



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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**AdStandards.com.au**

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
ACN 084 452 666

# Case Report

1	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0029/19</b>
2	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Koala Sleep</b>
3	<b>Product</b>	<b>House Goods Services</b>
4	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>Billboard</b>
5	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>06/02/2019</b>
6	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This billboard advertisement features IKEA style imagery with the word “NOFNIDEA?” with the Swedish alphabet used for the letters O and A, and a banner below stating “no tools, no worries koala.com”.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*The language is offensive and should be removed. I dont want my granchildren reading such rubbish.*

## THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

*I write to you in response to the abovementioned complaint reference number.*





*I have attached print-ready artwork of the billboard the complainant may be referring to which would have been seen on one Ooh Media-owned billboard referred to in the complaint in Brisbane.*

*Firstly, I would like to thank the Ad Standards for their initial opinion on the artwork passed on to us via the OMA when the billboard was first erected in Sydney from August and remained in place (without complaint) until the media buy finished in November last year.*

*To provide some context on the message behind the artwork: Anybody who has purchased an Ikea furniture item knows they're in for a struggle that comes in the shape of an Allen Key. Reporting over \$1.16 billion of revenue from flatpacks last year, it's safe to assume there are a LOT of Aussies out there to whom the struggle of assembling Ikea furniture is not foreign. I'd also suggest the struggle is so widespread even the aforementioned 1% might internalise some choice words to describe the experience, or at pitiful least they would empathise with the depiction of the collective experience.*

*As a young Australian company that delivers on the promise of 4-hour delivery and 4-minute assembly, we thought it would be fun to poke some light-hearted fun at the Swedish monolith. The design is quite clearly a parody of Ikea instructions, not the misdirected, uncalculated profanity it has been worryingly interpreted as.*

*On the topic of profane language. While the billboard doesn't make use explicitly of profanity – indeed it uses characters not in the English alphabet - we recognise that a swear word may be inferred from the syntax. We were guided by the precedent of well-known BCF radio and TV advertisement as precedent which repeats “BC effing fun” several times in the ad. We note the Ad Standards Board agreed the jingle is light rather than aggressive and, “noted that some members of the community might not make the connection between BC effing standing for BCF – ing but considered that the manner in which the words are sung in the jingle lessens the impact of the words...”*

*Similarly, given the design layout and obvious parody of Ikea's well-known product names, we were confident that the advertisement in question would be received in the humour with which it was intended. And until this complaint landed in our inbox it has been positively received by the hundreds of thousands who have seen it in Sydney, Brisbane, online and in the mainstream media. Indeed the billboard did receive positive mainstream media attention. Attached are some press articles a morning television program which succinctly discusses the impact of the billboard.*

*As you can see, the “NÖFNIDEÄ” billboard was received well by the mainstream media which at its best reflects the values and opinions of society and at its worst, shapes them.*



*We firmly believe that our creative does conform with Section 2 of the Code and we revised our original creative which read “NOFKNIDEA” – which we gathered might lend itself to interpreting a word in the middle that is often construed as obscene and possibly in breach of Section 2.5 of the AANA Code of Ethics. By removing the “K” we achieved a more light-hearted effect so that “the suggestion of a swear word is less strong...because an actual swear word is not used” (ASB Case Report November, 2016). So, in keeping with the Ad Standards case 0457/16 we propose that with the creative in question there is sufficient reasonable doubt within the play on words - using letters not even in the English alphabet - for the impact to be softened, for there to be innumerable possible interpretations for “fing” and for there to be a clear association between the play on words and the brand, as in case 0457/16.*

*We implore the community standards panel, if still in doubt, to think about the last argument they had over the assembly of flatpack furniture and then take one more look. I think then they’ll find that the very subtle play on words, or the language used is “appropriate in the circumstances” and thus in keeping with Section 2.5 of the AANA Code of Ethics.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement contains indecent and offensive language.

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

The Panel noted that this billboard advertisement features the word “nofnidea”.

The Panel considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. 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 Panel noted the complainants’ concerns that the language was inappropriate for an audience which would include children.

The Panel noted the Practice Note for Section 2.5 which states:

“Words and acronyms that play on the ‘f’ word, e.g. WTF and LMFAO, but do not use the actual word are normally considered acceptable if used in a light hearted and humorous way, are in subtitle rather than spoken word and are appropriate to the



situation.”

The Panel considered that the word ‘nofnidea’ is used in a manner which is similar to well-known retailer IKEA’s product names, and the surrounding imagery also similar to IKEA packaging. The Panel noted that the phrase is used in a light hearted and humorous way, and that there is no impression of aggression.

The Panel considered that an obscenity may be implied, however considered that there is no actual strong words in the advertisement. The Panel considered that this advertisement is playing on the audience’s knowledge of a common theme, and considered that the language is implied and not overt.

The Panel considered in the current advertisement that the language alluded to was not used in an aggressive manner and did not contain the word ‘fuck’.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not use language which was inappropriate in the circumstances and did not contain strong or obscene language. The Panel 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 Panel dismissed the complaint.

