



## Case Report

1	Case Number	0080/17
2	Advertiser	AAMI
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Pay
5	Date of Determination	22/02/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The complaint received is in relation to AAMI's latest TVC for our Roadside Assist product, titled 'Woop Woop.' We open on a caravanning family who have broken down on a rural dirt road. Mum and Dad are standing by their caravan discussing who should make the call to Roadside Assist. A tween girl and young boy are also with them, all looking hot and bothered.

### THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

*Advert making a play on the word S\*\*\* Creek Involving kids in a sound alike swear word. I do not think this is necessary and is totally inappropriate. Below is what seems to be a generic reply to my complaint from AAMI. Kids are subjected to enough bad language without having it presented to them on TV. In my opinion this is child abuse.*

*We're genuinely sorry to hear that you're not a fan of our latest marketing advertisement! We understand that this ad is a little bit "tongue in cheek" and not that "insurancey", but it was definitely not our intention to cause you any offence.*

*Hopefully our future advertisements are much more to your liking, and you will be able to relate closer with the brand image that we are portraying.*

*Have a lovely day.*

*Play on words "Ship Creek" announced several times during the TV add.*

*It just gets too obvious that they are trying to shock the public into remembering the add. The*

*company is contributing to the decline in community morals. After watching the add over and over it just gets annoying. I would definitely not purchase insurance from this company, it must have teenagers running it, do not trust them.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

*We would like to address some concerns and provide commentary relating to our advertising approach in our recent 'Woop Woop' execution, in particular section 2.5 of the AANA Code of Ethics.*

*At your request and to alleviate any other concerns, we will address all of section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics, as well as sections 3.1 and 3.3.*

### *2.1 - Discrimination or vilification*

*At no point during any AAMI advertising do we portray people or depict material in a way which could be seen as discriminatory, nor we do set out to vilify people or sections of the community.*

### *2.2 - Exploitative and degrading*

*Similarly, at no point during this advertisement (or any AAMI content) do we employ sexual appeal in a matter which exploits or degrades individuals or groups of people.*

*2.3 – Violence The advertisement in question has no justifiable violence depicted or any behaviour that could be considered dangerous.*

### *2.4 - Sex, sexuality and nudity*

*AAMI's advertising will never include sex, sexuality or nudity.*

### *2.5 – Language*

*As captured in the above script, AAMI's 'Woop Woop' execution leverages colloquial Australian humour to dramatise an everyday scenario in a light-hearted manner.*

*During his conversation with AAMI, the father describes that they've broken down in the district of Woop Woop which, according to a sign on the side of the road, is very close to Ship Creek – all of which is found both intriguing and amusing by his wife, daughter and son. Although the use of 'Ship Creek' may be described as a play on words, no inappropriate language is used within the ad and the pronunciation of the word in question is clearly 'ship' reinforced visually by the 'Ship Creek' sign (at 00:13).*

*This, along with the enjoyment of the family, soften the potential for this to be taken out of context and our CAD approval and PG rating (detailed above) are also reflective of this.*

*In her moment of enjoyment, the daughter (tween in the script) exclaims, "OMG, Dad." – a particularly common expression used by youth in a moment of joy or surprise as an acronym for 'oh my goodness', which was the intention.*

### *2.6 - Health and Safety*

*As per our stance on section 2.3, the advertisement in question does not contain any material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.*

### *3.1 - Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children*

*AAMI's core product suite is general insurance relevant for consumers aged 16 and over.*

*And while children appear in this content for the purposes of dramatising a family whose car has broken down in a remote location, our target television audience is 25-54 year olds and the content will only appear in programming relevant for our PG Rating (detailed above).*

### *3.3 - Food and Beverages Marketing and Communications Code*

*This advertisement is for AAMI's Roadside Assistance product which is an optional extra for*

*our Comprehensive Car Insurance product.*

*AAMI is not an advertiser of food or beverage, nor a licenced wagering operator.*

*We take all complaints we receive very seriously so we appreciate you raising the issue with us.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement uses inappropriate language and is not appropriate for children.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided”.

The Board noted that this television advertisement features a family who have broken down and while the father tries to explain where they are to AAMI over the phone, the children laugh when he says “up by Ship Creek”.

The Board noted that Ship Creek sounds very similar to the colloquial phrase ‘up shit creek’. The Board noted that the Macquarie Dictionary definition of ‘up shit creek’ is: “in trouble; in difficulties” and considered that as the family is in difficulties near a sign for Ship Creek the advertisement is using a play on words. The Board noted that after the father says they are right up by Ship Creek, the daughter corrects him and says, “Up ship creek’ and considered that while the inference is that the man has said ‘shit’ he clearly says ‘ship’. The Board noted that when the son goes to repeat his father’s words the suggestion is that he is going to say ‘shit creek’ rather than ‘Ship Creek’ and considered that his father stops him which in the Board’s view is highlighting that using the phrase ‘shit creek’ is not appropriate for children.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed similar complaints about the use of the phrase, “Oh sheet!” in an advertisement in case 0291/15 where:

“The Board noted that whilst there a suggestion of “shit” the actual word used is “sheet” and is clearly heard as such throughout the advertisement. The Board noted that after the exclamation is used, the word is contextualised immediately by onscreen imagery of the product being used to wipe up the particular mess.”

The Board noted that in the current advertisement the word ‘shit’ is not actually used and considered that the phrase ‘Ship Creek’ is contextualised by the sign post for Ship Creek.

The Board acknowledged that some members of the community may find a reference to the word ‘shit’ to be inappropriate but considered that this word is not actually spoken in the

advertisement. The Board noted the repeated use of the phrase 'Ship Creek' and considered that while this does emphasise the reference to 'shit creek' in the Board's view the overall tone is light-hearted and humorous and the language used is not inappropriate in the circumstances and does not amount to strong or obscene language.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not use strong, obscene or inappropriate language and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.