



ADVERTISING  
STANDARDS  
BUREAU

Level 2, 97 Northbourne Avenue, Turner ACT 2612  
Ph (02) 6173 1500 | Fax (02) 6262 9833  
[www.adstandards.com.au](http://www.adstandards.com.au)  
ACN 084 452 666

## Case Report

1	Case Number	0066/14
2	Advertiser	FOXTEL Management Pty Ltd
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Print
5	Date of Determination	12/03/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The Advertisement depicts the image of two confused men; one holding a burnt sausage over a flaming BBQ and the other holding a hammer while scratching his head. The heading states: "Confused? You could have Manesia."

There is also an image of a man wearing 'meggings' which are described as leggings for men, and a quiz on how much you would pay for a haircut.

The text, "A&E – The cure for Manesia" also appears on a couple of the images.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I am deeply offended by A&E TV's advertisement and worried about the dangerous attitude it promotes.*

*This not only insults the reader who may or may be questioning their identity, gender or simply their own fashion choices but enables bullying from those who seek to belittle others for their choice of clothing, hair-style or personality.*

*I find it deplorable that both mX and A&E TV could run such a vile campaign only a week after the freedom of expression that is the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.*

*The adverts are without a doubt sexist and transphobic. I consider them dangerous and*

*enabling violence and discrimination in our community.*

*The text of this advertisement is blatantly sexist and I find it highly offensive.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*The complaint relates to an advertisement that forms part of the A&E multi-media campaign titled 'Manesia' (the "Advertisement"). A&E is a channel on the Foxtel platform which is owned and operated by Foxtel.*

*Foxtel understands that the complainant's reason for concern is that the Advertisement is sexist and breaches section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the "Code"), which provides: Advertising or Marketing Communications shall 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 belief.*

*A&E is a male-focused, factual-entertainment channel on Foxtel with a target audience of males between 25 to 49 years of age. The objective of the Advertisement is to promote A&E as the channel that cures 'Manesia'. 'Manesia' is a play on the words 'man' and 'amnesia' and is a fictional condition where a "male has forgotten how to be a man". The Advertisement focuses on common male stereotypes in a humorous way by depicting two scenarios where men are seen to be suffering from 'Manesia'.*

*The Advertisement purports to suggest that the dominance of female skewed television content has led to the "catastrophic epidemic" where Australian men are forgetting how to partake in 'masculine' activities. Audiences are also encouraged to take an amusing 'Manesia' test that is available on the A&E Facebook page. The 'Manesia' diagnostic test measures the extent to which "dancing, singing, baking, rose ceremonies, snuggies and selfies" has exposed male participants to 'Manesia'.*

*The purpose of the 'Manesia' campaign is to highlight the point of difference with the content on the A&E channel, that is distinctly aimed at a male audience. The programming on A&E touches on male occupational themes such as truck driving, tree logging and hog hunting. The campaign suggests that the programming on A&E assists men to overcome 'Manesia' by reminding them how to do "real things in the real world." We believe the satirical and humorous nature of the Advertisement is evident to the audience and, while it does play on common stereotypes, it does not discriminate against or vilify males on the basis of their gender.*

*Foxtel takes the concerns of its subscribers and its commitment to the community very seriously. The Advertisement was intended to be light-hearted and humorous; it was never intended to cause offence to its male audience. Accordingly, for the reasons set out above, Foxtel submits that the Advertisement has not breached section 2.1 of the Code.*

## **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 is sexist and offensive to men and transgender people.

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 the print advertisement features images and text which suggest men are suffering from ‘manesia’ and need to be reminded of how to be a man.

The Board noted the complainants’ concerns that it is offensive to suggest that men should behave in a certain way.

The Board noted that the advertisement is promoting a channel on Foxtel aimed at men aged between 25 and 49 years of age. The Board noted that the text and images used are intended to be humorous and considered that most members of the community would recognise that the advertisement is not trying to be serious or factual but rather presents some stereotypical images of “unmanly things”. The Board considered that overall the tone of the advertisement is tongue-in-cheek and considered that in the context of a print advertisement in a free magazine which is aimed at adults the advertisement does not demean men who may be less manly but rather suggests that a particular channel is enjoyed by men.

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 complaints.