



Ad Standards Community Panel
PO Box 5110, Braddon ACT 2612
P (02) 6173 1500 | F (02) 6262 9833

AdStandards.com.au

Ad Standards Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1. Case Number :	0149-20
2. Advertiser :	Lion Dairy & Drinks
3. Product :	Food/Bev Groceries
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Outdoor
5. Date of Determination	13-May-2020
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.5 Language

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This outdoor advertisement features a bottle of 'no sugar added' Dare Iced Coffee in a pile of coffee beans and the phrase "Sweet F.A.". The text "A dare fix'll fix it." appears at the bottom of the ad.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The term 'sweet fuck all' is explicit. It will offend children, parents and the elderly.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Description of the Advertisement:

The advertisement is an outdoor advertisement featuring a bottle of Dare Iced Coffee and the phrase "Sweet F.A.".

Dare is Australia's highest selling iced coffee brand. The brand is well known for being disruptive with an energetic attitude and it has a history of running humorous and tongue-in-cheek advertising. Our entire philosophy is to wake people up out of lethargy. The phrase 'Sweet F.A.' was used as just one of the advertisements in



launching the new Dare “No Sugar Added” product. When linked with the “No Sugar Added” product message, it is intended to start conversations amongst mature consumers about Dare Iced Coffee now offering healthier alternatives. It is intended to be a tongue-in-cheek advertisement aimed at adult consumers, in the spirit of Dare’s general brand positioning.

Details of where this Advertisement appeared

The campaign consists of an outdoor media buy by the outdoor supplier JC Decaux. It was present in metropolitan areas across Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

Response to the complaint

We have carefully considered the complaint, and the concern raised by the complainant that the advertisement contains inappropriate language.

We note that the advertisement in question does not in fact include any strong or obscene language.

Dare Iced Coffee is a drink which is marketed to adult consumers. The advertisement uses the acronym ‘F.A.’. This acronym only alludes to swearing and only resonates with those who are aware of the saying – adult Australians. Acronyms form a large part of modern communication. For example, ‘WTF’ is present in the Cambridge, Mirriam Webster and Oxford dictionaries.

The phrase as interpreted by mature audiences connects ‘Sweet F.A.’ to ‘Sweet F--k All’. This is intended to convey the bold call out, that Dare is challenging the Iced Coffee status quo by providing a no sugar added option, and to encourage consumers to reappraise their beverage choice. It is intended to be a clever and sophisticated pun, which emphasises there is no sugar added in the product. Such a message would go over the heads of children and is clearly intended to be an advertisement for adults – for a product that is marketed to adults. Children are unlikely to make any correlation with the acronym “Sweet F.A.” to the actual word ‘f—k’ which is a tongue in cheek Australian slang phrase understood by adults. This is especially when seen with the bold No Sugar Added claim on the advertisement.

Moreover, the advertisement does not depict the actual word ‘f—k’, and ‘Sweet F.A.’ is not used in an aggressive manner, nor in conjunction with any offensive imagery.

In such cases this has previously been held by the Ad Standards not to amount to inappropriate use of language or language that would be considered strong or obscene (Victory Hotel - 0396/15).

In our view the advertisement therefore does not contain any strong or obscene language, or language which is inappropriate in the circumstances given the adult audience. Previously the Ad Standards held that the use of an obscured swear word like “f’ing” in a non-aggressive manner (in the case of BCF – 0434/16 and 0457/16) amounted to an overall use of language which is not strong or obscene or



inappropriate. We consider that this advertisement is similarly non-aggressive, as the acronym 'F.A.' is in reference to lack of sugar (not any person or thing), and the phrase 'Sweet F.A.' is clearly intended as a play on words to challenge adult consumers to rethink their beverage choice.

Further, our view is that "Sweet F.A" is even more obscure and removed from the swear word "F__k" compared to the advertising slogan "Be a BCFing Expert". As we have already noted, that BCF advertisement was not considered offensive by the ASB when it dismissed that complaint. Similarly, we note that the ASB dismissed a complaint against Remedy Kombucha in "its Tell Sugar To Get Fruct" campaign, 0512/18, stating that "The Panel considered that the language used in the advertisement is not inappropriate for a broad audience and did not contain strong or obscene language and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code."

*In contrast we certainly understand the ASB's decision to uphold complaints where the full swear word is used and only blocked by a single asterisk (such as the "F*ck That's Delicious" TV series or the CU in the NT campaign).*

Whether the audience is predominantly children

This advertisement is not marketing directed to children, or predominantly directed to children. Dare Iced Coffee is marketed as an adult non-alcoholic beverage.

Does the advertisement breach any other parts of Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics, namely the following:

2.1 – Discrimination or vilification

There is no discriminative language used or person/group of persons vilified.

2.2 - Exploitative and degrading

There is no exploitative or degrading language used.

2.3 – Violence

There is no violent language or actions used or depicted.

2.4 - Sex, sexuality and nudity

There is no sexual or nude content.

2.5 - Language

There was no strong or obscene language used.

2.6 - Health and Safety

The advertisement does not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety.



2.7 Distinguishable as advertising

This outdoor advertisement shows a bottle of the product and Dare Iced Coffee branding which makes it clearly distinguishable as an advertisement for the Dare Iced Coffee brand.

Lion Dairy & Drinks takes its obligations under the Code very seriously and certainly does not condone using obscene language.

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 complainant's concern that the advertisement featured an explicit term which would offend children, parents and the elderly.

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

The Panel 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 (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided".

The Panel noted that the advertisement was outdoors and the relevant audience would be broad and would include children.

The Panel noted the advertisement included the text "Sweet F.A." and this would be understood by many adults to mean "Sweet fuck all".

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the phrase is a pun emphasising that there is no sugar added in the product, and that the phrase is unlikely to be understood by children.

The Panel noted that the Practice Note for the Code provides:

""Words and acronyms that play on the 'f' word, e.g. WTF and LMFAO, but do not use the actual word are normally considered acceptable if used in a light-hearted and humorous way, are in subtitle rather than the spoken word and are appropriate to the situation."

The Panel noted that it has previously considered advertisements that used the terms 'AF' (0153-19), 'WTF' (0372-17, 0500-17) and 'BCFing' (0023-17, 0573-16) and in these cases had determined that the language was not strong or obscene and did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

Consistent with the previous determinations, the Panel considered the use of the phrase 'Sweet F.A.' was used in a light-hearted, non-aggressive way and is appropriate



to the situation. The Panel determined that the language was not strong or obscene and did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

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