

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/502
ADVERTISER	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
ADVERTISEMENT	Unite against COVID 19 Radio
DATE OF MEETING	24 November 2021
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The advertisement states that the government has a new stage in the COVID-19 response plan, but "to get there, at least 90 per cent of eligible people across New Zealand need to get fully vaccinated". The advertisement states that full vaccination will be required for "guaranteed access to sports events, bars, and restaurants". It ends by calling listeners to "get vaccinated today" and to visit "covid19.govt.nz" for their nearest walk-in vaccination centre.

The Chair ruled the Complaint was Settled.

Complaint: The NZ government is currently advertising on the radio to promote vaccination and includes the statement that "at least 90% of eligible New Zealanders will need to be vaccinated" before moving to the new Covid19 protection framework.

This statement is misleading because the actual threshold imposed by the government is that the 90% threshold needs to be achieved across every single DHB (see <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/latest-updates/introducing-the-covid-19-protection-framework/>)

The overall vaccination rate across the country will reach 90% before the vaccination rate at every single DHB reaches 90%. Therefore, if the vaccination rate across NZ reaches 90% then the government will still not move to the new framework, as stated in the radio advertisement, until the actual DHB threshold is met. New Zealanders will feel misled (and rightly so) if 90% vaccination across the country is met and the new framework is still not implemented.

I suggest an alternative phrasing could be:

"a minimum of 90% vaccination across every DHB in the country will need to be met before the new framework is implemented."

NB: time of advert is approximate. Advertisement played numerous times throughout the day and on other days.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(b), Rule 2(e)

The Chair noted the Complainant was concerned the advertisement was misleading as the requirement for a 90% vaccination rate related to each individual District Health Board not the country as a whole.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser confirmed the advertisements were broadcast for four days only, were no longer running and will not be used again in the future.

The Chair said noted the advertisements had stopped. The Chair confirmed it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board as removal of the advertisement is equivalent to the action the Board could request if a complaint is upheld.

The Chair ruled the matter was Settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled**

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 with notification of the intent to appeal lodged within 14 calendar days of receipt of the written decision. The substantive appeal application must be lodged with the ASA within 21 calendar days of receipt of the written decision.