Case Report

Case number: 0279-26
Advertiser: The Frontier Touring Co Pty Ltd
Medium: Billboard
Decision date: 11-Nov-2026
Decision: No breach

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITY PANEL

- AANA Code of Ethics - 2.3 Violence - no breach

AD DESCRIPTION

This Billboard ad features information for the upcoming YM & ODC tour. There is an image of a man aiming a gun.



SUMMARY

Complaints

Complaints were received on the grounds that the advertisement depicted the use of a gun which normalises the use of firearms and could cause distress to the community.

Advertiser response

The advertiser responded that the image is a stylised illustration taken directly from the cover artwork for Zach Bryan's album, Young Manhood and Other Donatable Organs.

A copy of the advertiser's full response is included as Appendix A.

Decisions

The Panel found that the ad did not breach section 2.3 of the AANA Code of Ethics as the ad did not depict violence.

ASSESSMENT AND DECISIONS

Section 2.3 (AANA Code of Ethics): Advertising shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

The Practice Note states:

> Section 2.3 prohibits the use of violent content unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised. Although the depiction of violence in an advertisement may be relevant to the story being told in the advertisement, any violence must also be justifiable in the context of the product being advertised, or else will be in breach of this section of the Code.

Panel assessment

The Panel considered that the figure in the advertisement was not shown point the gun at a person or firing it, and there was no consequences of violence depicted. The Panel considered that guns can be used for legitimate purposes such as sport and that the depiction of a person holding a gun is not, on its own, a portrayal of violence.

Panel decision

On this basis, the Panel found that the ad did not breach Section 2.3 of the AANA Code of Ethics.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Panel found that the ad did not breach any other section of the relevant advertising codes.

APPENDIX A: ADVERTISER RESPONSE IN FULL

Frontier Touring (Frontier) provides this response in relation to case number 0279-26 and 0282-26 and acknowledges the complainants' concerns but does not consider that the advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (Code).
This response is provided in relation to both case 0279-26 (outdoor billboard advertising including the site at the corner of Brunswick and McLachlan Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland) and case 0282-26 (Frontier's website). Both complaints concern the same Tour artwork, and Frontier's submissions in relation to Section 2 of the Code apply equally to both cases, subject to the additional matters specific to the website set out below.

Section 2.3: Violence
Section 2.3 provides that advertising must not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

Frontier acknowledges that the advertisement depicts a firearm. However, the image is not unrelated or gratuitous firearm imagery introduced for advertising effect. It is a stylised illustration taken directly from the cover artwork for Zach Bryan's album, Young Manhood and Other Donatable Organs, which also provides the name and underlying visual identity for the Tour.

The underlying artwork has a specific artistic meaning. In publicly explaining the album cover, Zach Bryan stated that he "wanted to signify resurrection and killing your old self daily". The original artwork depicts two versions of the artist, with the figure on the left holding the firearm towards the other figure.

The Tour creative adapts that established artwork in a materially less confronting form. It reproduces the left-hand figure and pose as a stylised illustration but removes the second figure altogether. As a result, in the advertisement complained of, the firearm is directed into empty graphic space and is not aimed at another person or at the viewer. The firearm is not discharged, and the advertisement depicts no victim, injury, blood or consequence of violence.\
The firearm therefore forms part of the underlying artistic work and visual identity of the entertainment product being promoted. It was not independently introduced by Frontier as an unrelated or gratuitous depiction of violence, nor does the advertisement endorse or promote firearm ownership or use. The firearm appears solely as an element of the underlying artistic work associated with the entertainment product being advertised.

Frontier considers Ad Standards case 0429/12 concerning outdoor advertising for The Walking Dead to be a useful comparator. That case also concerned public-facing entertainment advertising depicting a person pointing a firearm and a complaint that the imagery normalised gun violence and was visible to children. The complaint was dismissed. Relevant features of that advertising included that the firearm was not directed at the viewer or another person and that the imagery was connected with the entertainment product being promoted.

In addition, prior to placement, the creative was separately reviewed by QMS and oOh!. Both confirmed that it was acceptable for display, expressly noting the fact that the firearm was not pointed towards the audience, with QMS also confirming that the creative was acceptable provided there was no violence or blood.

Frontier acknowledges the complainant's concern that the advertisement may be seen by children in a public place. The Tour advertising is not directed at or targeted to children, and Frontier does not consider the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children to be applicable. The advertisement contains no graphic or realistic depiction of injury or violence and does not depict a firearm being directed towards the audience. Considering the advertisement as a whole and in the context of the entertainment product being promoted, and having regard to its stylised treatment, direct derivation from the artist's underlying artwork, the artistic context described above and the absence of any depicted act or consequence of violence, Frontier considers that the advertisement does not portray violence contrary to Section 2.3.

Website (case 0282-26)
The complaint in case 0282-26 concerns the same Tour artwork as it appears on Frontier's website. For the reasons set out above, Frontier considers that the artwork does not portray violence contrary to Section 2 in any medium. However, Frontier submits that the website context further reduces any concern.

Unlike outdoor advertising, which is seen by the general public, Frontier's website is visited by people who have chosen to look for information about Frontier's concerts and tours, including tour dates, venues and ticketing. The artwork appears on the Frontier landing page as part of the upcoming tours and on the Artist's tour page as part of the Tour's visual identity, alongside the Tour name, performance details and ticketing information. Viewers therefore see it in a clear entertainment context, as the artwork for a music tour. A person who seeks out tour information about a particular artist is likely to be familiar with that artist's music and visual identity, including the album artwork which was the basis for the Tour creative.

For the same reason, the website is not directed at children, and children are not likely to make up a significant part of its audience. The website promotes live music events for which tickets are generally purchased by adults, and its content, design and layout are not intended or likely to appeal to children.

Frontier acknowledges the complainant's concern that the advertisement may normalise or promote firearms, and that this would be inconsistent with Australian community expectations and Australia's firearm laws. Frontier respects those expectations and does not seek to promote firearms in any way. The advertisement promotes a music tour. It does not advertise, refer to or encourage the purchase, ownership or use of firearms. It contains no text, call to action or other message about firearms, and it does not present firearm use as glamorous, aspirational or a way to resolve conflict. The firearm appears only as part of a stylised illustration taken from the artist's album artwork, which has a stated artistic meaning ("killing your old self daily"). Viewed in that context, Frontier submits that a reasonable member of the community would understand the image as artwork connected with the music being promoted, rather than as a realistic depiction of firearm use or an endorsement of firearms.

Other provisions of Section 2
Frontier has also considered the remaining provisions of Section 2 and considers that:

- Section 2.1: the advertisement does not discriminate against or vilify any person or section of the community;
- Section 2.2: the advertisement does not employ sexual appeal or exploit or degrade any person or group;

- Section 2.4: the advertisement contains no sex, sexuality or nudity;
- Section 2.5: the advertisement contains no strong, obscene or inappropriate language;
- Section 2.6: the advertisement does not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety. It does not encourage members of the public to acquire, handle or use firearms, does not show any firearm being discharged or any resulting harm, and does not present firearm-handling as conduct to be copied. For the reasons set out above, in relation to both the outdoor and website placement, Frontier considers that the stylised artwork, viewed in the context of the entertainment product being promoted, is consistent with prevailing Australian community standards; and
- Section 2.7: the advertisement is plainly identifiable as advertising for the Tour.

Campaign context
The outdoor campaign ran from 19 to 25 October 2026 across 37 QMS and oOh! sites in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, comprising 11 sites in Sydney, 15 in Melbourne and 11 in Brisbane. Across those placements, the campaign generated approximately 3.9 million impressions, comprising approximately 2.8 million impressions across QMS sites and 1.1 million impressions across oOh! sites.

For context, apart from the complaint the subject of case 0282-26, which concerns the same artwork on Frontier's website, Frontier is not aware of having received any other complaint concerning the artwork across approximately 3.9 million impressions.

The QMS and oOh! placements concluded in the ordinary course of the campaign and were not removed in response to the complaint. The Tour remains current, with Australian performances scheduled for December 2027, and the Tour artwork continues to be used on Frontier's website and social media channels. Given the Tour remains more than a year away, there may be a period before further paid advertising is activated. However, the artwork remains part of the current Tour campaign and may continue to be used in future advertising in the lead-up to the Tour.

Frontier therefore respectfully submits that, considered as a whole and in the context of the entertainment product being advertised, the advertisement does not breach Section 2 of the Code, including Section 2.3, in either the outdoor or the website placements and asks the Community Panel to dismiss the complaints in cases 0279-26 and 0282-26.
Source: "I Wanted to Signify Resurrection": Zach Bryan on Young Manhood and Other Donatable Organs Cover Art, Holler, 17 October 2026.