



ADVERTISING  
STANDARDS  
BUREAU

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## Case Report

1	Case Number	0019/14
2	Advertiser	Gold Coast Tata
3	Product	Vehicle
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	12/02/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

There are two versions of the advertisement for Gold Coast TATA, each featuring a man dressed in traditional Indian clothing and speaking with an Indian accent.

In one version the Indian man is dancing his new 'TATA shake', in the other version he describes the Xenon TATA as his 'spiritual healing'.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*Stereotypical, exaggerated Indian accents by the two white men- Tata is an Indian company. The accents were very offensive. I am an Indian that has lived in Australia most of my life. I live on the Gold Coast now and deal with some degree of ignorance regularly- but this ad seems overtly disrespectful.*

*The characters in the advertisement are trying to display the Indian accent and the traditional dance in a mocking manner. This is highly discriminatory against the Indian community.*

### THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*We have been instructed by our client Gold Coast TATA to supply all relevant information required by your department on two TVCs produced to launch this new product. Two 30sec. Commercials were scripted and shot by my agency to launch a new vehicle product on the Gold Coast, Xenon TATA (PICKUPS made in India).*

*When launching an unknown product such as this it was important to create a “point of difference “.*

*The vehicle being made in India hence the dancers and costumes. All audio relates directly to the vehicles and their key selling points. You may like to go to [www.goldcoasttata.com.au](http://www.goldcoasttata.com.au) and cross reference the selling points on our two scripts.*

*The dancers and costumes were supplied to us by Bollywood Australia. The dancers are trained people in Indian dance. Costumes were authentic we believe and again supplied by Bollywood Australia. These people have worked in authentic dress and dance in a number of TV commercials previously we were of the understanding.*

*Our client has a long and successful tradition of making TV commercials with other product lines entertaining and humorous. We tried to achieve a focus on the brand rather than solely the vehicle itself. TATA in India is one of the biggest manufactures of vehicles in that country. Over 50 years of tradition. Hence the dancers and costumes.*

*At no time during discussions prior to filming, including script approvals, dancers and costumes was the intent to discriminate or mock the Indian community. In fact the exact opposite. The commercials are a celebration of this new product now on sale on the Gold Coast., We are proud that the catch phrase “ Made tough in India” ...Perfect for Australia... is highlighted in both commercials by presenters.*

*We have had no direct complaints by the Indian community on the Gold Coast to Gold Coast TATA regarding the commercials being in bad taste.*

*We look forward to a favourable response.*

## **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 discriminatory in its stereotypical depiction of an Indian accent by white men.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response. The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that 'advertisements 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 preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted the advertisement depicts a man dressed in traditional Indian dress and women dressed in traditional sarees on the back of a ute, dancing to Indian style music as the man discusses the features of the vehicle while using an Indian accent. There is another man who explains where the Gold Coast Tata caryard is and encourages the viewer to come and have a look at the newly imported vehicle.

The Board noted it had previously upheld a similar complaint against a stereotypical depiction of an Indian man in case 0267/11 where:

“The majority of the Board considered, however, that the depiction of the door to door salesman as an Indian man with a strong accent does perpetuate a stereotype, and is one that would generally be considered to be a negative stereotype of a person from a particular racial background.

The Board also considered that the subtle suggestion that the Indian man may not be completely honest is also offensive and that is vilifying Indian people. The Board determined that, in this instance, the advertisement does depict Indian people with a negative stereotype about their occupation and honesty.”

In the current advertisement, the Board considered that the man is presenting as a stereotypical man of Indian ethnicity and noted that the tone of the advertisement was lighthearted and that the man speaking with an accent is not portrayed in a negative manner. The Board noted that the vehicle that is being referred to is in fact a vehicle manufactured in India and that there is a clear relevance to Indian references and the origin of the vehicle.

The Board noted that the dealership owner is shown in the advertisement as well and that he interacts with the dancers and the Indian man in a humorous and positive way.

Based on the above the Board considered that the advertisement did not depict any material that discriminated against or vilified any person or section of society and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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

