



## Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0105/13</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>News Ltd</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Media</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>Outdoor</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>10/04/2013</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.3 - Violence Cruelty to animals

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Image of a handbag with the words, "Debbie here, used to be a real cow". Underneath is a copy of the front cover of Sunday Style magazine.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I feel the ad is offensive on two levels - referring to a female as being a real cow inference being that she's not a nice person and that a real live cow is better off being killed and made into a handbag. I'm sure 'Debbie' as referred to in the ad would much prefer to be a happy living cow rather than slaughtered and skinned to make a handbag. I think the advertiser needs to be a little more sensitive to the audience reading their advertisement. While some many think it's funny others do not. I asked a few people at work how they felt about the ad and a number of others felt it was offensive too.*

*I feel the ad is disrespectful to the animal in question that was killed. I have no qualms with eating meat (I don't wear or use leather often) but I do feel respect is in order for the animal that has been slaughtered for my meal and/or use. I feel the advertisement is also offensive to animal rights activists.*

### THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*The advertisement is for a printed publication, Sunday Style. The complaints assert that the advertisement:*

- 1. discriminates against or vilifies women; and*
- 2. presents or portrays violence.*

*We do not believe that there are any other issues under Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics that are relevant.*

*We make the following submissions:*

- 1. the advertisement makes fun of, and holds up for ridicule, the use of the term cow as a reference to human women;*
- 2. the advertisement does not adopt or endorse the use of the term cow as a reference to human women;*
- 3. the advertisement plays on the fact that leather handbags are manufactured from bovine animals, and the common anthropomorphic practice of naming bovine animals with human names;*
- 4. the human name is clearly targeted at the handbag by use of the term "here", and the placement of the relevant copy above the handbag - it is not seriously targeted at female human readers;*
- 5. the advertisement does not discriminate against or vilify women, it celebrates them as the key prospective customers of the Sunday Style publication;*
- 6. there is no portrayal or presentation of violence in the advertisement, other than that which is inherent in the assertion that handbags are manufactured from animals - to suggest that this portrays violence inappropriately would suggest that all portrayals of butchers or meat products is likewise problematic.*

## **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 complainants’ concerns that the advertisement is offensive in its

reference to a woman as a cow, and is disrespectful to animals in its link between a cow and a handbag.

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, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted that the advertisement features an image of a handbag and the text, "Debbie here, used to be a real cow".

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that to refer to a woman as a cow is offensive. The Board considered that the most likely interpretation is that the cow which was subsequently made into a handbag is called Debbie. The Board noted that it is not uncommon for women to be referred to as 'cows' in a manner which suggests they are not being nice people, however the Board considered that in this instance the overall tone of the advertisement is light hearted and the most likely interpretation is that the handbag was once a cow.

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 considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised".

The Board the complainants' concern that the advertisement links a leather handbag to a slaughtered animal and considered that it is a fact that the skins of some animals are used to make leather goods such as handbags. The Board considered that the advertisement is not condoning or encouraging cruelty to animals but is stating a fact that a handbag can be made from a cow's hide.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not present or portray violence.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

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

