



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0064-20
2. Advertiser :	Wicked Campers
3. Product :	Automotive
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Transport
5. Date of Determination	26-Feb-2020
6. DETERMINATION :	Upheld – Not Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification
AANA Code of Ethics\2.2 Exploitative or Degrading
AANA Code of Ethics\2.4 Sex/sexuality/nudity

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This transport advertisement features the text Slogan "I might have lost my virginity but I've still got the box it came in" on the back of the van. QLD Registration number 108 XUV.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This is a highly misogynistic and derogatory slogan to be displayed on a vehicle. Not only was it seen in a highly tourist-populated area but a popular holiday spot for families. There is no reason why parents should have to explain these slogans to their children, and there is absolutely no reason why women should be subjected to seeing messages that are pro-objectification of women and pro-rape thus evoking discomfort and lack of safety. I personally saw this slogan whilst driving in the car with my family and was horrified that in 2020 we had to see such an image. It is disgusting that a company is allowed to display messages like this on vehicles commonly seen on roads, and hired by international visitors- what does this say about Australian standards.



THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Advertiser did not provide a response.

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 slogan on the vehicle is misogynistic and derogatory towards women.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser had not provided a response.

The Panel 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 Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.1 provides the following definitions:

"Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment.

Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule."

The Panel noted that the use of the term "box" has two meanings in this context. The first being the physical object of a box and the second one the colloquial slang reference to the female vulva and the vagina.

The Panel considered that there are two interpretations of the slogan. One being that a woman is making the statement and referring to her own genitals as a "box". The second being that a man is making the statement and suggesting that he still has or owns the woman he has lost his virginity to.

In either case, the Panel considered that the advertisement suggests that women's genitals, and therefore women themselves, are objects. The Panel considered that this implication is discriminatory and vilifying of women and the Panel determined that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 of the Code.



The Panel 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 or degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Panel noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of the terms exploitative and degrading:

“Exploitative - (a) taking advantage of the sexual appeal of a person, or group of people, by depicting them as objects or commodities; or (b) focussing on their body parts where this bears no direct relevance to the product or service being advertised. Degrading – lowering in character or quality a person or group of people.”

The Panel first considered whether the advertisement contained sexual appeal.

The Panel considered that the use of the word “virginity” of itself was not a breach of the Code. The Panel considered that there is no clear reference to sex or a person’s appearance and considered that the advertisement did not contain sexual appeal.

The Panel determined that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal and did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Panel 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 Panel noted that the relevant audience for this transport advertisement would be broad and would include children.

The Panel noted that it had previously considered the same slogan in 2009 (607-09) and at that time had determined that the advertisement did not breach (then section 2.3 but now 2.4) on the basis that:

“The Board considered that the text was sexually suggestive but not likely to be understood by children or indeed, some adults. In finding that the text was not sufficiently explicit or obvious, the Board determined that the advertisement was not in breach of section 2.3 of the Code.”

The Panel considered that the text had a number of interpretations, but that as a result of the reference to virginity, box and ‘coming’, in the Panel’s view all of the interpretations were a clear reference to a sexual act.

The Panel noted that as a van driving on roads the slogan was visible to a broad audience. The Panel considered that although young children would be unlikely to understand the reference, that there were clear references to sexual activity.



The Panel considered that many adults would understand the sexual reference and would find this offensive. The Panel considered that the reference to sexual activity was not treated with sensitivity to the relevant broad audience.

The Panel determined that the advertisement did breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 and 2.4 of the Code the Panel upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

The advertiser has not provided a response to the Panel's determination. Ad Standards will continue to work with the relevant authorities regarding this issue of non-compliance.