



Case Report

1	Case Number	0104/12
2	Advertiser	My Dental Team
3	Product	Professional services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Radio
5	Date of Determination	28/03/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity - S/S/N - sexualization of children

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A voice which sounds like a young boy describes why he likes My Dental Team at Shellharbour with one of the reasons given as because the dental nurse holds his hand and is hot.

THE COMPLAINT

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

- 1. A small boy is talking about the service he receives he states 'he likes the dental nurse as she is hot'- I fine this sexualising of children concerning why or how would a young boy think of a professional female providing health care as 'hot'*
- 2. Sexism within the ad- a professional female providing health care is described as 'hot'. The dental nurses at the dental practice are important for how they look and not for the training and care they can provide.*

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Please find below a response from the i98 radio station in relation to the above mentioned complaint. Their creative team created the advertisement and felt appropriate to respond in relation to this matter.

In consideration of the response below, if the Board still deems this advertisement to be in breach of the code in anyway and seeks its immediate removal, we will gladly follow instruction.

RESPONSE FROM i98 FM:

Description of the advertisement

The commercial referred to in the complaint is a 30 second radio advertisement which forms part of a marketing strategy aimed at targeting parents of young children. It has been run in rotation with other commercials and is designed to relate directly to parents by featuring a child speaking in the first person about why they love visiting the advertiser 'My Dental Team'. Amongst other things it uses tongue in cheek humour to 'cut through' and create an emotional response with the listener.

It is worth noting this commercial has been in rotation with 2 others since October of last year and neither the advertiser nor radio station has received a single complaint until now.

CAD Approval

Not applicable in this case as this only applies to Television commercials.

Agency or Media Buyer

The advertiser in this case does not employ a media buyer or agency and deals direct with the radio station being i98FM in Wollongong. The commercial was written and produced by the Stations in-house production team and only aired after written approval from the client/advertiser.

*Response to complaint as it relates to Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics
Concern 1 – Section 2.3 addresses sensitivity of the topic of sex or sexualisation as it relates to its target market or intended audience. In this case the commercial is very clearly targeting adults, specifically parents who are the decision makers when it comes to choosing a dentist for their children. The commercial does not target children. The comment made by the child in the commercial is tongue in cheek humour designed to create marketing cut through and evoke an emotional positive response to the listener. We disagree that this constitutes 'sexualising' of children.*

Concern 2 – Section 2.1 addresses issues relating to discriminating against people based on sex amongst other things. The message of the commercial is clearly that the advertiser's staff is there to look after children and that children feel like they are looked after. There has been no attempt to sexualise, denigrate or devalue the importance of the nurse's role in this case. Again we argue this is nothing more than tongue in cheek humour to create impact.

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 complainant's concerns that the advertisement features a young boy describe a nurse as 'hot' which is sexist towards female health workers and sexualises children.

The Board reviewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Board first 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 this radio advertisement features a young boy describing his experience at the My Dental Team practice and using the word 'hot' to describe the dental nurse who holds his hand.

The Board noted the complainant's concern that describing a female health professional in this manner is sexist and detracts from the job they do. The Board noted that in contemporary youth language, the use of the word "hot" may have several meanings, including being good at something or being popular or being attractive. A minority of the Board considered that referring to a woman in this manner is not appropriate, especially when it is a child and not an adult making the comment. The majority of the Board however considered that it was not clear in which context the word "hot" is being used in this instance and is not inappropriate.

The Board noted that whilst the description of the nurse as hot is not relevant to the job she does, the Board considered that in this instance the reference is not discriminatory to the point of vilification.

Based on the above the Board determined that, in this instance, that 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.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience".

The Board noted that the descriptor 'hot' can be used to describe the attractiveness of a person and considered that in this instance the use of the word by a boy describing a woman is likely to be interpreted by most members of the community as a bit cheeky rather than as a sexual observation. A minority of the Board considered that it was not appropriate to make reference to a woman in this manner as it refers to her sexual attractiveness, however the majority of the Board considered that in this instance the use of a boy describing a woman as 'hot' does not amount to sexualisation of children, is not a sexual comment or reference and is not inappropriate for a radio advertisement which can be heard by a broad audience.

The Board determined that the advertisement did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and that it did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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

