

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/345
ADVERTISER	Toyota New Zealand
ADVERTISEMENT	Toyota Hilux, Television
DATE OF MEETING	5 July 2021
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Toyota New Zealand Limited opens with two Toyota Hilux vehicles meeting up, each having come from the opposite direction of a dirt road, which is situated in tussock-covered, open countryside. Other Toyota Hilux vehicles join the first two, and the drivers greet each other and have a casual chat. A female driver pulls up next to two male drivers and greets them by saying “Genital-men.” In the final scene approximately 38 vehicles are shown leaving the meeting point, spreading out across the hillside, and dispersing in different directions. The text says: “THE POWERFUL NEW 2021 HILUX – AN UNBREAKABLE BOND”

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

Complaint: In the Toyota Hilux advertisement one driver, a woman, arrives in her Hilux and greets the two male drivers in vehicles already present as "genitalmen" [sic]. It is clearly a play on the word "gentlemen". I regard the reference as offensive. The test is to ask what the reaction would be if a man were to greet two women as genitalwomen. The reference is a throwback to hackneyed male archetypes of the last century when male behaviour was accepted as boorish and sexual references between men were considered, however wrongly, as manly. Whether it be farmers, builders or whoever else fits the utility demographic, the advertisement stoops below acceptable contemporary behaviour and greeting; certainly on prime-time television. Why on earth do we have to see and listen to that pathetic representation of the way men can be spoken to by women. I am insulted each time I hear and see it. Is it supposed to be some form of retribution for years of male wolf-whistling and oogling. Aren't we better than that?

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

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.

The Chair noted the Complainant was concerned the advertisement was offensive to include the term “genital-men as a greeting.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and noted it was using irreverent humour as part of its narrative storytelling. The Chair said advertisement was alluding to the “unbreakable bond” between friends, drivers and their Hilux vehicles. The Chair said the dialogue used was light-hearted banter and the woman driver’s greeting, in what could be

seen as historically a male-dominated environment, was in keeping with the tone of the advertisement.

The Chair said the “genital-men” greeting was fleeting and spoken relatively quietly, meaning it was likely to be imperceptible from the word ‘gentlemen’ to many viewers.

Rule 1(c) of the Advertising Standards Code required the Chair to consider whether the use of the term ‘genital-men’ 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 for most consumers.

The Chair said the advertisement was not in breach of Principle 1 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.