



Case Report

1	Case Number	0118/11
2	Advertiser	Liquor Alliance (VIC)
3	Product	Alcohol
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	13/04/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

2.2 - Violence Hooliganism-vandalism-graffiti

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Young men are shown running through the streets at night placing stickers featuring the word "HUMP" on various signs, thus changing their intended meaning: Give Hump instead of Give Way, Express Hump instead of Express Post and so on. At the end of the advertisement the men are shown running in to a Thirsty Camel Bottleshop whilst laughing, and the voice over says, "Think Camel".

THE COMPLAINT

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

It is vandalism and should not be shown as it implies that it is ok to stick such signs on important signs.

I believe it is glorifying graffiti which is a public nuisance and against the law

The deliberate defacing of public and private property (particularly road safety signs) is being promoted as "advertising" and "funny" by this advertisement. In some cases obscuring a road safety sign (e.g. covering the word "STOP" on a railway crossing sign as shown in the advertisement) can have serious safety consequences. I feel this advertisement encourages vandalism of road safety signs and other public property such as post boxes.

Generally promotes anti-social behaviour, vandalism and underage drinking. I studied advertising and I reckon the ad agency who made this wanted to make an ad that pushed the boundaries. Incidentally this is the first time I've made a complaint about an ad... it's just frustrating to see thirsty camel promote vandalism and 'youthful' inconsideration of society.

*I feel not only is this ad promoting an illegal activity but is telling people this type of vandalism is O.K.
I believe this advertisement sends the message that it is ok to deface public property.*

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The core brand value of Thirsty Camel Bottleshops is irreverence. This communication strategy has been in place since the brand was launched in 2005. Whilst the 'camel' is widely accepted as irreverent, and could sometimes be seen as controversial, it's always light-hearted, left-of-centre and well-meaning.

The 'Think Camel' brand campaign has been designed as a light hearted way to encourage people to visit Thirsty Camel Bottles hops by using the word HUMP, which is synonymous with the camel, in amusing real -life situations.

When creating the TV advert we used removable stickers which were taken down immediately after filming. We certainly don't want to encourage graffiti or vandalism of public property which is why stickers, which could be easily removed, and not paint or permanent materials, were used.

In response to the complaint regarding the promotion of underage drinking, the talent used in the TV commercial is well over 18 years of age and alcohol is not featured being consumed at any point in the advert.

We believe, in all cases, our communication reflects Thirsty Camel core brand strategy of irreverence, but like any satire it can be taken out of context and might unintentionally offend someone. And in this case, we sincerely apologise for any offence that Thirsty Camel has caused.

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 encourages vandalism of road safety signs and other public property which could have serious effects on public safety.

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

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser response. The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 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 noted that the advertisement shows young men defacing public signs by sticking the word 'HUMP' over them to change their meaning.

The Board considered that the advertisement is endorsing the defacing of public signage and that this could be seen as encouragement for viewers to do the same. The Board considered that graffiti per se is socially unacceptable and costly and that the graffiti of public safety signs, if copied, could potentially endanger members of the community.

The Board noted that the advertisement is intended to be funny but considered that the depiction of vandalism has no relevance to the product being advertised.

The Board considered that the advertisement did portray violence through the act of vandalism and therefore breached section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided."

The Board noted the use of the word "HUMP" in the defacing of the public signs and considered it is a word which has many different interpretations. The Board considered that any sexual connotations of the word are subtle and unlikely to be interpreted in that manner by a child and so it is not inappropriate or strong or obscene. The Board noted that the advertisement has been rated L by CAD and is therefore not placed in children's programming.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not use strong or obscene language, the language was not inappropriate and did not breach section 2.5 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did breach Section 2.2 of the Code, the Board upheld the complaints.

ADVERTISER RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

The 'Think Camel' commercial is no longer on air; we intend to modify the commercial before using it in the future.

