

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/036
ADVERTISER	Horizon Regional Council
ADVERTISEMENT	Horizon Regional Council Radio
DATE OF MEETING	1 February 2021
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The voiceover for the radio advertisement for Horizon Regional Council says "...This story's about you. Actually, this story's about Yous. There's 'No Beers You', who's honestly pretty great. Then there's 'Couple of Beers You', who's a lot like 'No Beers You', but doesn't always make the best decisions, then there's 'Lost Count Beers You', who ended up in A&E because he accidentally bit himself eating chips..." The advertisement ends with the message "If you're drinking, don't drive..."

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

Complaint: The use of the English language with a word of "yous". There is no such word in the English language and I have no idea why you need to dumb the NZ public spoken word down with the use of a word that does not exist. NZ already rates very poorly in the education system and by encouraging the poor use of English, does not encourage anyone to make an effort to use the language correctly. I would appreciate it if this Advertisement is removed off Newstalk ZB or if not, do make a concerted effort to use proper English.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(c) and Rule 2(e);

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.

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

Rule 2(e) Advocacy advertising: Advocacy advertising must clearly state the identity and position of the advertiser. Opinion in support of the advertiser's position must be clearly distinguishable from factual information. Factual information must be able to be substantiated.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern the use of the word "yous" in the advertisement was not correct English.

The Chair confirmed the advertisement was an advocacy advertisement intending to encourage people who drink, not to drive. The Chair noted advocacy advertising is provided for under Rule 2(e) of the Advocacy Standards Code, allowing robust expression of opinion.

The Chair said the advertiser, Horizons Regional Council, is clearly identified in the advertisement and its message was clear. The criteria in Rule 2(e) of the Code had therefore been met.

The Chair said although the term “yous” is not standard English it can be used correctly as the plural of “you”. While “you” can be either a singular or a plural pronoun “yous” is definitely plural. In the context of this advocacy advertisement the term “Yous” refers to the three different ‘You’s – ‘No Beers You’, ‘Couple of Beers You’ and ‘Lost Count Beers You’.

The Chair said the advertisement was not likely to cause serious or widespread offence and therefore did not meet the threshold to breach Principle 1, Principle 2 or Rule 1(c) 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.