



Case Report

1	Case Number	0061/15
2	Advertiser	iSelect Pty Ltd
3	Product	Insurance
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 Race

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

There are two variants of the advertisement we believe the consumer has described in their complaint. One is a 30 second advertisement, the other a 15 second. Both are promoting the availability of Qantas Points via iSelect.

30 Second Advertisement Description: The main character, “Mr iSelect” is featured in a range of international locations, wearing relevant local attire, speaking local languages in a technically accurate, but humorous style. International locations depicted include; Bali, Japan, Mexico, Turkey and France.

15 Second Advertisement Description: The main character, “Mr iSelect” is featured in a Japanese rice paddy, wearing traditional Japanese attire and speaking Japanese in a technically accurate, but humorous style. The only international location depicted in this advertisement is Japan.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The first few scenes of the advert present a Caucasian in an Asian setting parodying Asian culture and language in an offensive manner. The same type of ridicule is not evident in later

scenes where the actor appears to be in a European setting yet there is no obvious demeaning of European culture or indeed the language. This is frankly demeaning to Asian people and culture and does little to promote a tolerant respectful society.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The purpose of the advertisement in question is to promote the availability of Qantas Points via iSelect.

International locations, traditional attire, and languages are used to illustrate example destinations that customers could travel to with their Qantas points earned via iSelect. Consistent with all previous creative executions of the Mr iSelect platform, the content within this advertisement is presented in a humorous and light-hearted manner.

Over the past five years, consecutive executions of the Mr iSelect creative platform have made strong use of 'self-deprecating' humour, the target of which is the Mr iSelect character himself. This same creative device has been employed within the Qantas Points advertisement.

As such, iSelect does not consider the advertisement to parody Asian culture or language in an offensive manner. Rather it is the Mr iSelect character that is being parodied. Similarly, iSelect does not accept the premise put forth by the complainant that the advertisement ridicules or demeans Asian culture or language.

A variety of different cultures and languages, included European ones, are featured in the advertisement referred to by the complainant. Remaining conscious of its cultural sensitivity responsibilities in the development of this advertisement, iSelect engaged third-party translators and dialect coaches to ensure Mr iSelect's pronunciation of foreign languages, including non-English European languages, was as technically accurate and realistic as possible.

Please see Appendices 2(a) and (b) for supporting documentation.

Similarly, Qantas Airways Limited (iSelect's promotional partner for this campaign) conducted third-party cultural sensitivity testing of a previous version of this advertisement that aired in 2014, which included the scenes referred to by the complainant. This testing returned no adverse findings. Furthermore, the Board may like to consider that where it was commercially feasible to do so, iSelect filmed these advertisements on location in the relevant countries. The objective of doing so was to visually represent the locations as authentically as possible.

In addition to the specific issues raised by the complainant, iSelect submits that the advertisement in question does not breach any part of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics. Specifically, iSelect submits that the advertisement is not: discriminatory, exploitative or degrading, violent, sexually explicit, offensive in its use of language, nor likely to place the

health and safety of viewers at risk.

We thank the ASB Board for consideration of iSelect's response to this complaint, and trust the information provided satisfies the ASB's request in full.

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 offensive in its parody of an Asian accent.

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 Mr iSelect in a range of locations around the world speaking in local languages and wearing local dress.

The Board noted the complainant's concern with regards to the portrayal of Asians in the advertisement. The Board noted that Mr iSelect is shown standing in a rice paddy wearing Japanese dress and speaking Japanese. The Board noted the advertiser's response that translators and dialogue coaches were used in the making of the advertisement to ensure that the pronunciation of any foreign language was technically accurate. The Board noted that Mr iSelect speaks in each foreign language in a humorous manner and considered that most members of the community would be familiar with the character of Mr iSelect and the manner in which he behaves in all the iSelect commercials. The Board noted that foreign languages other than Japanese are used in the advertisement and considered that their use is to demonstrate different areas of the world rather than to make fun of these places. The Board considered that the depiction of Mr iSelect speaking in different languages was not discriminatory against or vilifying of a person or section of the community from Asia or anywhere else in the world.

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.

