



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
PO Box 5110, Braddon ACT 2612  
P (02) 6173 1500 | F (02) 6262 9833

**AdStandards.com.au**

Ad Standards Limited  
ACN 084 452 666

## Case Report

<b>1. Case Number :</b>	<b>0084-20</b>
<b>2. Advertiser :</b>	<b>Geeks2U Pty Limited</b>
<b>3. Product :</b>	<b>Information Technology</b>
<b>4. Type of Advertisement/Media :</b>	<b>Radio</b>
<b>5. Date of Determination</b>	<b>25-Mar-2020</b>
<b>6. DETERMINATION :</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.6 Health and Safety

### DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This radio advertisement features a voice over speaking to Eugene.

V1: I'm talking with self-diagnosed geek Eugene, who's kindly pried his eyes away from a computer screen for a minute to tell us about Geeks 2 U. Hi Eugene... or should that be 'Greetings Earthing'?

V2: "Hi Eugene" is just fine.

V1: Okay. Great. Now, please tell us a bit about Geeks 2 U.

V2: Well, Geeks 2 U is Australia's leading provider of on-site computer repairs and IT support for homes and businesses.

V1: Okay...In plain English, please...

V2: Okay, as long as it hums, beeps, or clicks – Geeks 2 U will come to your home or office to help. We support more than 370,000 customers nationwide seven days a week: including evenings! Same day service is available too.

V1: Well, as I'm not a geek, I couldn't make sense of anything you just said, but thanks for giving us a brief insight into your weird and wacky mind.

V2: Um... sure.

V1: So 'normals', if you're having problems, best let a geek like Eugene fix it. Go to Geeks 2 U dot com dot au or call 1300 Geeks 2 U.



## **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*The ad in question portrays sysadmins such as myself in an incredibly negative light, as some sort of creepy weirdo that no one can relate to. The end of the ad, describing everyone else as "normals" just reinforces the workplace bullying we in IT have to tolerate on a daily basis, all in the name of "a bit of fun". I feel this type of ad normalizes and encourages this type of workplace bullying. We work incredibly hard to make sure people can get their jobs done efficiently and are still taunted and disregarded as workplace weirdos and misfits. This is the fourth time I've heard this ad.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*I can confirm that this ad is no longer on air. It was part of a temporary promotional segment for the month of February only and its last air date was February 22.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Ad Standards Community Panel (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:

- Portrays system administration staff in a negative light
- Portrays bullying behaviour towards people in IT

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 occupation is not a category covered by this section of the Code, and therefore considered that this complaint does not raise an issue under Section 2.1.

The Panel considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety".



The Panel noted the name of the business is 'Geeks 2 U' and that geek is often used as a reference to people with a love of computer science. The Panel considered that while this was a somewhat negative description when computers were first developed, in the Panel's view the term as used in the community now had a more general descriptive term meaning a computer science expert and was not necessarily used as a derogatory descriptor.

The Panel noted that the presenter talks to Eugene as though Eugene is speaking in a complicated manner and the presenter is somewhat condescending. The Panel noted that Eugene responded to the questions in a straightforward and easily understood manner and that the overall effect of this advertisement was to make the presenter look stupid.

The Panel considered that Eugene did not appear upset or hurt by the presenter's comments, rather he came across as somewhat bemused by the manner of the Presenter.

The Panel considered that most members of the community would not consider the behaviour in the advertisement as bullying as the presenter appeared foolish and the geek was unperturbed. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not contain material which would be contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety in relation to bullying.

The Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

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