



## Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0121/13</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Fosters Australia, Asia &amp; Pacific</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Alcohol</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>01/05/2013</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Physical Characteristics
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The 60-second television advertisement opens on a quiet street that features lovely older style architecture but that is somewhat grey and lifeless. People dressed in light clothing appear and as they grow in numbers/move through the city they create the impression of Pure Blonde beer flowing through the streets. Then as quickly as they appear they disappear. The final frame features the tagline “A Pure Blonde Moment” and a Pure Blonde stubby. The advertisement features James Vincent McMorrow’s cover of Steve Winwood’s “Higher Love”.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*The advertisement offends me on a number of levels. Firstly it is overtly supremacist in its depiction of a white fair skinned pure blonde race of people. It reaches new heights of poor taste and ignorance to film such a scene of an Aryan race on the streets of city such as Budapest where less than 100 years ago 600,000+ Jewish people from Hungary were murdered in concentration camps in pursuit of such an Aryan race.*

*History is awash with unspeakable horrors bestowed onto numerous races of people who did not fit the archetype this advertisement now presents before us. Untold racist acts inflicted on afro Americans in the early 1900's in the name of white supremacy, not to mention Australian's own 'White Australia Policy'.*

*It saddens me that I have to point out the obvious to an either very naive or very stupid advertising group and beer company. This advertisement will offend a multitude of people on many levels and I am concerned that this offence is not an issue or a problem that the company will acknowledge or accept.*

*I would like to see the advertisement removed, and I would like to see Pure Blonde display a little more intelligence and integrity in the future when they make decisions on add campaigns that are overtly racist and supremacist. The argument that the advertisement is suggestive of beer flowing through the streets, is a very naive one. One a very simple level, with history removed that may be the case. But history stands along with the horrors of it which people deal with daily. White supremacist groups very much active in their racist hate will love nothing more than to see a silly beer company from Australia do some free marketing for them.*

*It is now the 21st century. The weight of past horrors is heavy. Show a little respect Pure Blonde.*

*I find the placement of the ad in the streets of Budapest depicting a 'pure blonde' emphasis is deeply racial and specifically anti-Semitic considering the ad is filmed in Budapest. About 25,000 Jews from the suburbs of Budapest were rounded up and transported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp.*

*The eerie 'bring me a higher love' which is connotative of a divine intervention, and the final 'pure blonde moment' slogan I find offensive to anyone persecuted or murdered in the quest for a pure Aryan Race. It uses religion, history and race to sell beer in an extremely offensive and inappropriate manner.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Pure Blonde TVC REF 0121/13. First up I'd like to briefly describe the television advertisement and provide some background to Pure Blonde's advertising campaigns over time.*

*Pure Blonde has a history of using blondes in its imagery as a way to represent the name and style of the beer, namely "Brewtopia", "Dove Love" and "Pardon". This latest television advertisement – "A River of Blonde" – captures a moment that is unexpected and striking. The 60-second television advertisement opens on a quiet street that features lovely older style architecture but that is somewhat grey and lifeless. People dressed in light clothing appear and as they grow in numbers/move through the city they create the impression of Pure Blonde beer flowing through the streets. Then as quickly as they appear they disappear. The final frame features the tagline "A Pure Blonde Moment" and a Pure Blonde stubby. The advertisement features James Vincent McMorrow's cover of Steve Winwood's "Higher Love". The advertisement launched online on 20th March 2013 and more broadly from 24th March (on TV and also cinema) and it's estimated just over eight million adults have viewed it (at the time of writing this letter).*

*We respect that people will take different things from any advertisement however in this instance, we don't believe the three complainants' outtake of the Pure Blonde television advertisement is representative of the average viewer. This is based on both the number of complaints received and the extreme nature of their interpretation. In addition, our own ad tracking (conducted by an external research agency) also supports this with almost all respondents taking a positive message from the advertisement. As such, we believe the*

*advertisement does not communicate any of the suggested themes the complainants raise and nor would it ever be our intention to communicate such themes. This is simply a beer advertisement that was designed to bring to life the Pure Blonde brand in an uplifting and unexpected way.*

*You have asked us to address the issue of discrimination and vilification, which relates to section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics. The television advertisement does not discriminate or vilify as it does not show a negative depiction of a group of people, that is, we are not mocking those featured or being disparaging. Neither does the television advertisement claim the people are superior in any way and for that matter we do not agree that any religious or historical messages/references are conveyed (as stated in the complaints). The people shown simply represent the Pure Blonde liquid. This is obvious thanks to the volume of people (and their clothing) and some help from special effects, which create a flow of Pure Blonde complete with ripples and gentle waves that cascade the beer through the streets. It is important to highlight that the people in the advertisement are a broad group of people – representing both sexes and different ethnicities and ages.*

*The shoot location was not intended to represent one city in particular and we only referenced the actual location in our marketing media release. In relation to one complainant's comments about the chosen soundtrack, its choice reflects that it is a genuinely engaging melody. It is not supposed to convey hidden (or even overt) meaning through the lyrics. Whilst the song lyrics were not intended to communicate a message relating to Pure Blonde, that said when making their music selection the team felt that, generally speaking, the lyrics were appropriate and positive. The "A Pure Blonde moment" tagline at the end creates branding for the television advertisement and aims to state the obvious – that you just witnessed a special and unexpected moment that was bought to you by the brand – Pure Blonde.*

*We also believe the television advertisement in its entirety is compliant with the AANA Code of Ethics – there is a complete absence of nudity, sexual overtones, bad language, issues relating to health and safety and violence. In addition, this television advertisement was prevetted (approval number 12171) against the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code. If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to receiving news of your determination.*

## **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 and racist in its depiction of hundreds of blond actors running through a European city dressed in white and referring to it as "a pure blonde moment".

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.1 of the Code. Section 2.1 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of...race.."

The Board noted that the advertisement is for Pure Blonde beer and features actors with varying shades of blond hair wearing white and running through streets as a crowd before

disappearing in to the underground and leaving the streets completely empty.

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the reference to a Pure Blonde moment is suggestive of Hitler's quest for a pure Aryan race and that the setting of the advertisement in Hungary is insensitive to the Jewish people who lived there and lost their lives or loved ones as a result of Hitler's campaign. The Board noted the Advertiser's response that the actual location of the advertisement was only stated in the press release and that the intent was to portray a generic European city. The Board noted that the tagline of "a Pure Blonde moment" is a clear reference to the product, Pure Blonde beer, and considered that the most likely interpretation of the blond actors wearing white is that they are representative of the product.

The Board noted the community's sensitivities to any depictions which could be considered to be making light of WW2 atrocities however the Board considered that in this instance the advertisement is not suggesting that blond, 'Aryan', people are superior but is using blond actors to represent the advertised product, Pure Blonde beer.

The Board determined that the material depicted did not discriminate against a section of the community and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board considered Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety".

The Board noted that in one scene we see a man somersault from a building before being caught by the crowd below. The Board noted that whilst this is an activity which should not be encouraged by members of the community the Board considered that the overall tone of the advertisement makes it clear that this is an unreal situation and that the advertisement is not encouraging similar behaviour from members of the community. The Board noted that the advertisement is rated "L" by CAD and considered that even if children were to view the advertisement the scene is very brief and is presented in a stylised and unrealistic manner.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

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

