

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	20/216
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Valley Education & Training Enterprises Ltd
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Valley Education & Training Enterprises Ltd, Print
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	15 June 2020
<b>OUTCOME</b>	Settled – advertisement removed

**Advertisement:** The Valley Education & Training Enterprises print advertisement, which featured in the Hauraki Herald, promotes its free agriculture course. The advertisement discusses how clear the rivers became during the Covid-19 lock down while farmers activities were business as usual. The advertisement says "Dirty farmers aren't so dirty after all" and "the government has finally realised that the sunset industry is the hand that will pull us out of the swamp". The advertisement offers reader the opportunity to become part of the backbone of the country by taking up the free agriculture course which is taught by farmers, for farmers. The advertisement ends with the line "Someone has to have a plan in this country", contact details and the Valley Education logo.

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

**Complaint:** I believe the statement in this advertisement " How clear the lakes and rivers became during lockdown " is untruthful and that there is no evidence that would substantiate this claim. I'm a news junkie and I've seen nothing that would indicate our lakes and rivers are any clearer or cleaner than before lock down.

#### **The Advertiser, Valley Education & Training Enterprises Ltd, said in part:**

"Naturally, we are aghast that we have offended anyone with our advertisement, which was aimed at promoting our Agriculture Programme to help with training people for the farming sector, especially after Covid-19 decimated their pool of employees.

The advertisement was scheduled to run for two weeks only, so we can assure you it will not be published again in that format. In future, we will be sure to amend any such statements - they would be prefaced by "*in our opinion*"

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

**Principle 2: Truthful Presentation:** Advertisements must be truthful, balanced and not misleading.

**Rule 2(b) Truthful Presentation:** 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. Obvious hyperbole identifiable as such is not considered to be misleading.

**The Chair** noted the Complainant's concern the advertisement made unsubstantiated claims about the condition of New Zealand's lakes and rivers, which could be misleading.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had taken action to ensure the advertisement does not run again in its current form.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in removing the advertisement, the Chair said it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board.

The Chair ruled the complaint 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](http://www.asa.co.nz). Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.