



Case Report

1	Case Number	0137/11
2	Advertiser	Woolworths Liquor Group
3	Product	Alcohol
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Poster
5	Date of Determination	27/04/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.5 - Language Use appropriate language
- 2.3 - Sex/sexuality/nudity Treat with sensitivity to relevant audience

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A blonde woman wearing a sailor-style outfit has the brow of a ship apparently bursting out of her stomach. The wording on the ship reads, "Dry Dock Premium Lager. Extra Smooth. Extra Dry"

There is a picture of a bottle of Dry Dock in the bottom right hand corner of the advertisement with the text, "It's dry but it's wet."

THE COMPLAINT

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

Through the use of a female image in-combination with a social colloquial phrase of "dry dock" (which is a common reference to dry/not interested in sex) and an alcohol product would communicate in the mind of the general public that drinking this beer would change a woman from a "dry dock" into a "sure thing".

It sets up a negative proposition and also displays women as sexual toys to be manipulated and taken advantage of.

With today's issues of binge drinking date rape use of drugs to facilitate unwanted sexual activity I feel this is an irresponsible form of communicating alcohol.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

As stated previously, Woolworths takes its advertising obligations very seriously. It is Woolworths' submission that the complaint should be dismissed and no further action taken in the matter for the reasons expressed below.

The 'Sail and Anchor' brand has origins to the 'historical' public hotel and boutique brewer of the same name located in Freemantle WA (and part of the ALH Group) with its strong nautical heritage and association with the Freemantle wharf area. As you are aware Freemantle is historically recognised as a major sea port which serviced Perth and beyond in the past. It is a major tourist destination today.

'Dry Dock Premium Lager' beer product is a description of the beer 'type' and dry brewing style similar to other boutique brands such as Hahn Super Dry or Toohey's Extra Dry.

The 'Bow of the Ship' bursting through the selected medium concept has been used in other advertising formats to promote Dry Dock. The adshell 'bus shelter' creative often adopts feature models which, in this case, is incorporated into the nautical theme.

The complainant's suggestion that the term 'Dry Dock' connotes any other meaning than described above in a 'nautical context' is strongly rejected by Woolworths. There is no such 'colloquial' term as far as Woolworths is aware. If there was such a meaning Woolworths would not have proceeded with the advertisement.

The 'bus shelter' advertisement is of short duration only (2 weeks) and is limited in the locations where it can be placed. For instance, as with alcohol advertising generally, it cannot be placed near schools and similar institutions.

In all advertising but particularly advertising of a 'regulated' product, Woolworths undergoes a careful and thorough review process to ensure that all relevant regulatory standards and community standards are met in any of its advertising.

Woolworths does greatly appreciate the Board's careful consideration of a complaint considered by Woolworths to be isolated and will accept Woolworths' submission that this complaint should be dismissed.

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 suggests that this product will lead to success with women and depicts women as sexual objects.

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

The Board noted that the advertisement features an image of a woman in nautical wear with the helm of a boat in front of her. The text accompanying the image is 'Dry dock premium lager.' And 'it's dry but it's wet'.

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 considered that the image of the woman in nautical outfit was not objectification of women.

The woman is depicted wearing clothing that is relevant to the nautical theme of the product, she is smiling and saluting, is fully clothed and she is not depicted in a demeaning manner.

The Board considered that the image of the woman does not depict the woman as an object and did not discriminate against or vilify women.

The Board then 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 treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant programme time zone".

The Board considered that the advertisement depicts a nautical theme depicted through the woman's outfit and behaviour, the image of the boat and the name of the product. The Board considered that the text accompanying the image was also literally nautical and most likely to be taken as a nautical reference to play on the characteristic of the 'dry' tasting beer which of course is also 'wet'.

The Board agreed that some members of the community would consider that the text and image were sexually suggestive. However the Board considered that this was not a likely interpretation and certainly not an interpretation likely to be made by children. The Board noted that the advertisement is for alcohol and as such as directed to adults. The board considered that the advertisement was not sexualised, that most members of the community would not find the imagery and text offensive and 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 complaint.