

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/519
ADVERTISER	DUCO Events
ADVERTISEMENT	DUCO Events, Print
DATE OF MEETING	19 October 2020
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The events management company DUCO ran a wrap-around advertisement in the NZ Herald newspaper. One of the images shows the two boxers Joseph Parker and Junior Fa roaring at each other as they promote the upcoming boxing match. The second image shows the boxers in a boxing pose with flames coming from their fists.

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

Complaint: This appeared as a wrap around on the NZ Herald and I find it disturbing and racist.

It breaches Standard 2 - Depiction of People and social groups in a fair way and also breaches a standard of violence in advertising.

The ad shows a Samoan and a Tongan Boxer howling at each other like wild animals in a beastlike way whilst their boxing pose is ready for annihilation of each other and thunderbolts are on their fists to indicate their raw and brute strength.

I find this ad offensive as it plays up to the racist stereotype of Black/Brown men as violent and vicious brutes. This is otherism, where the norm WASP is portrayed as placid and industrious and the other are seen as vicious, violent and unpredictable savages. Many impressionable viewers and the intended audience of boxing bouts is not usually the most erudite and elite sectors of society (Although a white business elite no doubt will pay and sit in corporate boxes to watch two Islanders beat each other to a pulp).

It also glamourises boxing and other violent sports like MMA (Dominated by Black African athlete Israel Adesana) to men of colour and this does not help when they are lampooned by the right for being violent and stupid (Jake Heke for example).

Such advertising does not help when Island and Maori men are hugely over represented in violent crime, rape and murder and statistics and at least one violent murder a week is shown with a Maori or Island man as the defendant. Also Maori and especially Islanders are wildly over represented in violent contact sports like Rugby League, MMA and boxing. The similarity of this to Black American men in the USA was like a cover of a magazine showing LeBron James also in some wild growl bouncing a basketball was slammed and condemned by African American lobby groups.

There is also a well known rivalry between some Samoan and Tongan people in sporting circles and the recent rugby and league tests were proof of this. Many Samoans and Tongans will no doubt fight over the outcome and see the burning fists like "Beat that Tongan out, Manu Samoa" etc.

Such images also lend into the wild animal stereotype that men of colour are less than human and like some wild beast of burden.

I will admit there were 4 other images of the pair inside the insert that were more sedate merely showing the two men facing you with gloves poised, but its this image you see on the cover and it screams the stereotypes.

It is more harmful as Polynesian men are less likely to read a right wing publication written

and consumed by Pakehas for other pakehas and will look at that image and think "Yeah typical violent Islanders". You never see any positive images of these people unless they are being given some help by White people or they are whinging about some land or some form of official racism.

This type of advertising should be banned (Boxing and league are two sports I detest), or at least buried deep in the paper. As a part Samoan and Maori man this type of racist and stereotypical advertising is like an unwelcome trip back to the "Mandingo" fights set up by White slave owners in the 1800 and realistically this has not changed with corporate boxing bouts.

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

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.

Rule 1(f) Violence and anti-social behaviour: Advertisements must not, unless justifiable on educational or social grounds, contain anything that condones, or is likely to show, violent or anti-social behaviour or damage to property.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern the advertisement content is disturbing and racist.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and considered it in relation to the context of other promotional material for boxing events.

She said the consumer takeout of the advertisement which showcases the two boxers who are participating in the sporting event was unlikely to be one of racism or offensive use of stereotypes, given that it was reasonable for the Advertiser to use the image of Joseph Parker and Junior Fa, the boxers participating in the event. The consumer takeout was likely to be that the advertisement was promoting a boxing event between the two sportspeople.

The Chair noted the Complainant's genuine concerns with the advertisement and their concerns about the violence involved in the sport of boxing in general. She said however, that the Advertiser had the right to promote a legitimate sporting event which has a large mainstream following.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider whether the use of the sportsmen's images in this context was likely to cause serious or widespread offence in light of generally prevailing community standards. The Chair said that despite the Complainant's objection to the advertisement, it did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence.

Rule 1(f) required the Chair to consider whether the advertisement contained anything that showed violent or antisocial behaviour. The Chair said the depictions of the sportsmen posing in an advertisement promoting a boxing match, did not reach the threshold to breach this rule in the code.

The Chair said the advertisement had been prepared and placed with a due sense of social responsibility and was not in breach of Principle 1 or Rules 1(c) and 1(f) of the Advertising Standards Code.

The Chair ruled 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 calendar days of receipt of this decision.