



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Ad Standards Limited
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0120-20
2. Advertiser :	Bunurong Memorial Park
3. Product :	Professional Service
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Billboard
5. Date of Determination	8-Apr-2020
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification
AANA Code of Ethics\2.0 Other

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This billboard advertisement depicts a young boy playing on equipment and the text "Ethan loves visiting grandma. The perfect place to celebrate life."

THE COMPLAINT

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

I believe that this ad is disrespectful and highly offensive to all grandparents. The idea that a grandchild would "love" visiting grandma's grave because he can play on the ropes? ??? I'm aghast at the insensitivity of this notion!! Grandparents are a big part of children's lives and this ad is demeaning in the extreme. What really amazes me is that they are offending the very market they are pitching to- old people who will die soon and need to make decisions about their final resting place!!. I can tell you, mine will certainly not be Bunarong Memorial Park.

Showing a child at a playground should not be an incentive to visit a deceased person. Found it crude and base form of humour.



THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In regards to the complaint raised, Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust would like to outline:

- The intent of the advertisement is to be warm, uplifting and welcoming; moving beyond the traditional sombre and sad advertising associated with cemeteries*
- SMCT has developed this campaign based on observation and direct engagement with the Victorian community and has taken the upmost care in reflecting this within the creative*
- The purpose of the advertisement is to publicise Bunurong Memorial Park as the perfect place to celebrate life – communicated in this particularly advertisement, by the fact that we have a children's playground at the cemetery, which children can enjoy at the same time as visiting their loved ones' graves. The intent is to try and alter the perception of cemeteries as a sombre and daunting place for children who are accompanying their parents on visits to the cemetery and to encourage that both children and parents to feel more comfortable about visiting cemeteries. We believe most grandparents would love the idea of grandchildren enjoying their visits to the cemetery to pay their respects, and to laugh and play.*
- The advert is designed to create a positive association with cemetery environments – and in fact depicts the real-life environment at Bunurong Memorial Park. The play equipment featured in the advertisement is prominently positioned at the entrance of Bunurong Memorial Park to create a familiar, welcoming and positive environment for all ages. The installation is enjoyed by children every day which has been reflected in this creative*
- Visiting a cemetery can often be daunting, especially for children, so a positive association with the environment when visiting a loved one's grave can help individuals grieve better*
- People grieve in different ways and wish to be remembered in different ways. Our campaign brings together a broad cross-section of individual stories and each will resonate differently with different consumers*
- In no way was this ad developed to vilify by age, rather to celebrate a relationship between grandson and grandma – with a focus on how future generations can remember and celebrate those that have passed*



THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainants' concern that the advertisement suggests that the only reason to visit a deceased grandparent is to play on equipment and that equipment should not be a reason to visit the grave of a deceased person.

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 the Practice Note to Section 2.1 provides the following definitions:

"Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment.

Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule."

The Panel noted that cemeteries have traditionally been sombre places and that visiting cemeteries can be quite a daunting experience for children who may not understand the feelings experienced by visitors. The Panel considered that cemeteries often have nothing for children to do, and noted that the advertiser stated that it is promoting a cemetery that is trying to create a more positive experience for families visiting the grave of a loved one. The children's equipment can assist in promoting a happy association with the cemetery and a more pleasant visiting experience.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the advertisement was intended to celebrate the relationship between a child and grandparent and focus on how future generations can remember and celebrate those that have passed.

The Panel considered that it is a reality that people die as they get older – but recognised that there will also be people of all ages buried at cemeteries. The Panel considered however that the reference to a particular type of person who would be visited, namely grandparents, is not suggesting that the graves of old people are only good to visit, or that old people are most likely to die. The Panel considered that the image described a scene that many people would prefer not to be advertised, but that it not unfair to older people and does not invite ridicule.

The Panel considered that while some members of the community may consider the advertisement to be in bad taste, the content of the advertisement did not show a person to receive unfair or less favourable treatment because of their age, and did not



humiliate, intimidate or incite hatred, contempt or ridicule any person because of their age.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of age and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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