

COMPLAINT NUMBER	22/263
ADVERTISER	Pet Refuge NZ
ADVERTISEMENT	Pet Refuge NZ, Radio
DATE OF MEETING	29 August 2022
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The radio advertisement on Newstalk ZB promoted Pet Refuge New Zealand and encouraged people to donate. The female voiceover says, “She wants to leave her abusive partner, but he’ll hurt her pet if she goes. Now more than ever they need your help to escape abuse. Donate \$25 today at petrefuge25.org.nz”. The background sound effects at the end of the advertisement are an animal in distress.

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

Complaint: The advert states that men hurt animal to get revenge against woman. I object to this statement for the following reasons:-

1. I am concerned that the advert will give an evil idea to unkind people.
2. Many many men would never hurt an animal for revenge.
3. The advert vilifies men.
4. If a man is capable of hurting an animal, so is a woman.
- 5 If the advert stated that a woman would hurt an animal for revenge it would have been banned immediately.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Principle 2, Rule 1(c), Rule 1(f), 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(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.

Rule 1(f) Violence and anti-social behaviour: Advertisements must not, unless justifiable on educational or social grounds, contain anything that condones, or is likely to show, violent or anti-social behaviour or damage to property.

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 concern the advertisement could encourage abusive behaviour towards pets, vilified men and presented an unbalanced gender view of domestic abuse.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and said the likely consumer takeout would be the advertisement used a fictional case of domestic abuse to raise awareness and encourage donations to a refuge for pets of people affected by domestic violence. The Chair said the charity provided temporary shelter for pets while their owners are supported to leave an abusive relationship.

The Chair referred to information on the Advertiser's website: <https://www.petrefuge.org.nz>

The Chair confirmed it was an advocacy advertisement and noted that while such messaging could be confronting, this is provided for under Rule 2(e) of the Advertising Standards Code, as long as the Advertiser is clearly identified. The Chair said the Advertiser's name and website address feature in the advertisement, which meet the identity requirements.

The Chair did not consider that highlighting the need for a pet refuge would encourage further abuse of animals, but rather raise awareness of a barrier to people leaving abusing relationships. The Chair said the 2018 research conducted by Women's Refuge has established that where women are at risk, animals are also at risk.

The Chair said the language and gender choice used in the advertisement's narrative reflected the reality of domestic abuse figures in New Zealand. According to the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse website:

"In 2020, most applicants for protection orders were female (84%) and most respondents were male (86%) (Notes and trends for 2020, Ministry of Justice, 2021)."

The Chair said the advertisement did not suggest all men hurt animals nor that women could not also be the perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Chair said the advertisement was not in breach of Principle 1, Principle 2 or Rules 1(c), 1(f), 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 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.