

COMPLAINT NUMBER	22/040
ADVERTISER	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
ADVERTISEMENT	Unite Against COVID-19, Radio
DATE OF MEETING	7 March 2022
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The NZ Government radio advertisement promotes the “Big Boost February 2022”. The female speaker states that February is an important month to get the booster vaccine against COVID-19 and while two shots were effective against the Delta variant, the booster is needed for Omicron. The advertisement encourages people to book their booster in February and ends with the URL, bookmyvaccine.nz.

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

Complaint: The booster February advertisement contains a mispronunciation of the current covid variant.

The relevant provisions were Principle 2, Rule 2(b) and Rule 2(e) of the Advertising Standards Code.

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 was concerned the advertisement mispronounced the word “Omicron”.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and said the speaker pronounced omicron as “oh-muh-kron”. She noted that the Oxford English Dictionary provided 6 different pronunciations for the word ‘omicron’, including the pronunciation used in the advertisement, and said there was no single agreed pronunciation in common use.

The Chair said given the context of a global pandemic with a large amount of information available from a variety of sources about COVID-19, including the Government, the science community, news media and interest groups, the audience would understand the

advertisement was about the most recent strain of COVID-19. The Chair said it was unlikely listeners would be confused or misled by the advertisement.

The Chair confirmed the advertisement was not misleading and was not in breach of Principle 2, Rule 2(b) or Rule 2(e).

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 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.