

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	19/047
<b>COMPLAINANT</b>	R Parry
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	NZL National Party
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	NZL National Party Digital Marketing
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	19 February 2019
<b>OUTCOME</b>	Settled

**Advertisement:** The New Zealand National Party Facebook post consisted of a video featuring Gerry Brownlee talking about a recent National Party announcement regarding proposed changes to National's tax policy. Mr Brownlee said: " 'Bracket creep' as it's called is a big problem and this Government is going to take an extra \$17.7 billion dollars over the next years out to '20/'21 out of the pay packets of New Zealanders simply because of that 'bracket creep'."

**The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.**

**Complainant, R Parry, said:** In the video in this sponsored ad, Gerry Brownlee states that the policy announced by Simon Bridges will help working New Zealanders because, in his words, This Government is going to take an extra \$17.7 billion over the next years, out to 2021, out of the pay packets of New Zealanders simply because of that bracket creep. So far it's had over 6000 views (as of 31/01/19 at 6:48 pm) and it would be fair to say, it is targeting adults of a voting age.

Rule 2(b) of the Advertising Standards Authority's Advertising Standards Code states that Advertisements must not mislead or be likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust or exploit their lack of knowledge. This includes by implication, inaccuracy, ambiguity, exaggeration, unrealistic claim, omission, false representation or otherwise.

Gerry's claim that bracket creep costs New Zealanders \$17.7 billion over four years is massively exaggerated and inaccurate, even according to the National Party itself .

According to the National Party's own published calculations, ([https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/nationalparty/pages/11726/attachments/original/1548815370/Tax\\_Indexation\\_Q\\_A.PDF](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/nationalparty/pages/11726/attachments/original/1548815370/Tax_Indexation_Q_A.PDF)) their tax change to fully address the bracket creep issue would cost \$650 million a year, which is \$2.6 billion over four years, not the \$17.7 billion Gerry is claiming.

This basic maths error by a senior member of the National Party grossly misleads New Zealanders who see this advertisement.

I request that the Advertising Standards Authority should urgently contact Gerry Brownlee and the National Party to correct and clarify this misleading online advertisement.

**The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(b), Rule 2(e).**

**The Chair** noted the Complainant's concerns the advertisement contained misleading comments which over-estimated the cost of 'bracket creep' under the present tax system.

The Chair noted the Advertiser's acknowledgement that the number quoted "equated to the overall amount of tax increases the Labour-led Government will be taking out of the back-

pockets of taxpayers in New Zealand, as opposed to just the cost component of bracket creep.” The Chair also noted the Advertiser had removed the Facebook post which was the subject of this complaint.

Given the Advertiser’s co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in removing the Facebook post, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

**Chair’s Ruling:** Complaint **Settled**

#### **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 days of receipt of this decision.