



ADVERTISING  
STANDARDS  
BUREAU

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# Case Report

1	Case Number	0148/14
2	Advertiser	Fosters Australia, Asia & Pacific
3	Product	Alcohol
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	14/05/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

“Coincidence” is another chapter in the Carlton Mid advertising series that embodies the idea of “Stay a Little Longer”. This campaign depicts the lengths that blokes go to in order to get some much needed mate time. The TVC shows how four mates organize a romantic getaway with their partners on the same weekend and at the same resort and we then witness their ‘surprise’ when they all cross paths for the first time.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*I feel that this ad breaches section (2) of the code of ethics, part(2.1), that states that advertising shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section or the community on account of ( in this instance : gender). I feel that the advertisement breaches the code 2.1 by portraying men as mentally simple, childlike, deceptive and sly, (albeit inept) and stereotypically unreliable as a direct link to their gender to the point of communicating a depiction of inequality and inferiority in maturity and responsibility in relation to women. I also feel that it is perpetuating a popular recent trend that Australian males are unsophisticated and unintelligent. The ad implies men as being neglectful and unreliable by actively preconspiring to avoid spending quality time with their female’s partners in pursuit of lazy and selfish pastimes. It mocks men as being perceived to be henpecked and minimalized in dignity through implied yet unseen persecution*

*by their spouses to the point that they strive to avoid spending time with their spouses in pursuit of simplistic and lazy pastimes. In short and with some reiteration, I find this advertisement offensive as it depicts, perpetuates unreal stereotypes and undermines Australian men predominantly as unequal, inferior, unsophisticated, simple minded, disrespectful, childlike, lazy and unreliable. I also feel that the ad promotes undertones that suggest that Australian men, once married, become feeble, weak, controlled and coerced by their female counterparts to a point of seeking refuge amongst themselves rather than enjoying mature strong and nurturing relationships where freedom, respect and equality are practiced and enjoyed.*

## **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 complaint 0148/14. This single (1) complaint relates to a Carlton Mid 30 second TVC titled "Coincidence", which has been on air since March 2013. This execution sits as part of a campaign that includes a total of four television commercials (TVC).*

*The campaign launched in March 2013 in regional markets and has been on air continuously since then. In June 2013 the campaign went to air in selected capital cities and then more broadly from November 2013. In metropolitan markets the "Coincidence" TVC has been viewed by over 7 million adults to date.*

*"Coincidence" is another chapter in the Carlton Mid advertising series that embodies the idea of "Stay a Little Longer". This campaign depicts the ingenious lengths that blokes go to in order to get some much needed mate time. The TVC shows how four mates organize a romantic getaway with their partners on the same weekend and at the same resort and we then witness their 'surprise' when they all cross paths for the first time.*

*The complainant specifically believes that the Coincidence TVC is an example of discrimination and vilification for a number of reasons but largely due to the perceived negative depiction of the men. In the Advertising Standards Bureau's "The Discrimination and Vilification Research Report – 1 March 2009" the definition of discrimination is as follows: "Acts with inequity... less favourable treatment to one person or a group because of their race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability and/or political belief." In relation to vilification the following definition is provided: "Humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred towards, contempt for...their race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability and/or political belief." We do not believe the Carlton Mid TVC discriminates or vilifies and it's important to note that this would never be our intention. The Carlton Mid brand has in fact a long history of celebrating blokes and their ingenuity in its advertising and showing the often elaborate things they'll do in order to enjoy a quiet beer together.*

*The TVC depicts the mates hamming up their disbelief as they discover their best mates holidaying at the same resort. It's clearly part of an elaborate plan they have concocted but in a humorous way highlights the lengths that these mates have gone to so they can spend time together. The men do exaggerate/ham up their surprise when discovering each other at the resort but their 'overacting' is simply for audience laughs (and nor is it laughter at their expense). The TVC is a lighthearted depiction that doesn't show the men in a negative or disparaging way and nor does it make a broader statement along those lines about men in general. It is for these reasons that we believe that the TVC is compliant with section 2.1.*

*Furthermore, the TVC is compliant with the code in its entirety - there is nothing sexual in nature or violent, there is no inappropriate language and nor are there any health and safety issues evident.*

*In addition, whilst we respect that the complainant has a perspective of the TVC, given this is the only complaint we have received for this long running TVC (and in fact the whole campaign), it's fair to say their view does not represent the way the broader community has interpreted the TVC.*

*The Carlton and United Breweries (CUB) team take our responsible marketing commitments seriously and considered both the AANA Code of Ethics and the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) during its development. For this TVC the CAD rating is L and the CAD reference is 979036. In addition, this TVC was independently prevetted through the ABAC scheme. The AAPS number is 577/12.*

## **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 concern that the advertisement portrays men in a stereotypical manner which suggests they are unequal to women in their intellect and reliability.

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 this advertisement features four mates seemingly on a romantic getaway with their partners. It coincidentally turns out that they are away on the same weekend and at the same resort. The men pretend that they are surprised when they all cross paths for the first time.

The Board noted that the advertisement is clearly an exaggerated and humorous set up intended to appeal to the target audience of adult males who would be interested in a holiday away with their partners but also with the option of sharing a beer with their mates.

The Board noted that the advertisement is humorous, light-hearted and the men are not portrayed in a negative or disparaging way and it does not suggest that all men would behave in this manner. The Board considered that the advertisement does not depict material which discriminates or vilifies any section of the community on account of their gender and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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

