



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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**AdStandards.com.au**

Ad Standards Limited  
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## Case Report

<b>1. Case Number :</b>	<b>0068-21</b>
<b>2. Advertiser :</b>	<b>PETA Australia</b>
<b>3. Product :</b>	<b>Community Awareness</b>
<b>4. Type of Advertisement/Media :</b>	<b>App</b>
<b>5. Date of Determination</b>	<b>24-Mar-2021</b>
<b>6. DETERMINATION :</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

### DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This in-app advertisement features video footage of very young piglets in distress and includes the text "Please...help me.", "I don't want to die here.", "What did they do to her?" and a request for people to donate.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*It shows piglets writhing in agony, in great pain and is extremely violent. All ages plays internet games, children to seniors. Its what nightmares are made of! It is extremely violent and absolutely horrific! It needs to be removed! Its violent and shows extreme animal cruelty. Private viewing only.*

### THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*Thank you for your communication regarding a complaint about a PETA social media advertisement. We carefully review all communications and materials to ensure that they are legal, decent, honest, and truthful and closely adhere to all relevant regulations.*



*The ad in question shows piglets suffering on factory farms with compelling messaging asking the viewer to help since those animals do not want to die.*

*The ad was clearly marked as being from PETA. It was a targeted ad on Facebook and therefore passed that company's stringent review for advertising standards before it was posted. Facebook requires that ads be authentic; that they not threaten, intimidate, exclude, or silence others; that they not harass or degrade others; and that they not contain sensational content or misinformation.*

*Our targeted Facebook ads are sometimes displayed on game apps through the Facebook 'audience network' and we believe this is how the complainant viewed it. If so it will be the same ad with the same targeting parameters and under 18s are suppressed from viewing the ad.*

*The images of the piglets were obtained by PETA eyewitnesses to help inform the public about the way their choices affect animals. No one who cares about animals could view some of the photographs in our literature and the video footage on our website without becoming upset. However, there are several reasons why we feel that it's vital to include images from inside factory farms and other facilities.*

*Many people simply do not want to believe the extent of animal abuse occurring in our society. The old adage about a picture being worth a thousand words is particularly true in the case of cruelty to animals. With visual evidence of such abuse, we can easily counter the claims of exaggeration made by the industries responsible for all this suffering.*

*As I noted, the PETA ad was targeted. Since anyone under the age of 18 was suppressed, children could not have viewed it. Furthermore, the ad was targeted at adult PETA donors and adults who had previously indicated an interest in taking action for animals by supporting other animal charities. The ad campaign was also brief.*

*The ad does not depict violence and so does not violate that standard. Violence is behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something. Although PETA has documentation showing*

*violent treatment of pigs (and other animals) in the meat industry, we didn't include such images in the ad in question.*

*Our ad isn't violent, but industry treatment of animals certainly is, as 90% of the 6 million pigs slaughtered each year in Australia are intensively or factory-farmed. Pigs' short lives are defined by a series of enclosures: weaner, grower, and finishing pens. They spend their entire lives in these extremely crowded pens on small slabs of soiled concrete.*

*These intelligent animals become increasingly agitated by their deprivation and confinement and often attack each other out of frustration. In order to prevent piglets from injuring each other, their tails and the ends of their teeth are cut off. The males*



*are also castrated. All this is done without providing them with any pain relief. Many piglets die within the first few weeks after birth.*

*At the slaughterhouse, the cruelty and violence continue often, stunning methods are ineffective and workers slit pigs' throats and then dump them into scalding-hot water while they're still conscious.*

*By showing actual footage from inside factory farms, PETA overcomes false assurances from the meat industry and misleading promotional images that purportedly show that all animals are treated humanely. This is crucial for engaging consumers in our peaceful campaigns for change.*

*We immediately comply with requests from supporters that graphic images be suppressed. We believe the complainant who submitted this complaint also contacted us, and we immediately put her on a list to suppress any further graphic ads.*

*We also monitor feedback on our advertisements to make sure that we're targeting people effectively. It's not in our interest to target people who don't want to see any of our ads or to target people with ads that turn them away from, instead of engage them with, our work to promote respect for all animals.*

*We hope this addresses the concerns and that the Ad Standards agrees that such communications are appropriate and necessary in meeting our charitable mission to help animals.*

## **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 advertisement is extremely violent and horrific and not appropriate to be shown to people playing a game.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

**Section 2.3 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.**

The Panel noted the Practice Note for the Code includes:

*"Violence against animals is caught by this section. However graphic depictions of violence against animals or the effects of such violence may be justified by the community message involved."*

**Does the advertisement contain violence?**



The Panel noted that the advertisement features distressing images of piglets that appear to be neglected or treated cruelly.

The Panel considered that many people viewing this advertisement would find the treatment of the animals distressing, and that this treatment would constitute violence.

### **Is the violence justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised?**

The Panel noted that the footage used in the advertisement was conveying a community awareness message about the treatment of pigs, and that these images were directly relevant to what was being advertised.

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the violent images were not appropriate to be shown to people of all ages who are playing a game.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the advertisement had been targeted towards adults who have previously interacted with animal welfare charities.

The Panel considered that the advertiser had taken reasonable steps to ensure that the advertisement was not displayed to young audiences.

The Panel noted that the footage was distressing, and would be distressing to adults concerned with animal welfare, however the graphic depiction were justified by the community message involved,

### **Section 2.3 conclusion**

In the Panel's view the suggestion of violence in the advertisement was justifiable in the context of the product advertised, and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

### **Conclusion**

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code, the Panel dismissed the complaint.

