



Case Report

1	Case Number	0056/15
2	Advertiser	Ford Motor Co of Aust Ltd
3	Product	Vehicle
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	11/03/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a woman driving a Ford and explaining what the plate sale is: "Nothing to do with crockery. It's really just a stockable sale. But for cars."

The woman arrives at a Ford dealership and we see her enter the showroom, hold up the various shopping bags she has been carrying and saying, "But, like in the sales, the best stuff always goes fast".

On-screen text reads, "Ford 2014 Plate Sale. At your participating dealer, while stocks last".

THE COMPLAINT

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

I wish to register my disgust at the current Ford TV commercial advertising the plate run out sale and its gobsmacking sexist stereotyping. The ad appears directed at young women, tall, thin leggy ones at that; it condescendingly assumes they are dumb (delivery of the definition of 'plate' in a car), and have more important things to worry about like shopping.

I have seen it on a number of occasions on the commercial channels and have been offended by it, but tonight my 22 year old daughter watched the movie with me and was equally disgusted by this ad. That said to me that it is not generational in its offensiveness, hence why

I have lodged a complaint.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Introduction

First and foremost, I would like to emphasise that Ford Australia takes seriously its commitment to the AANA Code of Ethics (AANA Code) and we are aware of the potential impact that our advertising may have on members of the public.

All of our advertising, including the Ford Plate Sale TVC, is carefully reviewed in that context and is approved by legal counsel. In this instance, we firmly believe that the scenario depicted in the Ford Plate Sale TVC does not breach the AANA Code.

The complaint referred to in your letter dated 11 February 2015 alleges that the Ford Plate Sale TVC contravenes Section 2 of the AANA Code. Section 2 of the Code requires, amongst other things, that advertisers ensure that advertisements are free of discrimination or vilification. The complainant expresses concern that the Ford Plate Sale TVC is offensive to women by assuming they are unintelligent and have more important things to do like shopping.

You have indicated that the Board will review the Ford Plate Sale TVC in its entirety against the AANA Code, and accordingly, our response should address any issues within the Ford Plate Sale TVC that fall broadly within the AANA Code.

Description of the advertisement

The objective of the Ford Plate Sale TVC was simply to promote the current retail campaign, being the "2014 Plate Sale", which involves reduced prices across the range of 2014 plated vehicles.

The TVC depicts a woman in the driver's seat talking to camera and questions what a plate sale is. She then goes on to explain that a plate sale has nothing to do with crockery, in a play on words. She makes her way past a series of shops and explains that it is simply a stocktake sale for cars and that a "plate" is something on the car that distinguishes when it was produced.

The woman strolls into a Ford Dealership and encourages the audience to make their way into a dealership quickly as the best stuff is likely to go fast.

Allegation that advertisement contravenes Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics

Ford Australia strongly disagrees with any allegation that the Ford Plate Sale TVC contravenes Section 2 of the AANA Code, and in particular that it discriminates or vilifies a particular gender.

As noted above, the Ford Plate Sale TVC was intended to promote the 2014 Plate Sale as the concept of a vehicle plate sale is not as well-known and understood as a stock take sale. Ford Australia explained the concept by likening it to the more familiar stock take sale.

The Ford Plate Sale TVC was carefully crafted to demonstrate the 2014 Plate Sale in a light hearted but matter of fact manner. The TVC followed a similar format to previous retail commercials from Ford using a straight-forward, no nonsense tone.

Issues arising under Clause 2 of the AANA Code generally

Ford Australia submits that no issues arise under Section 2 of the AANA Code. The Ford Plate Sale TVC:

(a) does not portray people 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 believe (Section 2.1 of the AANA Code);

(b) does not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people (Section 2.2 of the AANA Code);

(c) does not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised (Section 2.3 of the AANA Code);

(d) does treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience (Section 2.4 of the AANA Code);

(e) does only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium) (Section 2.5 of the AANA Code); and

(f) does not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety.

If the ASB considers that any other issues arise under either of the codes, Ford requests the opportunity to be informed of the ASB's views in that regard so that an appropriate response can be made.

The CAD reference number for the 30 second Ford Plate Sale TVC is DNA400030D.

Ford Australia strongly believes that the Ford Plate Sale TVC does not breach the AANA Code. I trust that this correspondence adequately addresses the concerns raised in the complaints referenced.

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 concern that the advertisement is sexist in its depiction of a woman explaining a plate sale as it suggests that woman are dumb and are mainly concerned with shopping.

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 that this advertisement features a woman promoting a Ford plate sale by using shopping comparisons.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement is condescending in its tone and suggests that women are dumb but considered that the woman provides information about the Plate Sale in an informative manner and her portrayal does not suggest that she, or any woman, is dumb.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement suggests women are more worried about shopping than buying a car and considered that the references to shopping were used as examples rather than a suggestion that shopping is all the woman is interested in.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of their gender.

The Board 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 complaint.