

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/050
ADVERTISER	New Zealand Government
ADVERTISEMENT	New Zealand Government COVID-19 Television
DATE OF MEETING	15 February 2021
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The New Zealand Government television advertisement about COVID-19 showed two people arriving at a beach on a summer's day. Everyone on the beach is holding a fixed position and not moving. The woman says "Summer's just stopped. Have you got your Bluetooth on?". The man immediately checks his phone and turns on Bluetooth. The people at the beach resume their normal activity. The text at the end of the advertisement says "Unite against COVID-19".

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

Complaint: I am complaining about the Governments corona virus campaign stopping christmas adverts.

The advert is untrue. It is misleading and targeting the wrong people. It could very easily cause more anxiety than necessary.

The advert portrays ordinary people in the NZ Economy/General Population Bubble. It is targeted at US when it will not be US who stop Christmas by doing one or more of the things or actions portrayed in the adverts.

Correct me if I am wrong. I almost exclusively get my info from the six o'clock news on TV one.

1. We Eliminated the Cov 2 Novel Corona Virus D-19 after that first wave. There is NO virus in the NZ Economy/General Population Bubble.

2. Any out break of the corona virus D-19 has been from either managed isolation or from people managing people in managed isolation.

3. The risk of any out break is from people who are managing the people in managed isolation. Or airline staff going to places outside the NZ economy/general population bubble and then returning and entering the NZ Economy/General Population Bubble.

4. If no body entered NZ from outside our border then you and I cannot possibly get infected.

5. If the people managing people in managed isolation were in a THIRD Bubble and not going home at night. Then you and I cannot possibly get infected.

6. The advert that I am complaining about does not identify any of the people in the advert as either in managed isolation or people managing people in managed isolation. Non of them are wearing Defense Force insignia for instance. Nor are the adverts taking place in any settings indicating an Isolation Facility.

The advert was seen by me on the Maori TV Channel at 20:00Hrs on Saturday the 19th of December 2020. I have however seen it on various TV Channels and at various other times.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Principle 2, Rule 1(g), Rule 2(b), 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(g) Fear and distress: Advertisements must not cause fear or distress without justification.

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.

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 concerns the advertisement was misleading and could cause unnecessary anxiety.

The Chair confirmed the advertisement is an advocacy advertisement from the New Zealand Government, in the nature of a public service announcement. The Chair said it aims to engage with New Zealanders about the seriousness of the current pandemic and the importance of trying to minimise its impact on our country.

The Chair said the advertisement is designed to encourage New Zealanders to use the NZ COVID Tracer app because it is another tool to help limit the potential spread of COVID-19, and therefore enable summer activities to continue.

The Chair noted the following information from the official COVID-19 website: <https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/latest-updates/bluetooth-tracing-added-to-the-nz-covid-tracer-app-to-boost-contact-tracing/>

The Chair said the ongoing risk of COVID-19 outbreaks and community transmission is very real and constant vigilance by all New Zealanders is required to help prevent this. The Chair said this advertisement is not misleading nor does it cause fear or distress without justification.

The Chair said the advertisement had been prepared with the due sense of social responsibility required and ruled it was not in breach of Principles 1 and 2 or Rules 1 (g), 2(b) or 2(e) 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.