



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0075/18
2	Advertiser	Transport Accident Commission
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	21/02/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Nationality

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

In the 15 second version of the TV advertisement a female is driving when her phone goes off alerting her to a message. A police officer appears in her passenger seat and tells her it's just a text, and not to worry about it. The woman ignores her phone and keeps her eyes on the road.

The 30 second version shows police appearing to give advice to different people including telling a man not to rush because he's late, a woman not to look at a text while driving, and a man that he should get a taxi after drinking.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I believe this advertisement is racially vilifying and depicting the negative racial stereotype of Asian women being poor drivers and being a danger on the roads. As an Asian man, I have experienced racism from other drivers while behind the wheel and I fell that this negative imagery of an Asian woman being told off by a police officer for thinking about conducting a driving offence creates a negative connotation of Asian drivers being dangerous behind the wheel and needing to be reprimanded by the



Police even though it does not actually show her committing the offence.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Complaint relating to the Transport Accident Commission's Television Commercial re Perceived Racial Vilification

Thank you for notifying the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) of the complaint received by the Advertising Standards Bureau in relation to the recent road safety TVC "Think of us" depicting a young female driver. I can assure you that the TAC is always keen to hear feedback from the community and genuinely values community input.

Details of this campaign follow, in addition to information regarding the racial backgrounds of people depicted in recent campaigns.

CAD numbers G5AHWGOA G5AI3GOA

Following your review of this material I am confident that you will find that TAC has placed an advertisement that encourages the community to self-regulate their behaviour on the roads in a manner that is 'justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised' (i.e. road trauma).

The advertisement in question is one of three similar advertisements about mobile phone use, drink driving and speeding respectively.

This particular TV advertisement shows a young female driver making the right decision on the road when she hears a text message alert from her phone. She chooses not to pick up her phone to look at the message. The majority of drivers tell us in market research that they are tempted to look at texts while driving, particularly when there is not much traffic around. We see this young driver resisting the urge to look despite being the only car visible on this road. Her expression is meant to convey that she is making a difficult decision. The ad goes on to show that she does not pick up her phone. The advertisement is designed to show a driver making good decisions. In this case, the driver is a role model who makes conscious choices to drive in a safe and responsible manner, despite the temptation to undertake risky behaviours. The script and a copy of the advertisement is submitted together with this response.

In no way is the advertisement attempting to show that female Asian drivers are "poor drivers and a danger on the roads". In fact, the advertisement celebrates good driving and safety on the roads.



It is important that the whole community feels included in the TAC's aim to reduce motor vehicle crashes and can identify with the people depicted in the TAC's campaigns for safety. Therefore, TAC is committed to reflecting the diversity of the Victorian community in its TV advertising.

We understand that Mr Ng's concern is that the advertisement contributes to the (perceived) racial vilification of drivers from an Asian background, and I was sorry to hear of Mr Ng's personal experience as a driver. It is not the intention of this advertisement to make any suggestions relating to race. The focus group testing of this advertisement in the days leading up to its appearance on TV did not elicit any comments or community concerns regarding the driver's race or possible culture.

Conversely, it can be argued that TAC's advertising is not inclusive or representative if it continually shows people from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. You may also be interested to know that over the past four years, five TAC TV advertisements have shown drivers making the wrong decisions or driving poorly. A list of these advertisements and the racial background of the driver demonstrating poor behaviour follows:

TV Advertisement Poor behaviour Racial background of driver

- 1. 2014 - 2018, Drowsy driving, "Pillow" Female driver falls asleep at the wheel Caucasian*
- 2. 2014-2015, Vehicle Safety, "AEB" Male driver fails to brake and crashes into car in front Caucasian*
- 3. 2016-2017, Motorcycle safety, "Looking out" Female driver and motorbike rider have crashed Caucasian*
- 4. 2017- 2018, Drug driving, "Gran" Young man gets caught with illegal drugs in his system when driving his grandmother home Caucasian*
- 5. 2014-2017, Parental influence & role modelling, "Strings" Father can be seen holding a phone and clenching his fist in rage in a scenario that represents driving on the roads Caucasian*

In the future, the TAC plans to show people from a wider range of racial backgrounds in advertisements, and this naturally means that future TV advertisements will show drivers making decisions, good and bad. Saying this, the TAC recognises there is a need for sensitive casting of talent in advertisements that show people making poor decisions on the roads, and will balance this with our broader goal of being inclusive.

I trust this information allows the Bureau to reach a determination on the question of racial vilification.

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 concerns that the advertisement discriminates against women of Asian descent.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s 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 this television infomercial depicts a woman driving when her phone message tone goes off. A police officer appears in her passenger seat and tells her it’s just a text, and not to worry about it. The woman ignores her phone and continues to drive.

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement is racially vilifying and contains the negative stereotype that Asian women are bad drivers.

The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that this 15 second advertisement is a cut-down from a larger campaign which contains multiple scenarios of people rethinking unsafe decisions relating to driving.

The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that the advertisers is committed to reflecting the diversity of the Victorian community which is why an Asian woman was selected for her role in this advertisement.

The Panel acknowledged that there is a negative stereotype that Asian women are poor drivers, however considered that in this advertisement the woman was seen driving safely and was depicted as a safe and responsible driver.

The Panel considered that this advertisement did not contain a negative stereotype and did not portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person on the basis of race.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaint.

