



14 September 2020

Broadcasting Standards Authority
via email: info@bsa.govt.nz

To whom it may concern,

COMPLAINT REGARDING LABOUR PARTY ELECTION ADVERTISEMENT

1. This is a complaint regarding the content of the Labour Party's inaugural television advertisement for the 2020 election campaign, which ran multiple times during the 6pm news bulletins over the weekend.
2. In the advertisement, Labour Party Leader Jacinda Ardern tells viewers: *"We'll create new jobs in infrastructure and environmental projects, **make apprenticeships free** to prepare for tomorrow's jobs, and back business and grow trade with targeted support."*
3. Our complaint relates to the reference to "free" apprenticeships. The apprenticeships are not free. Rather, they are paid for by taxpayers.
4. Ardern is presumably referring to the Government's Trades and Apprenticeships Training Package, which is budgeted to cost taxpayers \$1.6 billion. That is far from free.
5. It would not even be true to say that the apprenticeships are free for the individuals who enrol. To the extent that these individuals pay taxes through their working lives, they will contribute to the cost of their apprenticeship, and because new government spending is borrowed, this cost will be paid with interest.
6. The reference to free apprenticeships is not a passing mention – it is one of the three policies singled out in Labour's first official election advertisement, which will be viewed by hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of New Zealanders.
7. We believe this ad is a significant breach of the Broadcasting Codes of Practice, specifically the standard of "Accuracy" explained as: *"Programmes should be accurate in relation to 'material points of fact' and should not mislead."*
8. The Labour Party is inaccurate in describing taxpayer-funded apprenticeships as free, and we believe this inaccuracy is an intentional attempt to mislead viewers into believing they will not have to pay for one of the Party's key policies.
9. We are happy to discuss this complaint further or meet with the Authority at your convenience in either Auckland or Wellington.

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10. We look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,
New Zealand Taxpayers' Union Inc.



pp **Jordan Williams**
Executive Director

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