

# Joburg may call itself 'world class African city' after all

The City of Johannesburg can continue to advertise itself as a "world class African city", following a ruling by the Advertising Standards Authority this week.



Can you imagine living in such a city? (Image: Wikimedia Commons)

On Monday the authority overturned an earlier decision in which it ordered the city to withdraw a radio advertisement where it claimed to be a financially stable world class city.

The advertisement, which boasted of the city's "many significant achievements", was heavily criticised by Johannesburg resident Steven Haywood, who lodged a complaint at the authority about it in July, after hearing it on Radio 702.

The advertisement included the words: "Imagine a city where you can rest assured, knowing that it is financially stable ... A city that continues to create new jobs despite the economic downturn. ... Can you imagine living in such a city? You do."

Haywood claimed that the commercial told "blatant untruths".

He questioned how the city could claim to be financially stable when it had received three qualified audits from the auditor-general; its waste-management service provider, Pikitup, was bankrupt and left "refuse lying in the streets for days"; and the Johannesburg Roads Agency was unable to repair the city's roads.

The authority agreed that the claims were misleading and, in July, ordered the city to remove the advertisement and not use it again.

However, this was overturned on appeal this week, with the authority finding that the city could back up the claims in the advertisement, focusing exclusively on the fact that the city could prove it was financially stable. The city, which failed to respond to the original complaint before the authority made its ruling, argued that most of Haywood's allegations were on items not referred to in the advertisement and were incorrect.

Source: Business Day, via I-Net Bridge

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