



## Case Report

1	Case Number	0096/11
2	Advertiser	Sportsbet
3	Product	Gaming
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	13/04/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Sex

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A man at the races, referred to as Obstacle\_Jim, is shown prevented from placing a bet due to various obstacles in his path. These obstacles include a couple having a picnic, an esky, a jockey, 'crap' (horse manure) and some ladies referred to as cougars by the voiceover. The cougars tackle the man to the ground and one of them is shown licking hummus from the knee of 'Jim' (from when he fell in the picnic) whilst the voice over suggests betting on the internet via sportsbet.com.au.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I have been a horse owner, punter and race goer for many years. I do love the wonderful sport of kings.*

*I was very pleased to see coverage of the Caulfield Carnival of Racing on Channel 9 but to my horror the main promoter Sportsbet.com's major ad campaign...cougar inspired with very large women rolling around the ground licking dip or something off men's pants is the most disgusting ad I have seen. Degrading to women, degrading to racing and degrading to anything decent.*

*I thought Racing was trying to promote horses, fashion and having fun in a classy way. I am shocked Melbourne Racing Club and Channel 9 would find this acceptable. I did complain to Sportsbet but they just laughed.*

*If this is the new image of the sport of kings ... count me out!!*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*The advertisement referred to as "Obstacles" presents an exaggerated course of events that occur to a young man at the races trying to place a bet. It is set with a humorous tone and is light and funny. Exaggeration is commonly used in advertising as a form of humour and in this case a series of exaggerated characters and mishaps as well as events that are unlikely to occur besiege the hero in our ad stopping him from placing a bet.*

*The complaint alleges the material is in breach of the advertising code, specifically section 2.1 in that it is discriminating against, Women, Racing and anything decent.*

*We dispute the complaint and do not believe this ad to be derogative to women nor racing and dismiss the third. The context of the ad is fun. It is a humorous take on Racing and the experiences people have at the races.*

*These events didn't really happen, the messages are exaggerated and not to be taken seriously. A jockey is not usually mixing with patrons and horse manure not found in the patron's picnic area. Cougars are in fact a real stereotype that has been portrayed in society. This ad meagrely plays on that stereotype in a staged attack on a young man, role playing that stereotype.*

*It uses the exaggeration to promote online wagering as a more convenient product.*

*The advertisement has been received in this nature. CAD also deemed this to be suitable approach to advertising.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Advertising Standard Board ('the Board') considered whether the advertisement complied with the AANA Code of Ethics ('the Code').

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement is degrading to women.

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, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief.'

The Board noted that the advertisement features a man attempting to overcome a variety of obstacles at the races. The last of these obstacles is the man being set upon by a number of women. The Board considered that the use of the term 'cougars' is a well known and humorous reference to women who like to date younger men. The Board considered that the

depiction of the young man being 'set upon' by a number of women was exaggerated and intended to be a humorous representation of 'cougars'. The Board considered that the exaggerated nature of the advertisement and the inclusion of a number of classic racing stereotypes as obstacles for the man gave a context to the depiction of the women. The Board considered that the depiction of the women was a humorous stereotype and was not in any way a denigration of women generally. The Board considered that the advertisement did not denigrate women.

The Board considered that the images did not discriminate against or vilify women.

Based on the above the Board determined that, in this instance, the advertisement did not depict any material that discriminated against or vilified any person or section of society. 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 complaint.