



Case Report

1	Case Number	0020/14
2	Advertiser	Woolworths Supermarkets
3	Product	Alcohol
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	12/02/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.6 - Health and Safety Depiction of smoking/drinking/gambling
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

There are two versions of an advertisement for everyday specials at BWS. In each version we hear a voiceover describing what is special to each person featured in the advertisement: because their dog almost fetched a stick, because they grew a beard, because they asked for a pay rise. Each version ends with scenes inside a BWS store and a voiceover which states, "At BWS, we believe today's special. And to celebrate, you'll find specials on beer, wine and spirits today and every day. Enjoy responsibly."

THE COMPLAINT

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

I believe that this is promoting/encouraging the consumption of alcohol as an acceptable means of celebrating very trivial events. I have no problem with alcohol as part of celebrations but this advert promotes the view that anything is an excuse to drink. As a teacher and parent I do not believe that this is a message that should be going out, in particular on weekend afternoons and during sporting events when many young people are watching.

This ad is sending a very bad message to our children that you should have a drink because of any trivial achievement. In a time when we are discussing the bad attitude Australians have with alcohol it is simply encouraging another generation to drink for no reason at all. I

believe it is excessive and it is played in every ad break during the cricket - family viewing.

The ad is promoting ANY reason - a haircut, growing a beard, finding the office mints - as special day to have a drink. This sends an appalling message that is designed nothing more than to go and buy there alcohol at any cost. It's promoting a dangerous drinking which this country is sadly losing the battle against. It was made all the more worse that I felt extremely concerned that my 10yo son could watch this.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Woolworths is Australia's most responsible retailer of alcoholic beverages and last year formalised our status as a signatory to the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) Scheme. As such, the television advertisement and its concepts were subject to pre-vetting processes and approvals from a storyboard stage against both ABAC and ASB.

Prior to becoming a signatory, Woolworths has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to supporting and adhering to the ABAC and Advertising Standards Bureau.

Woolworths maintains internal and external processes in addition to those required by the ABAC Scheme for compliance purposes.

BWS ads include messaging that promotes our ID25, Don't Buy It For Them, and DrinkWise programs which are initiatives that seek to prevent the underage service of alcohol and promote a positive drinking culture.

The Advertisement is a new brand campaign for BWS called "Today's special" which recognises that everyday can be special in small ways and the specials on the price of alcohol in-store at BWS.

The Advertisement was subject to a complaint under the ABAC Scheme. The Adjudication Panel decision was to reject the complaint and this decision is available from the ABAC website: www.abac.org.au.

In relation to the Advertisement, Woolworths submits:

- They clearly relate to 'specials' on offer at BWS stores and special moments in everyday life.*
- At no point is the consumption or excessive consumption of alcohol encouraged.*
- Alcohol is depicted or is being consumed responsibly and within NHMRC guidelines.*
- BWS brief to the creative agency required all actors to be over the age of 25, which was the case.*
- The availability and promotion of price 'specials' or discounts are not linked to alcohol*

consumption.

- *They do not suggest the presence or the consumption of alcohol as a contributor to success or a change in mood or as necessary to aid relaxation. Alcohol consumption is depicted as being incidental to the ‘circumstances’ and there is no suggestion that alcohol transforms the occasion or directly contributes to its success.*
- *They are snapshots or vignettes of everyday life that are inherently ‘special’ in their own right without the presence of alcohol and consumption of alcohol which is in the ‘minority’ in its depiction.*
- *The alcohol is incidental to the mood rather than the cause of the mood.*
- *The ad is light-hearted and is focused on the relationship between the friends, family and life situations and not alcohol consumption.*
- *The TV ‘spots’ booked were at times to comply with ‘audience’ guidelines to avoid viewing by minors.*
Woolworths appreciates the ASB’s careful consideration of a complaint and will accept Woolworths’ submission that this complaint should be dismissed.

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 encourages excessive alcohol consumption and sends an inappropriate message to viewers about the consumption of alcohol.

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

The Board considered Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety”.

The Board noted that there are two versions of the advertisement for everyday specials at BWS. In each version a voiceover describes what is special to each person featured in the advertisement. Examples include: because their dog almost fetched a stick, because they grew a beard, because they asked for a pay rise. Each version ends with scenes inside a BWS store and a voiceover which states, "At BWS, we believe today's special. And to celebrate, you'll find specials on beer, wine and spirits today and every day. Enjoy responsibly."

The Board noted that the product itself is not an alcoholic beverage but a retail outlet that sells alcoholic beverages as well as other drinks.

The Board noted that the advertisement includes different scenarios that involve many different people celebrating various achievements or events. The Board noted that neither of the advertisements depict any one person consuming alcohol to a level that could be considered excessive.

The Board noted that at the end of the advertisement the voiceover clearly states “enjoy responsibly.”

The Board noted that the voiceover refers to the different occasions as being significant “today” no matter how minor they may seem. The Board noted that the repeated use of the word “today” was linked to the special deals being offered on beer, wine and spirits by the

store to celebrate the achievements of 'today'. The Board considered that most reasonable members of the community would not consider that this means to invent an excuse to consume alcohol every day.

The Board noted that it had previously considered a billboard advertisement for Liquor Alliance (ref: 0432/13) features a picture of a camel and the words; "Need a drink? Bottle shop this way" and determined that:

"the words "need a drink?" in connection with directions to the bottle shop is not of itself encouraging or condoning excessive drinking."

Consistent with the decision above, the Board considered that scenes showing people celebrating events with alcohol irrespective of the type of event does not amount to a material that is encouraging or condoning excessive drinking and that it did not depict material that was contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety and that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

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