



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
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Case Report

1	Case Number	0167/18
2	Advertiser	ALDI Australia
3	Product	Food and Beverages
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Print
5	Date of Determination	11/04/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Ethnicity
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This print advertisement is an ALDI Stores Weekly catalogue. It was headed "Greek feast" and featured a range of Greek-themed foods. It included the words "Celebrate Greek Easter with ALDI".

THE COMPLAINT

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

There is no such thing as Greek Easter. Easter does not belong to a nationality and Aldi should have known this!

It has been stated as "Greek Easter" but orthodox Easter is celebrated amongst many countries, not everything is about Greece. It is highly offending to classify orthodox Easter as theirs and it's racist.



Many cultures celebrate Orthodox Easter...eg Serbia, Russia, Lebanon, Egypt, Macedonia, Ukraine.

Orthodox Easter is not only for the Greeks..! If they used Orthodox Easter instead of Greek Easter it would be more inclusive of all the cultures celebrating Orthodox Easter. We just celebrated Harmony Day which promoted inclusiveness & to see this is an insult..!

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The complaints that we are responding to take objection to the use of the words "Greek Easter". They each make the point that Greeks are just one many nationalities who celebrate Orthodox Easter, and assert that the advertisement is discriminatory towards and offensive to other Orthodox Christian communities. They appear to have taken the advertisement to imply either that Greeks are the only nationality to celebrate Orthodox Easter, or that Greece has a particular status not enjoyed by the other nationalities who celebrate Orthodox Easter.

ALDI response to the complaints

While the reference to Greek Easter was intended to promote the Greek-themed Special Buys, ALDI accepts that some members of the Orthodox Christian community who are not Greek felt ignored or disrespected by the advertisement, and have taken offense on that basis. ALDI offers its genuine apology to these people. The advertisement is not continuing and we do not intend to republish it.

For the reasons set out below, the advertisement does not breach any provision of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code), including section 2.1 of the Code, which prohibits advertising that portrays people or depicts material in a way that discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on the grounds of ethnicity, nationality or religion.

No discrimination

The failure to refer to non-Greek nationalities who celebrate Orthodox Easter - in an advertisement that features Greek-themed foods - cannot reasonably be said to portray non-Greek Orthodox Christians in a way that discriminates against them; ie by treating them unfairly or less favourably. Many of the foods depicted in the advertisement are either stereotypically Greek (eg souvlaki) or labelled "Greek-style". This is not to say that some of the foods portrayed are not shared with other nations, but as a combination the advertisement draws attention to the fact that these are foods suitable for, and typical of, a "Greek feast" that may be part of an Easter



celebration. ALDI has done that without discriminating against other Orthodox nationalities which share Easter.

There is no suggestion in the advertisement that non-Greek Orthodox Christians are in any way "lesser" than Greek Orthodox Christians, nor that Greeks are the only nationality that celebrates Orthodox Easter. The fact that an event, or even a faith, is shared with other nations does not make it offensive or inaccurate to refer to one. For example, an advertisement featuring foods for an "Australian Christmas" could not reasonably be said to discriminate against non-Australians who celebrate Christmas.

No vilification

Nor is there anything in the advertisement which portrays Orthodox Christians who are not Greek in a way that vilifies them; ie which humiliates, intimidates, or incites hatred, contempt or ridicule against them. As we have already noted, ALDI accepts that some non-Greek Orthodox Christians were extremely annoyed by, and took offence at, the reference to Greek Easter, but we submit that the advertisement does not vilify members of these communities.

The term Greek Easter is a common expression that is used widely. See, for example, a recent Sydney Morning Herald Article headed "We work 48 hours straight": Greek cake shop has two bites at Easter" which includes the words

Easter comes twice a year for Athena's Cake Shop owner Effie Ahtypis with the Easter holidays this weekend followed by Greek Easter next weekend on April 8...

"We are very busy this week for the Catholic Easter and extremely busy for the Greek Easter," she says.[1]

See also a recent article on the Goodfood.com.au website headed "Greek Easter: Recipes for thiples and lemon-yoghurt cake". [2]

Compliance with the Code

For the reasons set out above, ALDI considers that applying prevailing Australian community standards, the advertisement cannot be said to be in breach of s 2.1 of the Code or of any other part of Section 2 of the Code. For the sake of completeness, we have also considered the AANA Food and Beverages: Advertising and Marketing Communications Code, and consider that the advertisement also complies fully with this code.

We request that the complaint be dismissed.

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’ concerns that the advertisement was offensive and dismissive of all other Orthodox Christian communities in Australia also celebrating Orthodox Easter.

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 of the Code which provides the following definitions:

“Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment

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

The Panel noted this print advertisement appeared in a catalogue for ALDI’s weekly specials. It was headed “Greek feast” and featured a range of Greek-themed foods. It included the words “Celebrate Greek Easter with ALDI”.

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement classifies orthodox Easter as belonging to Greece which is discriminatory to all other nations and people that celebrate Orthodox Easter.

The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that failing to refer to non-Greek nationalities that also celebrate Orthodox Easter cannot be said to portray those nationalities or religious groups of people in a discriminatory way, particularly in an advertisement that features Greek-themed foods.

The Panel noted that the advertisement is a two-page layout of Greek themed foods, and that the only reference to Greek Easter is in small text. The Panel considered that the description of the event alone did not contain any negative imagery or themes surrounding it.

The Panel considered the advertiser’s response that there is no suggestion that Greeks are the only nationality that celebrates Orthodox Easter, or than non-Greek Orthodox Christians are lesser than Greek Orthodox Christians.



The Panel considered the advertisement did not portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a section of the community on the basis of religion or ethnicity and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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