



Case Report

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Case Number | 0177/13 |
| 2 | Advertiser | Bonds Industries Ltd |
| 3 | Product | Clothing |
| 4 | Type of Advertisement / media | TV |
| 5 | Date of Determination | 12/06/2013 |
| 6 | DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - children
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - sexualisation of children

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A girl begins skipping at an easy pace, and every time the skipping rope passes in front of her, the underwear she's wearing changes.

With each jump she's sporting a new pattern, cut or colour, demonstrating the range of collectibles.

THE COMPLAINT

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

As a parent of a preteen girl and younger children I found this particular advertisement inappropriate and disturbing. There have been several attempted abductions of young girls this past month in Victoria; these types of advertisements are in my opinion validating the already disturbed mind of a sexual predator. I am trying to teach my daughter that her body is sacred and precious. Why has Bonds seen fit to display a young girl age unclear, but body clearly developed doing an innocent young child's activity of skipping rope in her underwear, then it finishes with close ups of her behind. What is this scenario even supposed to be advertising? I believe it to be inappropriate on many levels and I am really disappointed that

not only Bonds could exploit young girls in this way but that it has gotten past advertising standards and no one has put children's best interests first. Our children need to be protected not exploited. Bonds should be ashamed of themselves for potentially contributing to the ever growing violence towards children.

The ad sexualises young girls. She is doing an activity that young girls do - skip- in her underwear. She wiggles her bottom from side to side. At the end the camera shows her bottom and the underwear looks slightly see through. It is being shown at night. It is like showing off the young girl in a sexual way.

An angelic faced young woman, cutie ponytail, in her underwear, playing a childish game in an isolated area with the viewer focus entirely drawn to her bottom. And then at the end, a tantalising glimpse of just a little of that bottom below the pantyline - to my way of thinking it's a perverts delight and totally inappropriate!! Bonds really do need to get a grip!!

At first from a distance the person skipping with knickers changing colour looks like a young woman. However at the end of the ad they show a close up of the face and it is clearly a quite young girl 12 - 14 years of age. The way the advert is presented showing close up of the young girls bottom is provocative and inappropriate when you realise this is really a child. I have grandchildren this age and find it disturbing that a child this age would be "sexulised" in this way in an attempt to sell Knickers.

I don't think it's appropriate to have content on commercial TV.

When I first saw this I thought she was about twelve years old. She is wearing underpants and singlet that deliberately make her look child like. Her hair is braided like a schoolgirl.

The whole tone of the ad is suggestive of a child skipping and is not only offensive to women but in extremely poor taste considering the amount of publicity surrounding child abuse and pornography. Women are not children and we do not appreciate being portrayed as such.

This tv ad by Bonds is irresponsible and offensive because:

1. Sexualisation of young girls.

That is, encouraging males to see young girls as sexual objects.

2. The girl in the ad looks much younger than the age of consent for sexual intercourse.

Please note, just because a young girl may have the physical maturity since she is going through puberty and looks great in Bonds underwear it does not mean that she has the emotional maturity and judgement in social situations. Ads like this encourage voyeurism and could potentially lead to negative outcomes such as unwanted attention and quite possibly criminal acts like rape.

3. Promoting and perpetuating self-esteem and body image problems amongst young girls.

I would like this ad to be taken off our tv screens ASAP. I am disgusted that an Aussie iconic brand such as Bonds is reckless and irresponsible with their advertising content.

I believe your Bureau has a duty of care to set the standards so girls in this vulnerable at risk age group are PROTECTED from young boys (and men in general) who may not have much

regard for their person. I do not believe this is a healthy, safe advertisement for young girls and yes I am offended by it.

A mother of two girls, now women, I just feel the girls pictured skipping in their bonds underwear would attract men who are attracted to young girls. The girls just seem that borderline of innocent and adult - it was hard to tell how old the girls are, therefore the image to me was in bad taste and is done in a sexual way not a fun way.

The ad is making a young girl look 'sexy' and it has been played in each ad break. The program on is aimed at men and there would certainly be no young girls watching. I have a 14 yr old daughter and I'm fairly liberal, but why splash beautiful young girls onto TV's to potentially encourage the wrong people to have the wrong thoughts?

All the images presented in this advertisement encourage the sexualisation of young girls. From the moment the advertisement starts, we are presented with an image of an obviously young girl from behind skipping rope playfully on her own. The camera focuses on her bottom with the changing underwear images, while she continues innocently skipping, oblivious to the attention of the approaching "viewer" creeping up behind her.

When the camera pans around to her face towards the end of the commercial, it's quite astonishing that this young model could pass for a quite younger girl, 14 or 15 years.

My young daughter (who loves to skip rope with her little friends at school everyday) has seen these ads during prime time and asked me why is this girl jumping rope in her underwear. What do I say to her?

I'm not against advertising women's underwear, but what angers me is why is it appropriate to depict the image of a young girl partaking in a common activity played by girls as young as kindy in order to sell underwear. Who are you selling the underwear to? It's obviously not second graders!

As a mother and as a member of the community in which a predator walked into the local primary school grounds and sexually and indecently assaulted four school girls, this sort of advertising is irresponsible, backward and dangerous.

I object as it is the girl skipping and at the end is more showing her body / bottom in the underwear, but as she falters from skipping and leans down to giggle she looks like she is 15 at the most, i.e. underage.

I object as with most underwear ads it is difficult for it not to look sexual perhaps, but this girl look underage and I think might appeal to the wrong "type " of person i.e. paedophile.

It made me feel uncomfortable and my teenage boys 18 and 19 didn't disagree with me! (and not because we were watching it together).

The girl is firstly looks very young (over sexualisation of girls), she is in her underwear skipping which nobody does!! The focus of the colour changing underwear means you are looking at her bottom the whole advert... my 12 year old son actually turned away from the TV when he saw the ad and was embarrassed...at one point the sun shines between this girls

legs which is so offensive it is a disgrace that the ad was passed as acceptable. Underwear is meant to be worn in private and my daughters now have another image to live up to, fit, brown skinned, pretty, happy energetic girl with the perfect body...totally unrealistic and sexually explicit. Please remove it from the TV and Collective Shout has now been informed of this advert.

This is a young girl, clearly a teenager who is the focal point of the ad. Her bottom in particular is focused on and zoomed/ enlarged upon. The changing colour and design of the bond undies further emphasises the bottom region. She is half naked and jumping around, on a seaside cliff (for some ludicrous reason). I find this ad disturbing because of the overt sexualisation of this YOUNG girl, whose private parts are being advertised to all, and at 8.30pm during celebrity apprentice? How this ad is an appropriate way to sell undies escapes me. Underwear does not need to be sexual, especially with teenage, young girls. Skipping??!?

Close up shots of girl's bottom wearing only knickers. Girl appears to be only about 12 years old. Both my husband and I felt the advertisement was sexualising children. The nature of 'skipping rope' and the appearance of a young girl certainly did not suggest these knickers were for adults.

I think this is so inappropriate in an era when young girls are so vulnerable.

It concerns me that they are portraying a young looking girl in such a sexualised manner, with the close-ups of her bum wiggling. She is also participating in a child-like activity, i.e, skipping rope, which appears to further sexualise young girls. I am not sure if this product is aimed at teenage girls (though it was shown a bit late at night for it to be aimed at this market). The youthful tone suggests a teenage market, however, the point of it seemed only to serve as titillation for men. This ad also made me feel objectified as a woman with its intense focus on the model's body. I am of the opinion that this ad is normalising the sexualisation of children. A close up of a young girl's bum wiggling on TV does get attention for the Bonds product but at the cost of girls' and women's welfare. As parents of young children, both my husband and I found this ad disturbing. I was due to buy my children some Bonds items for winter but will now be boycotting this brand.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We write on behalf of our client, Bonds (Pacific Brands Underwear Group) in response to the complaint reference number 0177/13 specifically relating to three issues:

2.2 Objectification exploitative and degrading children

2.2 Objectification exploitative and degrading women

2.4 Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N- sexualisation of children

In the first instance and specifically relating to issues 2.2 and 2.4, the talent in this commercial is a Bonds Ambassador and well established actor by the name of Isabelle Cornish. She is 19 years of age and has been a Bonds ambassador for a period of 6 months.

The commercial is designed to showcase a range of underwear and in the case, a range of underpants teamed with a singlet top. The underwear is not sexual, the tone of the commercial is innocent, fun and playful and the leading role is played by Isabelle, aged 19 years of age who is a very confident young Australian actor, aligned with the Bonds brand and values. The underwear itself is very modest and the target audience for these is girls is that of Isabelle's age bracket so certainly the product range is not intended for younger girls. Whilst Bonds does cater for children, this is a different category.

It was never our intention to produce a commercial which was provocative and sexual in any way and we trust upon receiving the script, commercial, CAD rating and our response, you will agree.

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 depicts a young girl skipping in underwear in a manner that sexualises a child and is not appropriate.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with section 2.2 of the Code which states ‘advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.’

The Board also noted the Practice Note to the Code of Ethics which states that ‘In advertisements where images of children are used, sexual appeal is not acceptable and will always be regarded as exploitative and degrading. Advertisements must not state or imply that children are sexual beings and that ownership or enjoyment of the advertised product will enhance their sexuality. Children must not be portrayed in a manner which treats them as objects of sexual appeal.’

The Board noted the advertisement features a young looking woman skipping on a grassed area near a lighthouse. The Board noted that the young woman is dressed in underpants and a singlet top and as she skips her underwear changes in colour and design. There is music in the background with a woman's voice singing. The Board noted that there is a range of close up and long shots in the advertisement and that as the camera zooms in from time to time it does focus on the young woman's bottom.

The Board considered that it is acceptable for an advertiser of underwear to show their range of underwear in advertising.

The Board noted that the young woman in the advertisement is Bonds Ambassador, actor Isabelle Cornish and that she is 19 years old. The Board considered that the age of the person appearing in an advertisement is not key to determining whether or not the person is represented in a child like manner or to appear as a younger teenager.

The Board noted that in addition to undertaking a childlike activity (skipping) the young woman's hair is in plaits.

A minority of the Board expressed concern over the content of the advertisement, in particular the manner in which the scenes are filmed giving a perception of 'voyeurism'. The minority of the Board also considered that the position of the young woman alone in an open space wearing only underwear made her appear vulnerable.

Overall however the majority of the Board considered that the young woman looks like a young woman and not like a child. The Board also considered that the image is not sexualised or sexually suggestive – rather, the majority of the Board considered that the advertisement is a youthful, fun and energetic depiction of a young woman and that the emphasis is on the range of underwear available to women of her age. The majority of the Board considered that there was no use of sexual appeal in the advertisement and that the advertisement was not exploitative or degrading of any people.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience".

The Board noted the Practice note to the Code of Ethics which states that 'Models which appear to be young should not be used in sexualised poses.'

The Board noted that although depicted as a young woman, the advertisement does not depict the actor in a sexualised pose – rather the focus is on demonstrating the range of underwear now available. In the Board’s view the images of the woman, including those images which focused on her bottom, were images that were not gratuitous or sexualised.

The Board considered that the woman is dressed only in underwear and a singlet top. The Board considered that it is reasonable to depict people wearing underwear in an advertisement for underwear. In the Board’s view this depiction of the young woman wearing only underwear was not inappropriate and did not amount to nudity.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not depict sex or sexuality and did not depict nudity and that the advertisement did not breach section 2.4 of the Code.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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