



Case Report

1	Case Number	0503/11
2	Advertiser	Bras n' Things
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Poster
5	Date of Determination	18/01/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Images of women wearing different styles of lingerie including a Christmas themed red and white slip and matching santa hat.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This advertisement is overtly sexual in content depicting a model in underwear in a pose that you would see in Ralph or any one of the men's magazines printed onto a poster that covers the whole window. Actually ALL of their advertisements are like this. It is unacceptable that my 3 boys under 5 or anyone else are for that matter should be exposed to this kind of material while we go to lunch or shopping in the middle of the day!

I am EXTREMELY upset that my boys have now had that image imprinted into their minds at such a young age and especially without my or my husband's consent.

In an age where feminism commands equality these images are sexualising women and are offensive. There is no equality here. Does the advertiser really understand how backwards these types of images are? I would like my boys to grow up respecting women for who they are not treat them as sexual objects. The shop sells bras as the name suggests surely a mannequin with the product displayed is sufficient? I really don't appreciate seeing a woman's camel toe and I am sure that if a man in underwear pushing his package forward as if in a sexual stance would not be an appropriate advertisement in an image that is so large it

is impossible not to see it so why is it acceptable for the women? Then women complain that they are being treated as objects! How confusing for young boys and especially premature girls. Is this how they should behave?

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thank you for your email of Monday 19 December 2011, regarding the Bras N Things window posters. Whilst a specific campaign is not mentioned, the complaint primarily addresses the appropriateness of Bras N Things window posters and their visibility to passing shoppers. Our window promotions are updated on a fortnightly basis and the specific promotion the complainant viewed would no longer be on display.

We have attached two sets of posters promoted in our stores during late November and early December 2011.

The first series ran from 23 Nov until 4 Dec inclusive. Poster 1 was shown in the main window of all stores during this period accompanied by poster 3 positioned as a backdrop to poster 1. Poster 2 was again used in conjunction with poster 3 but only in stores where there is a second window. Our Waverley Gardens store has 2 windows, so all posters would have been displayed in this store.

The second series ran from 5 Dec until 13 Dec inclusive. The same display configuration applied to these posters. That is, poster 1 was used in the main window with poster 3 as the backdrop. Poster 2 was displayed in the secondary window with poster 3 as the backdrop. I do not have a photo of the Waverley Gardens window during this timeframe. I have however attached a photo of our Castle Towers store in NSW taken during the Christmas promotion. This should provide a better understanding of how the main posters work in conjunction with the backing posters.

As with all retailers, Bras N Things' shop windows are a critical part of our visual merchandising and are a key resource in drawing potential customers into the store.

Bras N Things is of the belief that our store windows should be used to strongly promote the products represented within the store.

Sleepwear and lingerie always looks best when promoted in a way that it is intended to be used – that is, on the body. Posters often convey this better than mannequins, where the rigidity of mannequins can result in the product appearing to fit differently to it does on the body. Mannequins are used in conjunction with posters in many of our store windows.

Bras N Things believes our window promotions reflects the products we sell and caters to our prime customer base of 18-35 females. Our window promotions are intended to appeal to these customers, not to be overly sexualised.

We have recently changed the style of briefs promoted on our window posters. Where the range being promoted offers a variety of briefs to match the bra, we now promote the fuller style briefs.

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 features a highly sexualized image that is inappropriate for young children to see.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.2 of the Code which states, “Advertising or Marketing Communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board noted the advertisement was seen in the window of a Bras N Things store and noted there are four different images used for this campaign and each image depicts a woman in lingerie. The Board noted it had recently dismissed a complaint about the Playboy image in case 0300/11 where it found that “...the pose of the model in the advertisement is playful and that the playboy image has connotations attached to it. However these connotations would not be understood by many viewers and overall the advertisement is a depiction of a woman wearing lingerie and is not overtly sexualised.”

The Board noted that the women are posed in a manner which is clearly intended to show the lingerie and is not overtly sexualised. The Board considered that the women are not represented in a manner which could be considered exploitative and degrading.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading and did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.”

The Board noted that the advertisements are featured on posters facing outwards to shoppers passing by and feature women wearing products that are available for purchase in store. The Board considered that it is reasonable to expect a lingerie advertisement to feature imagery of lingerie and noted that the advertisements are aimed at women seeking to buy lingerie. The Board considered that the images depict women in lingerie but that the images are not sexualised. The Board noted that the posters are visible to a broad audience that includes children and considered that most members of the community would not find the images used in these advertisements to be inappropriate for a broad audience.

Based on the above the Board considered that the advertisement did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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

