

COMPLAINT NUMBER	19/211
COMPLAINANT	A Evans
ADVERTISER	Howick Village Optometrists
ADVERTISEMENT	Howick Village Optometrists, Radio
DATE OF MEETING	24 June 2019
OUTCOME	Settled – advertisement removed

Advertisement: The Howick Village Optometrists radio advertisement has a salesperson showing a customer glasses and says in part: “Oh, so you’re a personal assistant! Well these are the secretarial look. Real “come do me” glasses, that you can fling aside as you untie your hair and throw yourself across his desk.” The customer replies saying “ewww.”

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, A Evans, said: On Tuesday 04 I was listening to The Mix when an advert came on for Howick Optometrists, with the add describing the 'type' of glasses that presented to the client in look at stereotype; with one particular OUTSTANDING comment that was of the theme "Throw yourself across his desk - Secretary Glasses".

I was flabbergasted to say the least. Who allows this continuation of stereotyped sexism today, and how is this lazy type of advertising still acceptable.

Where is the professional moderation of your client adds in the 21st century. Not only topical globally is the issue of gender stereotyping, but in the age of the "Me Too Movement" I would have thought there would have been someone within this advertising team that thought this tone for any add would be check and moderated.

I am disappointed that this level of misogynistic advertising is still deemed acceptable and would have expected better.

Despite the continuing global reality of patriarchy, the continuation of "Ambivalent Sexism" is unacceptable. Every time an advertisement or comment like this is left unaddressed, this perpetuates the continuation of stereotyping which continues the perception that there is still a level of contempt and disdain for women, and that our roles in society are continued to be belittled and sexualised.

I would expect that someone should be reviewing this add, and be making a comment back to the client to advise that I have made a complaint, and in speaking with other people who have agreed with me, that there will be little support/business being given to this Optometrist in context of this add.

I would hope that this add is either then edited or pulled.

The Media, NZME responded on behalf of the Advertiser, Howick Village Optometrists and said in part:

We acknowledge that a stereotype is employed in the advertisement, although we note that the stereotype is explicitly rejected with “ew” stated by the person portraying the purchaser.

We understand that this advertisement has played for a number of years (since 2015) and has undoubtedly been heard many thousands of times. In all of that time it has not generated

any complaint until now, which suggests it has not caused serious or widespread offence. However, in reflection of this complaint, we consider that the tongue in cheek stereotype in the advertisement is now outdated when taking into account societal tastes and expectations, particularly in the “Me Too” era. It is no longer in rotation.

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

The Chair noted the Complainants concern the advertisement was perpetuating a sexist stereotype about women’s role in society.

The Chair said upon receipt of the complaint, the Advertiser had contacted NZME and had the advertisement withdrawn from rotation. The Chair noted the Media’s response and the decision to discontinue the advertisement given the changes in societal tastes and expectations.

Given the Advertiser’s co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in removing the advertisement, 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 – advertisement removed**

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.