

COMPLAINT NUMBER	22/087
ADVERTISER	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
ADVERTISEMENT	Unite Against COVID-19 Television
DATE OF MEETING	21 March 2022
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The NZ Government television advertisement encourages people to boost their "whānau protection" against COVID-19. Text using English and te reo Māori is shown on screen, there is also a voiceover. The advertisement encourages people, and their "kura aged tamariki", to get vaccinated. The advertisement ends with the phone number and URL for people to book their vaccine. The NZ Government, Unite Against COVID-19 and Ministry of Health logos are shown along the bottom of the screen.

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

Complaint:

This is in regard to The Ministry of health advertisement in regards to the COVID-19 booster vaccine.

Majority of the add is in Te Reo and my wife Mildred could not understand the Ministry's message about the booster. At one stage she one stage she thought the topic was plants and not COVID-19.

I had to correct her saying kura meant apartment not plant.

Do you know why the ad is mostly in Te Reo which people such as my wife cannot understand?

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

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 was difficult to understand, due to the use of te reo Māori.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and the complaint. She said the likely consumer takeout of the advertisement was the Government was encouraging viewers, along with their school-aged children, to get their booster vaccines for Covid-19. The Chair said the advertisement met the criteria in rule 2(e) of the Advertising Standards Code. The identity and position of the advertiser was clear in this advocacy advertisement.

The Chair said concern about the use of te reo Māori in an advertisement had been raised previously, in precedent decision, 21/455, which was also ruled No Grounds to Proceed. In that decision the Chair said: "... te reo Māori is an official language of New Zealand and the advertisement included a full English translation, in the form of sub-titles.

The Chair said similar points could be made in response to this complaint as well. The Chair said that while a number of words in te reo Māori were used the advertisement, the main message was also conveyed in English: "Now is a great time to get your booster ... If your kura aged tamariki are yet to be vaccinated bring them along so you can all get boosted together..."

The Chair noted the following te reo Māori words were included in the advertisement: "whare" which is house, "hapori" which is community, "hōhipera" which is hospital, "kura" which is school, "tamariki" which is children and "E te whānau" which means to everyone.

The Chair said while the te reo Māori words used in the advertisement might not have been understood by all viewers the overall message of the advertisement was clear and the advertisement did not reach the threshold to be misleading.

The Chair said the advertisement was not in breach of Principle 2, Rule 2(b) or Rule 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 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.