



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 542/08 |
| 2. Advertiser | Transport Accident Commission |
| 3. Product | Community Awareness |
| 4. Type of advertisement | Internet |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Language – use of language – section 2.5 |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 21 January 2009 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This internet advertisement from the Transport Accident Commission includes four frames. The first has the words "winding down?" on a bright green background. The second frame shows a traffic policeman and the words "we're cranking up...". The third frame shows a woman about to be tested by a traffic policeman and the words "to catch drug drivers". In the last frame the words "we'll catch you before someone gets hurt" appear in white writing on a black background.

THE COMPLAINT

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

TAC using the word cranking up to catch drug drivers. I have worked on the TAC advertising in 2000 and I know what smart alics some copywriters can be....Crank is also known as crack cocaine. I believe its a play on words.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

Thank you for notification of the advertisement complaint - reference 542/08 made to the Advertising Standards Board. Provided below is background about the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) advertising campaigns being queried and the rationale for the use of this particular creative. I am confident that you will concur that the TAC has produced advertising that conforms to AANA's Advertiser Code of Ethics and are 'justifiable in the context of the product or service' (ie. road safety) that it promotes.

The TAC public education campaign continues to focus on accident prevention, with the intention of reducing fatal, serious and minor casualty crashes on Victoria's roads. The development of the TAC's high profile public education campaigns has received both acclaim and criticism over the years, as the road toll has drastically reduced from numbers in the high hundreds (776 in 1989 when the campaign began) to a low of 332 in 2007.

*The Christmas Enforcement campaign was initiated in November 2008 to educate the community, and particularly drink and drug drivers, of the increased enforcement activity that would be undertaken in the lead up to the holiday season. Significant holiday periods produce high volumes of traffic on Victoria's major highways and arterial roads and therefore involve inherent risk to the safety of Victorian road users. **In** order to reduce the incidence and severity of road trauma during the Christmas/New Year period Victoria Police undertook a strategic and coordinated enforcement operation focussing on drink and drug driving across the state.*

The objectives for this campaign are to continue to reduce the incidence of self-reported drink

driving and drug driving behaviour in the Victorian public and increase the perception of there being a high risk of getting caught if you drink drive or drug drive.

The use of the word 'cranking' in the Internet banner commercial is appropriate in the circumstances. To "crank up" can be defined as "to cause to intensify, as in volume or force" (URL: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cranking>. accessed 22/12/08) and in this instance it is used to highlight the intensity with which Victoria Police will be targeting drug drivers in the lead up to Christmas, in which people generally 'wind down' or relax. I acknowledge that the term 'cranking' may also be a slang term for a drug, but it is appropriately used in this context as an opposite to 'winding up'. The TAC's Creative Agency is Grey Melbourne (03 9208 - 1800) and our Media Agency is Mitchell & Partners (03 9690 - 5544). I trust that you will view this response favourably given these communications are critical to influencing road user behaviour and have played a critical role in helping to reduce the level of trauma on Victoria's roads over the past 18 years.

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 complainants' concerns about the use of the expression "cranking up" and considered the application of Section 2.5 of the Code, relating to the use of language.

The Board noted that, although "crank" may be understood by some to mean an illicit drug, the expression "cranking up" is generally interpreted to mean starting, increasing in intensity, taking something to a higher level or "winding up", which corresponds directly with the previous text of "winding down". The Board considered the expression was used appropriately in the context of the whole advertisement and found no breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. The Board also considered that the advertisement, even for those who recognise the work 'crank up' as a reference to cocaine, would not see the advertisement as a depiction or promotion of the use of cocaine in contravention of community standards on public health and safety.

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