



## Case Report

1	Case Number	0034/16
2	Advertiser	Offshore Surf
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	24/02/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This advertisement opens on a man surfing followed by images of women at a beach - either astride a surf board, walking along the sand or swimming. There are some images of products in-store and the male voiceover lists the products available to purchase at these surf shops.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*Overt images of women in tiny bikinis. Women all filmed from behind with the emphasis on their bums. No males in the ad are portrayed in this manner.*

### THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*As I am a single father trying to raise 2 kids, and service a huge debt left by their mother, by running the 2 shops in the ad in question, I will try to keep response brief and in point form.*

*-The complaint is absurd, we have run similar ads each Dec/Jan for the past 3 Summers.*

*-We generally run a new TV campaign each Summer in Dec/Jan only.*

*-We have received much positive feedback from guys and girls alike.*

*- I employ 3 female staff, none of whom have an issue with the ad, nor does my 16 year old daughter.*

*-Ad is designed to our target demographic, 15-35 years, young happy active, beach going people.*

*-Ad designed to sell board riding related gear for guys, and swimwear for girls.*

*-All the footage that was not shot instore, was provided by 2 key suppliers: Rip Curl and Reef. This is promotional footage that is used in surf shops around Australia.*

*\_The scenes depicted in the ad are stereotypical of most beaches through the Australian Summer, from Noosa to Bondi to Bells. In fact the women shown in the ad are wearing more modest swimwear than a lot of young women are wearing on beaches around Australia.*

*-After viewing the ad again, I could only see one brief scene, of a bikini bottom featured from behind. With all other female scenes being side on underwater shots, or girls sitting on surfboards etc.*

*-This is not objectification or exploitive. If anything it is a celebration of the female form. Certainly not degrading.*

*-I had a female friend, 51, ask if she bought a bikini from us, would she look as good as the girls in the ad.*

*-Of course our suppliers use attractive models to help sell their swimwear and the lifestyle they promote. Would the complaint feel less threatened if the models were older, overweight women?*

*-After viewing ad again I could still not see any nudity, let alone sex.*

*-We do not sell Speedos, thus we do not have a male, filmed from behind, or front, wearing them. We sell boardshorts, best exemplified by Owen Wright wearing them in the tube.*

*-Australia is still a free society, and women are not forced to cover up their bodies in public. It will indeed be a sad day should that change.*

*-I am not sure why the whinger has some sort of vendetta against Offshore, she also targeted our website around the same time as this complaint to your organisation.*

*Could she be a competitors put up job, or wife??? Wasting my time and yours.*

*-Finally, the producer of the ad was a woman.*

## **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 features images of women wearing tiny bikinis with an emphasis on their bottoms.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board noted that this television advertisement features a montage of beach scenes: surfing, walking on the beach, swimming.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that there appears to be a focus on the bottoms of the female models in the advertisement.

The Board noted the advertiser’s response that they sell bikinis and board shorts in their stores. The Board noted that we see a man in board shorts as well as women wearing bikinis and considered that it was appropriate for a surf shop to depict people wearing its products. The Board noted that there are more images of women in bikinis than of men in board shorts and considered that although the advertiser has stated they sell these products, the voiceover in the advertisement makes no mention of board shorts or bikinis. The Board noted the disconnect between the voiceover’s description of wetsuits and body boards and the repeated images of women in bikinis and considered that whilst this focus on the women is exploitative the manner in which the women are depicted is consistent with how women in Australia would dress on or around a beach setting and is consistent with the beach scenes and the surf culture and is not of itself degrading.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading to any individual or group of people.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience”.

The Board noted that all actors in the advertisement, male and female, are wearing beach appropriate clothing and considered that the level of nudity was consistent with the context of a beach setting. The Board noted that the models are shown surfing, walking and swimming and considered that these activities are not sexual and the poses and behaviour of all the models is not sexualised.

The Board noted that the advertisement had been rated ‘W’ by CAD. The Board considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the

relevant broad audience which would include children.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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