



Case Report

1	Case Number	0064/17
2	Advertiser	AAMI
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	22/02/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion
- 2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The complaint received is in relation to AAMI's latest TVC for our Roadside Assist product, titled 'Woop Woop.' We open on a caravanning family who have broken down on a rural dirt road. Mum and Dad are standing by their caravan discussing who should make the call to Roadside Assist. A tween girl and young boy are also with them, all looking hot and bothered.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I am offended by the fact that innuendo is used to sell this product.

using ship creek as a thinly veiled reference to the common phrase "shit creek". If they can't use shit creek then they shouldn't be able to use "ship creek".

The use of the term "up ship creek" which insinuates a link between the well known saying "up Shit Creek". The use of the the word Ship in place of the work Shit is offensive. I have a young family (ages 4,8 & 8) who know that they should not be using the they saying and that they are aware of what they are intending of saying.

The use of this advertisement during prime time TV where families with varied aged children are watching is inappropriate.

I object to the the nature of the Tagline and it's very close association to a well known and widely used phrase. That's fine for adults but I have three children and think it is disgraceful that this ad deliberately and blatantly uses this simple play on words to sell their product. The fact that it is shown during prime time is unacceptable.

Not good for kids to think its okay to swear ,

Offense language used on day time tv, my children watch this and I believe their is no need for it

Daughter responds "OMG dad Ship Creek?!"

This is clearly a connotation to swearing & OMG is also not necessary language to be teaching kids. The younger boy then goes to repeat what the daughter heard her father say & he gets told to be quiet. Do we need to be teaching kids this kind of language?

How the word ship is said sounds to much like the word shit according to my six year old asking me why they are aloud say a swear word on tv

They keep saying "ship creek" and it deliberately sounds like "shit creek". They have kids in the ad saying "shit" like that's normal behaviour. We are trying to teach our son not to walk around saying shit and shit creek. It's offensive. This ad also appears on you tube as an unskippable ad on kids channels. Cant they sell insurance without the shock value of children swearing? Thanks.

Watch the advertisement. The swearing is horrific

I think the inference used (up ship creek) is totally inappropriate for the children involved in the advertisement and for the viewers watching.

The language innuendo.....being lost near "ship creek".... the son gets in trouble for suggesting they are lost in.....sh..... creek. I feel that the implication of being lost in ship creek is too close to profanity. The young children of today hear enough bad language, they do not need to have it implied in commercials too.

This play on words is obviously skirting around bad language. My 4 & 8 year olds have both heard and asked why they are "swearing" . I feel it is in bad taste and should be on later in the evening if at all.

*Offensive language - it's not even 8pm .
The advertisement tries to confuse ship with shit .*

This commercial had children in it. So when was this allowed through? There is enough swearing on television now.

*The joke is they are saying ship instead of "shit". It sounds very much like the more offensive word. It is toilet humour and i would rather my children do not hear it.
not funny, just offensie*

Bad language

I have a 10, 7 and 4 year old watching family TV shows and I am highly offended by the inuendo of swearing in this commercial. It has been aired numerous times in this program and we have had to mute the commercial so our 4 year old doesn't mimic it. Please remove this commercial from family TV.

AAMI might think it's very funny to describe drivers broken down in the outback as 'up shiP creek' but the pun is repeated at least three times and for all the world is sounds like the announcer says 'up SHIT creek'. My kids, my wife and I certainly thought so. I concede that the first time the pun i used they show a sign 'Ship Creek' but I'm sorry, my kids were watching that during the football, and they were clearly convinced later mentions of it were SHIT creek. Regardless of how clever this might be it's unacceptable if you want the women's AFL to be family viewing .

I object to the use of inappropriate/profane language - and the repeated allusions to this language - in an advertisement screening at 6.30pm during a G-rated children's film, exposing and familiarising pre-school aged children to language that is inappropriate for their stage of development.

I think the reference to 'ship creek' and the saying 'we're up shit creek' shouldn't be allowed on TV. My son was watching and it makes it look like this reference and word are acceptable for anyone to hear, or a child to say

It is highly inappropriate for a young child to be knowing and repeating swear words on television and for it to then be heard by young children in their homes and then repeat it in their social context.

Mentioning / implying the word shit, shit creek during the screening of A movie aimed at 4-8year olds, Igor.

I have now had my four year old tell me he is up shit creek 3 times in the last 5 minutes.

The advert shows a family stranded in the country due to the breakdown of their car. When asked as to their location they read from an adjacent signpost that indicates "Ship Creek 2km". The location is a clear reference to urban slang and as children are involved in the discussion I, and my friends consider it unacceptably offensive and extremely irritating and the ad should be removed from free to air TV.

In my opinion this sort of thing reflects very badly on the advertiser so much so that I would under no circumstances use their services and if I was I would change providers.

Young girl blaspheming with the statement OMG and the blatant reference to 'up ship creek' which is skirting around a well known swearword. How do I explain this to my 5 year old? I am increasingly concerned by an apparent erosion of advertising standards by marketers who continually press the limits of good taste and are seemingly getting away with it. Ask yourselves seriously if you would allow allah to be blasphemed in an ad. Why should my christian faith be similarly challenged?, its not on and its not clever.

This was very clearly an attempt to cause viewers to make the connection to a crude saying "UP SHIT CREEK" . It is a classic double entendre designed to titivate and amuse. However it should not be shown at times - and on programs - when children are watching. It encourages children to believe it is acceptable behaviour to use swear words - and grubby

ones at that. I would not want my grand-children to see this advertisement.

It makes a play on words, making the location "Ship Creek Road" sound like the expletive. In the ad the child almost says this. I think it is meant to be funny. It crosses the line of acceptable .

I object to and offended by the fact that children depicted in the commercial are playing on the words "up ship creek"; when it's clearly obvious they are referring to the Australian vernacular of "up shit creek".

Dad: "We are right up by Ship Creek"

Young girl: "OMG Dad, up ship creek".

Dad: "No! SHIP Creek. SHIP!" (Talking on the phone to AAMI)

Young boy: "Did Dad say Shhh....."?

Do young children really need to be depicted saying shit over and over again???

Does a young girl really need to be saying Oh My God (OMG)? Which is using the Christian Lord's name in vain. If there was any spec of inference to Islam / Mohammed name used in vain; TV stations would be getting burnt down.

I genuinely find this particular ad very offensive.

This ad is aired during general viewing times and I have 5 primary aged children that are influenced by words and phrases they hear on the TV and this ad to me is obscene and very deliberately made to sound like swearing and therefore IS swearing.

It is so obvious that the advert location is referring to shit creek not ship creek and we find it irrelevant to use this phraseology also the child in the advert was about to say shit instead of ship this is not good but it is offensive and not necessary , please do something about it.

Offensive content as the words ship and shit were indistinguishable; timing of screening before 7pm

*It's not appropriate for young kids and encourages them to say 'sh*t' as the ad makes it a joke. This ad should be taken off the air and I don't actually understand how it passed advertising standard in the first place, let alone how the Child Employment Agency in the state it was shot passed the script given the young age of the kids.*

The use of the phrase "up ship creek" over and over to simulate the phrase "up shit creek" ie "we are up ship creek and need help".

The child also says to the effect "omg you said ship creek" nodding to the fact they know the ad is using thinly disguised profanity.

This ad sounds very much like swearing and is insinuating swearing and was on at a time when our preschool children were watching the footy. I don't think this ad is appropriate before 8:30pm or in programs that are rated less than M.

The time of day and the program this ad shows in and the program it is telecast during is inappropriate for young children. I watch sports with my primary school aged children. I feel the repeated innuendo is not appropriate for this time slot given the expectation that children will be watching.

The use of 'ship creek' is totally inappropriate . Kids are not stupid and they know it means shit creek and how is this ok for kids to have this flash up on their TVs? I am very unhappy that have been approved to be shown

I find the use of swearing or playing around with the word very wrong. Saying "shit" within in an ad is inappropriate for anyone to hear let alone children. Being within an ad to sell a product making out it to be funny and a normal way to speak, which in every way it is not.

This phrase 'up ship creek' is a direct pun on the phrase 'up shit creek'. The attempt at humour is in poor taste as at 8pm, during a children's movie 'Flushed Away', the audience is primarily young children and families. The diction and frequency of the expression makes it almost impossible to determine what is being said, and younger audiences would not be able to differentiate between the swearing or the pun. It's highly inappropriate to air this during this time.

We were watching the new girls family football team. I have three children aged between 7-10. I was trying to encourage my children to watch a friendly game of football so we could spend quality time with the family. We were absolutely offended to hear the ad not only once, but TWICE in 20 mins. I don't condone the word SHIT, nor being said 2-3 times in the commercial by a 13 year old!!!! All my kids heard were SHIT, SHIT, SHIT by not only the 13 year old but the day. Disappointing. I will be cancelling my insurance with AAMI over this and will not be watching the football with my kids again. I thought you encouraged kids to watch the football.

We certainly don't talk like this at home, in public nor at school. What gives you the right??? Where is channel 7's censorship team on this ? Wasn't this quality checked before going on air. FYI - Facebook comments aren't talking kindly to this either already...Big mistake seven and AAMI!!

The words "Ship Creek" are deliberately intended to sound like a swear phrase. Indeed the child in the ad thinks the father is saying the swear words. We do not need this vulgar type of ad. It is a total turn-off and there are other better ways to convey their advertising. Repeatedly saying they are near "ship creek" or "up ship creek". Saying it quickly it appears to sound like "shit"

I am offended at their up ship creek slogan, sounds too much like up shit creek and i know that is what they want as it gets people talking about the commercial.

The word ship is said in a way it can be taken as the person is saying shit.

It's offensive as it is played at varying times through the day, not just evenings and i shouldn't have to be listening to that especially with children around mimicking 'up shit creek' It needs to be taken off the air or only played after a certain hour at night.

The phrase "up shit creek" is offensive and not suitable for tv. The ad is designed so the viewer hears the offensive version on all occasions that it is uttered.

I'm not impressed by the use of language in the commercial. Whether it was actually swear words or not, they were very suggestive words. The fact that many children would still be awake during this time slot, not to mention there was a child in the advert, I find it totally unacceptable and inappropriate. I'm shocked that it passed approval to go on TV at all, let alone in a 'family' time slot.

'Ship creek' being repeated over and over. Not needed!!!

My children thought the characters in the ad were swearing, and my husband and I were both offended by the language as well; as were many Facebook posts on the AAMI Facebook page.

Ad refers to being 'stuck up 'ship' creek'. And repeats this several times. It's easy to mishear this as it's not clear, and think they're saying 'shit' creek. It's very offensive.

Offended by use of implied swearing using children in advertising. Encouraging children to use swear words and also OMG stands for ' Oh My God' which is an offensive blasphemous term. AAMI use shock tactics to advertise their product using children and this is highly inappropriate particularly when using minors.

Swearing

"Up Ship Creek" is a reference to the saying "up shit creek". First of all there are children in the advert, referring to this and secondly, I believe it is totally unnecessary for advertisers to stoop to this level in order to advertise their product. An advert of this type should not be on TV at that time of evening, when there will be so many children watching. Children will see the advert, and see the children on the advert making reference to the saying, and think it is OK for them to repeat. What kind of a society are we living in where even TV ads have to include this kind of content before 7.30pm? Even BIG DOG doesn't even come on TV until 7.30pm every night in Newcastle to tell children it's time to go to bed, but the children will have already seen the "up Ship Creek" advert before this. Further though, this advert should not be on TV at all! Why is it necessary? It doesn't add anything of value to the advert. It doesn't make it humorous. It is merely distasteful and crude.

Language.

Up Ship Creek is repeated several times including by a child in the ad to sound like (up shit creek). We first heard the advert daytime when our eight and 10 year old girls were in the room. My wife and I were extremely annoyed because it was the type of language we work hard to keep out of our house. We raced for the remote to change channels and then realised it was midday with a G rated program on and just not on. We heard the ad again at around 9 PM this evening, still with kids in bed I found it offensive.

They say they are "up ship creek" and the child asks if the father said "Sh.." It is very obvious what it is pretending not to be and sounds like the word shit. My children don't need to keep seeing this ad in prime time. I think it's inappropriate.

First of all there is this expression up ship creek "or ship creek" being used which really is up shit creek, shit creek and OMG. Both are very offensive. OMG is especially offensive to Christians. Also that young children are in the ad saying these expressions. Swearing should not be allowed in ads particularly as young children may be seeing them. It did not say the word but people are not stupid. It needs to be taken down ASAP. My family was absolutely horrified, disgusted and offended. I had to quickly change the channel.

I object to the use of Ship Creek which is repeated many times. It really does sound like the word "s..t". I am embarrassed when my grandchildren see the the ad because they giggle & know what they are really saying.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We would like to address some concerns and provide commentary relating to our advertising approach in our recent 'Woop Woop' execution, in particular section 2.5 of the AANA Code of Ethics.

At your request and to alleviate any other concerns, we will address all of section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics, as well as sections 3.1 and 3.3.

2.1 - Discrimination or vilification

At no point during any AAMI advertising do we portray people or depict material in a way which could be seen as discriminatory, nor we do set out to vilify people or sections of the community.

2.2 - Exploitative and degrading

Similarly, at no point during this advertisement (or any AAMI content) do we employ sexual appeal in a matter which exploits or degrades individuals or groups of people.

2.3 – Violence The advertisement in question has no justifiable violence depicted or any behaviour that could be considered dangerous.

2.4 - Sex, sexuality and nudity

AAMI's advertising will never include sex, sexuality or nudity.

2.5 – Language

As captured in the above script, AAMI's 'Woop Woop' execution leverages colloquial Australian humour to dramatise an everyday scenario in a light-hearted manner.

During his conversation with AAMI, the father describes that they've broken down in the district of Woop Woop which, according to a sign on the side of the road, is very close to Ship Creek – all of which is found both intriguing and amusing by his wife, daughter and son. Although the use of 'Ship Creek' may be described as a play on words, no inappropriate language is used within the ad and the pronunciation of the word in question is clearly 'ship' reinforced visually by the 'Ship Creek' sign (at 00:13).

This, along with the enjoyment of the family, soften the potential for this to be taken out of context and our CAD approval and PG rating (detailed above) are also reflective of this.

In her moment of enjoyment, the daughter (tween in the script) exclaims, "OMG, Dad." – a particularly common expression used by youth in a moment of joy or surprise as an acronym for 'oh my goodness', which was the intention.

2.6 - Health and Safety

As per our stance on section 2.3, the advertisement in question does not contain any material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

3.1 - Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children

AAMI's core product suite is general insurance relevant for consumers aged 16 and over.

And while children appear in this content for the purposes of dramatising a family whose car has broken down in a remote location, our target television audience is 25-54 year olds and the content will only appear in programming relevant for our PG Rating (detailed above).

3.3 - Food and Beverages Marketing and Communications Code

This advertisement is for AAMI's Roadside Assistance product which is an optional extra for our Comprehensive Car Insurance product.

AAMI is not an advertiser of food or beverage, nor a licenced wagering operator.

We take all complaints we receive very seriously so we appreciate you raising the issue with us.

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 uses inappropriate language and is not appropriate for 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. 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 that this television advertisement features a family who have broken down and while the father tries to explain where they are to AAMI over the phone, the children laugh when he says “up by Ship Creek”.

The Board noted that Ship Creek sounds very similar to the colloquial phrase ‘up shit creek’. The Board noted that the Macquarie Dictionary definition of ‘up shit creek’ is: “in trouble; in difficulties” and considered that as the family is in difficulties near a sign for Ship Creek the advertisement is using a play on words. The Board noted that after the father says they are right up by Ship Creek, the daughter corrects him and says, “Up ship creek’ and considered that while the inference is that the man has said ‘shit’ he clearly says ‘ship’. The Board noted that when the son goes to repeat his father’s words the suggestion is that he is going to say ‘shit creek’ rather than ‘Ship Creek’ and considered that his father stops him which in the Board’s view is highlighting that using the phrase ‘shit creek’ is not appropriate for children.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed similar complaints about the use of the phrase, “Oh sheet!” in an advertisement in case 0291/15 where:

“The Board noted that whilst there a suggestion of “shit” the actual word used is “sheet” and is clearly heard as such throughout the advertisement. The Board noted that after the exclamation is used, the word is contextualised immediately by onscreen imagery of the product being used to wipe up the particular mess.”

The Board noted that in the current advertisement the word ‘shit’ is not actually used and considered that the phrase ‘Ship Creek’ is contextualised by the sign post for Ship Creek.

The Board acknowledged that some members of the community may find a reference to the word ‘shit’ to be inappropriate but considered that this word is not actually spoken in the advertisement. The Board noted the repeated use of the phrase ‘Ship Creek’ and considered that while this does emphasise the reference to ‘shit creek’ in the Board’s view the overall tone is light-hearted and humorous and the language used is not inappropriate in the circumstances and does not amount to strong or obscene language.

The Board noted the advertisement had been rated ‘PG’ by CAD and considered that the language used was not inappropriate for this relevant audience.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not use strong, obscene or inappropriate language and 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 complaints.

