

ADVOCACY ADVERTISING QUICK GUIDE



WHAT IS AN ADVOCACY AD?

Paid advocacy ads convey an advertiser's position on a political, religious, industrial relations, environmental or societal matter or on an issue of public interest or concern. They could include election ads, government advertising, and interest group campaigns.

The rights and freedoms in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act may be subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. If a right is engaged, the Complaints Board is required to consider whether the application of the Advertising Standards Code is a limit on the rights protected by sections 13 and 14 and whether the limits in the Code are justified limits.

WHEN CREATING AN ADVOCACY AD, ENSURE THE FOLLOWING:

01 MAKE YOUR IDENTITY CRYSTAL CLEAR

Advertisers should clearly state their identity and provide contact information like a website URL, social media links or an email address so consumers can find more information if needed. If you are not well-known, the more detail you include the better.

02 MAKE YOUR POSITION OBVIOUS

The Complaints Board will consider whether the advertiser's position in the advertisement is clear. It is not the role of the Board to agree or disagree with an advertiser's position, or opinion.

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03 DISTINGUISH OPINION FROM FACT

The easiest way to distinguish opinion from factual information is to use belief statements. If you use words like “I believe,” “I think,” or “We oppose,” then it will be clear it is your opinion.

EXAMPLE

“The Government spent \$85m on trees in 2021.”

What is the source of this number? If it comes from a media release or annual report by the Minister or Ministry of Trees, including a link in the advertisement can make the claim more credible and may prevent an ASA complaint.

04 HAVE AVAILABLE SUBSTANTIATION FOR ANY FACTUAL STATEMENTS

Any factual statements you make in an ad must have sound and robust evidence to substantiate them. If challenged, you must be able to provide this evidence to support your statements.

Opinions should not be misrepresented as facts.

05 AVOID THE USE OF OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY

Think about the target audience and the likely consumer takeout. Are the language and the imagery suitable for the audience that will see the advertisement?

More information is available in the ASA's [Guidance Note on Advocacy Advertising](#) and you can also research our [decisions database here](#).