



Case Report

1	Case Number	0018/11
2	Advertiser	Victa Mowers
3	Product	Hardware/Machinery
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	09/02/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.6 - Health and Safety within prevailing Community Standards
2.3 - Sex/sexuality/nudity Treat with sensitivity to relevant audience

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A man is cutting his grass. A woman emerges from the house next door and they exchange glances, smiles and waves.

A male voice over describes the features of the mower and how it can reduce your mowing time "by up to 40%" The voice over then goes on to say that the mower is so efficient "you'll have time to cut your neighbour's grass" and we see the man about to enter the woman's house, where she is waiting for him.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The advertisement implies adultery/sexual immorality and "having enough time" to indulge in such behaviour. It is not appropriate to be shown on television where children or anyone may be exposed to the idea that such behaviour is socially acceptable.

They mention how good the lawn mower is that you can go and CUT your neighbour's grass and not meaning the green stuff because of its efficiency!!!! I feel in a world full of promiscuity and divorce and broken families that to make a joke of 'cutting you neighbour's grass' is offensive. It was meant in a sense of taking the neighbour's wife, girlfriend or the lady of the house.

Considering the amount of marriages that end in divorce I really don't agree with advertising that allows time to "cut your neighbour's grass"! Is Victa really supporting breaking the vows of marriage and encouraging cheating?

A very offensive ad by Victa!

Whilst clever advertising, I think it is ridiculous to be showing this in the middle of kids' television programmes. Why can't they put it on when adult programmes are on? Firstly, kids aren't going to buy Victa mowers or care about them anyway.

Secondly, to show and instil in kids a value that is atrocious and causes many families much damage and heartache is beyond all reasoning. Why would Victa Mowers agree to help this world be a worse place JUST to advertise their mower? I'm sure there are many more clever things they can come up with. If not, then their product is not worth buying!

Thirdly, I have quite a few friends at the moment going through marriage breakups due to infidelity/affairs and it's not pleasant. It is something that takes years and years to get over. So I don't think it's a great thing to make a joke of as if there are no consequences if you actually do go and cut your neighbours grass! For the kids who KNOW what has happened to break up their families, they would probably be seeing this ad as backing up that it is OK to go ahead with this kind of behaviour and that the person offended/upset just needs to get over it! Making them confused and reinforcing the behaviour of the man who cuts the neighbour's grass. At least they got it right that it is usually the man who goes and cuts his neighbours grass! Thinking of nothing but his needs and not his family's!

My specific complaint is the wording "to cut your neighbours grass" which to me is a direct invitation to commit adultery. I find this extremely offensive.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

I wish to point out that the Victa Campaign commenced October 1, 2010. The commercials have appeared weekly since that date on the following networks:

- *Subscription television (Foxtel, Optus and Austar)*
- *Prime Regional Television Network*
- *WIN/NBN Regional Television Networks*
- *Southern Cross Regional Television Network (One HD)*

The complaints start December 27, 2010 to January 11, 2011. The commercials appeared only on the WIN/NBN Networks during the period of the complaints.

WIN/NBN have assured us the commercials appeared, and continue to appear within the rating guidelines set down by CAD.

The Victa Lawncare commercials were classified 'W' and 'PG' by CAD. As previously mentioned, all commercials appeared over the period of the complaints within the classification guidelines set down by CAD.

Schedules were produced for Victa with the rating guidelines in mind. Children's programs were never at any stage part of our strategy. Children don't buy lawnmowers. Our selected demographic was all people 25 to 49, with schedules built accordingly.

The Victa Lawncare commercials are certainly not targeted towards children and could only be described as mild, cheeky, adult humour.

As previously mentioned, the commercials were never scheduled or requested to appear in timeslots for children viewers. They are obviously not part of targeted audience. All commercials aired within the rating guidelines set down by CAD.

The Victa campaign concludes early March 2011, airing only on the regional networks of WIN/NBN in the following markets:

- *Queensland*
- *Northern NSW*
- *Southern NSW*
- *Victoria*
- *Tasmania*

In light of the complaints being identified from recent activity on the WIN/NBN Networks, I would like to propose that all Victa Lawncare Commercials in question are all classified 'PG' for the remainder of the campaign. Therefore deleting the 'W' rating entirely/ The classification/rating of PG will guarantee all commercials will appear in adult timeslots. If the Advertising Standards Bureau is in agreement with my ratings changes, I will work closely with the WIN/NBN Networks to swiftly move all of Victa Lawncare's activity to PG classification.

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 that the advertisement is offensive and inappropriate as it suggests infidelity and is inappropriate for children to view.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant programme time zone".

The Board noted the advertisement features a man mowing his lawn with a suggestion that the mower is so efficient "you'll have time to cut your neighbour's grass".

The Board noted the advertiser's response that the Victa Lawncare commercials are not targeted towards children, are classified W and only shown in appropriate programming, and can be described as mild, cheeky, adult humour. The Board considered that the reference to 'cutting your neighbour's grass' was clearly intended to have sexual innuendo. However the Board considered that the innuendo was not overly strong and was unlikely to be understood by children.

The Board recognised that suggestions of infidelity may be upsetting to some members of the community. However the Board considered that most viewers would consider the

advertisement is humorously playing on a double entendre, and not condoning or encouraging viewers to be unfaithful.

Based on the above, the Board determined that the advertisement did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and that it did not breach section 2.3 of the Code.

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