

Case Report

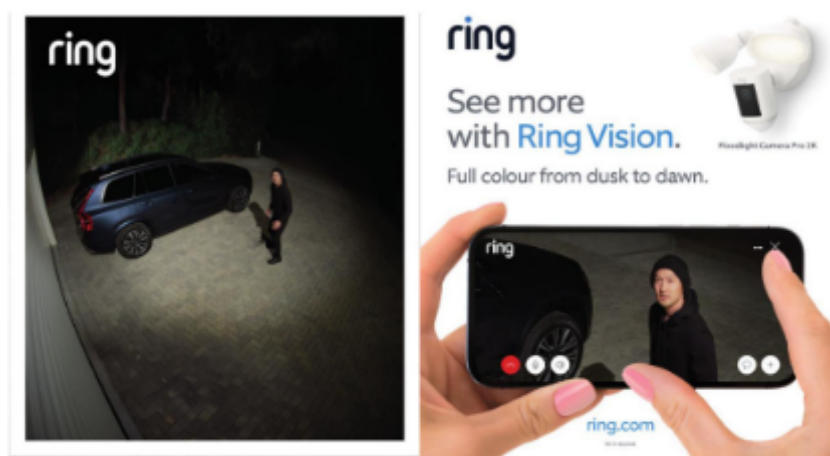
1. Case Number :	0129-25
2. Advertiser :	Ring LLC
3. Product :	Information Technology
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Billboard
5. Date of Decision:	18-Jun-2025
6. Decision:	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This billboard advertisement features an image of a man dressed in black clothes wearing a black beanie, standing near a car in a driveway. The words "Ring. See more with Ring Vision. Full colour from dusk to dawn" are featured. There is an image of hands holding a mobile phone looking at the image of the man.



THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

Racism against the Asian community in a community with a large portion of people with Asian origins

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

1. About Ring

Ring LLC ("Ring") is a manufacturer of home security and smart home devices owned by Amazon. Ring manufactures a line of Ring smart doorbells, home security cameras, and alarm systems.

Our mission is to make neighbourhoods safer. As a smart security company, we strive to make safety and peace of mind accessible to everyone and empower communities to work together for one another.

2. Description of the advertisement

The advertisement consists of a billboard with two panels ("Advertisement"). Each panel is prominently branded in the top right corner with the name "ring".

The first panel depicts a birds-eye view from a security camera looking over a driveway with a closed garage door. A spotlight shines on a person dressed in all black, including a black beanie, standing in front of a car parked in the driveway.

The second panel displays the text, "See more with Ring Vision. Full colour from dusk to dawn." next to an image of a "Floodlight Camera Pro 2K", and above an image of two hands holding a smartphone showing the Ring app. The smartphone display depicts a close-up of the scene in the previous panel showing a larger image of the person from the torso up and part of the car, above the text "ring.com" and "Wi-Fi required". The person appears to be of Asian appearance, although no explicit reference is made to the person's race.

3. The complaint

The complaint states that the Advertisement depicts "a man with obvious Asian features as a burglar who is trying to break into the house." The complaint asserts that "This is not acceptable as it is inappropriate [sic] to characterise any race as a criminal in an ad". Under the request to provide reasons for concern, the complaint further states "Racism against the Asian community in a community with a large portion of people with Asian origins".

4. Response to the complaint

Ring has considered the complaint and does not agree that the Advertisement characterises any race as criminal or breaches the Australian Association of National Advertisers Code of Ethics ("Code"). We submit that the complaint should therefore be dismissed for the reasons set out below.

Section 2.1 of the Code provides that advertising shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

Ring is part of Amazon, a company that employs more than 1.5 million people worldwide across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America. Neither Ring nor Amazon would intentionally publish an advertisement that discriminated against or vilified any individual or section of the community on the basis of race. In particular, Ring has a robust multi-step internal advertising review process consisting of product line leads, marketing and legal review to ensure that its advertising complies with all legal obligations.

We strongly maintain that the Advertisement does not contravene section 2.1 of the Code and we disagree with the contention that the Advertisement discriminates against or vilifies the Asian community.

First, it is clear that the Advertisement:

- does not make any discriminatory or vilifying reference to any individual or section of the community based on race (or any other attribute);*
- does not contain any language, references, images or other material that could reasonably be viewed as humiliating, intimidating, or inciting hatred or ridicule towards a person or a section of the community based on race; and*
- does not exaggerate any physical attribute of an individual's appearance, which could be considered an offensive stereotype used to denigrate persons of a specific race.*

Second, we strongly disagree with the complainant's assertion that the Advertisement characterises any race as "criminal". The complaint appears to proceed on the misconception that the inclusion of a person that appears to be of Asian descent in the Advertisement racially stereotypes all people of Asian descent as criminals. Respectfully, we submit that this is not a fair or reasonable interpretation of the Advertisement.

Ring's depiction of individuals of diverse backgrounds across its range of advertising materials (as shown in screen shots in Annexure 1 and Annexure 2 to this Response), reflects the diversity of the Australian population and other similar multicultural communities in which Ring's products and services are used. It is clear that the Advertisement does not characterise any particular race as "criminal".

Third, we submit that it would not be fair or reasonable for viewers to draw the conclusion from a single representation of a person in one advertisement that the advertiser is portraying the entire community generally as "criminals". Respectfully, we submit that to accept this conclusion requires subscribing to the belief that an

individual represent their race at all times, and that the conduct of one person can be attributed to their race as a whole. We submit that this is not the interpretation that the vast majority of community members would take from the Advertisement.

Lastly, Ring submits that the dismissal of the complaint would be consistent with the following earlier decision:

- Case ID 0270/18 (DPP Pharmaceuticals): This advertisement featured a person that appears to be of Asian descent breaking into a house and attempting to reach a bathroom in order to steal a product. The complaint was that the advertisement was racist as it featured an Asian person committing a crime. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not depict the Asian person or Asians in general in a manner that was unfair nor in a manner that would be likely to humiliate or incite ridicule, and therefore did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

- Case ID 239/09 (Rockstar Games): This advertisement promoted a game called "Grand Theft Auto - Chinatown Wars". The Board considered whether the advertisement breached section 2.1 of the Code by depicting Chinese people as drug dealers and violent criminals, but found there was no breach as the advertisement itself did not suggest that all Chinese people are violent criminals or of bad character.

For completeness, we also note the matters below in relation to sections 2.2 to 2.7 of the Code.

Section 2.2 of the Code - Exploitative and Degrading: The Advertisement does not depict any minors or employ sexual appeal.

Section 2.3 of the Code - Violence: There is no violence depicted in the Advertisement.

Section 2.4 of the Code - Sex, sexuality and nudity: There is no sex, sexuality or nudity in the Advertisement.

Section 2.5 of the Code - Language: There is no strong or obscene language used in the Advertisement.

Section 2.6 of the Code - Health and Safety: The Advertisement does not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

Section 2.7 of the Code – Clearly Distinguishable Advertising: The Advertisement is clearly distinguishable as advertising (including because the Ring logo is included prominently in the Advertisement).

We thank the Panel for their consideration of this response.

THE DECISION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement was discriminatory on the basis of race.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

Section 2.1: Advertising shall not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

The Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.1 provides the following definitions:

- *Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment.*
- *Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule.*
- *Race – viewed broadly this term includes colour, descent or ancestry, ethnicity, nationality, and includes, for example, ideas of ethnicity covering people of Jewish or Muslim origin*

The Panel acknowledged that casting people of colour in advertising in negative roles, such as criminals, can perpetuate negative stereotypes. However, in this instance the Panel considered there is no common stereotype linking Asian people with burglary. The Panel considered that the advertisement does not depict or reinforce a racist stereotype.

The Panel further considered that the portrayal of the Asian man, or Asians in general, was not done in a manner that is unfair or that would be likely to incite hatred or contempt. The Panel determined that the advertisement did not discriminate against or vilify a person or section of the community on account of race.

Section 2.1 conclusion

The Panel found that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaint.