



Ad Standards Community Panel  
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
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# Case Report

1	Case Number	0025/18
2	Advertiser	Hotels Combined
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	07/02/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a group of friends looking for a hotel for a boy's weekend. One of them states they want a property with 'kick ass' reviews.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*One character used the term 'kick-ass' to describe the standard of accommodation he was seeking. My 3 children (aged 7-11) were enjoying watching Big Bash (aimed at families and children) cricket before bed and this language was completely unexpected and unacceptable.*

*I do not believe that we need to hear the American slang word 'kickass' on a hotel ad, especially during the WBBL at 4:20 pm on a Saturday, or anytime for that matter. Young children are watching and thinking that this is acceptable language in everyday communication and it is most certainly not acceptable! I'm absolutely fed up with us*





*picking up the bad habits of the Americans, for goodness sake lets not have it taking over our ads where children hear and repeat it!!!!!!*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*In no way, does the material breach section 2 of the Code of Ethics*

*- The material in no way discriminates against or vilifies any one person or group - The material in no way employs sexual appeal which is degrading to any one person or group - The material in no way portrays violence - The material in no way shows sex, sexuality or nudity. The material is ambiguous with the following comment with respect to the complaint. - The material in no way uses offensive or obscene language.*

*HotelsCombined's creative does not reference the word 'arse' but rather the word 'kick-ass', which can be defined as "to be very impressive" by Oxford and Macquarie dictionaries. Therefore, in context of the hotel reviews, this has only positive connotations. In the first audible instance this is used when the hotel-booker wants to ensure he has a positive experience at his hotel by reading previous guests reviews before booking, and in visual instance on the display screen in the creative, that the hotel can deliver on this experience due to a previous guests review.*

*No CAD warning was put in place for this creative and we have proceeded in running this spot at all time slots as advised.*

*- The material in no way breaches community health and safety standards.*

## **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 features language that is not appropriate for an audience which would include children.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code (including Prevailing Community Standards). Section 2.5 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided".

The Board noted the complainants' concerns regarding the use of the term 'kick ass' not being appropriate for a television advertisement which would be seen by children.



The Board noted that the television advertisement features a group of friends looking for a hotel for a boy's weekend. One of them states they want a property with 'kick ass' reviews.

The Board noted that there is a genuine level of community concern about strong or inappropriate language (Community Perceptions Research, [https://adstandards.com.au/sites/default/files/2017\\_community\\_perceptions\\_web.pdf](https://adstandards.com.au/sites/default/files/2017_community_perceptions_web.pdf)) particularly where children are exposed or included.

The Board considered that the term 'kick ass' in this context was innocuous and widespread and part of common Australian vernacular meaning 'very good' or 'impressive'. The Board considered that the term is not used in a negative or aggressive way and is a positive statement.

The Board considered that the term 'kick ass' was not strong or obscene language and that it would be appropriate for a broad audience which would include children.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

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

