basic Principle 4.

In light of the above, the Chair said there was no apparent breach of the Code of Ethics.

Therefore, the Chair ruled that 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 days of receipt of this decision.