



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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**AdStandards.com.au**

Ad Standards Limited  
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## Case Report

<b>1. Case Number :</b>	<b>0192-20</b>
<b>2. Advertiser :</b>	<b>Destination Brisbane</b>
<b>3. Product :</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>4. Type of Advertisement/Media :</b>	<b>Outdoor</b>
<b>5. Date of Determination</b>	<b>24-Jun-2020</b>
<b>6. DETERMINATION :</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification

### DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This advertisement is on safety hoarding around Queen's Wharf Brisbane construction site and promotes the Queens Wharf development and Brisbane. Different Panels include:

- An image of a cyclist with the words "CHANGING ... slow down Speedy, there might be changes to the path conditions over the coming months."
- An image of two construction workers and the word "GROWING"
- An image of an adult and two teenage children with the word "RESTORING"
- An image of two men in construction hats and the word "DEVELOPING"
- An image of a man and woman and the word "WELCOMING"
- An image of a man with two children and the words "FOR EVERYONE"
- An image of two chefs and the word "TEMPTING"
- An image of a woman and two teenage children and the words "BRISBANE PROTECTING...we're not removing our heritage, we're embracing it."
- An image of a man with two children and the words "BRISBANE FOR EVERYONE...our new green spaces will provide more picnic spots for your friends and family."
- An image of a man with a backpack and the words, "BRISBANE RESTORING...nine heritage buildings will be revitalised to provide memorable experiences for you."
- An image of a woman and child and the words "BRISBANE THE DESTINATION"
- An image of a woman and the words "BRISBANE EMPLOYING...We'll have 8,000 operational roles when we open."



- An image of a woman and child and the words, "Public access Skydeck for unrivalled views of the city."
- An image of a woman dancing and the words, "BRISBANE ENTICING...exciting new and diverse places to shop and dine are on the way."

### **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*It turns my stomach to see this billboard. There are 8 or so people pictured, 7 of them are Caucasian, white skinned people, all pictured enjoying the exciting new development, cuddling together, pointing at the view, the slogans next to these people say, Brisbane, enticing!' and, 'skydeck of the city'. Then there's the 1 person of colour on the billboard, who is attached to the wording, Brisbane employing, we'll have 8000 operational roles when we open'. This lady is smiling like she's happy to have the chance to work as a cleaner in the hotels, or serving drinks, to the smiling white people on the sign.*

*The contrast is obvious, tone deaf & blatant enough to be sickening. My local council member agrees with me that it is gross 'and has advised me to lodge this complaint, in the hope that it can please! Be taken down!*

*The advertising employs racial stereotyping, showing only white people enjoying the development, while a woman of colour is used to promote the developments creation of service jobs.*

*There are around a dozen excited white people pictured with quips about recreation etc, and then just one person of colour who is excited about the service jobs this developed will create. It's in poor taste.*

*The 12 or so white people are pictured enjoying themselves at the new development, they have slogans attached to them like, 'Brisbane Enticing!' -on the pretty young lady (??), or the white couple pointing at the view, advertising the skydeck. Then there's the person they've chosen to be smiling about all the service jobs the new casino, bars & hotel will bring. The 1 brown woman. She's the one happy that there will be 8000 jobs cleaning hotel rooms, serving drinks, working a casino table, making sure all those other white people on the sign have a great time.*

### **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*We understand that complaints have been raised about DBC's safety hoarding design around the Queen's Wharf Brisbane construction site. We have attached copies of the*



*safety hoarding design to assist Ad Standards in its review of the safety hoarding design and issues raised by the public in respect of 'AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification\Race' (and any other relevant sections of the Code of Ethics).*

*We are incredibly mindful of community sensitivities and take complaints of this nature extremely seriously. We are horrified that anyone would consider this hoarding in the context of racial stereotyping. The Star – a lead partner in DBC – has been acknowledged, and is extremely proud of, its status as one of the world's leading diversity and inclusion employers. The Star placed second in Australia and 25th worldwide when Refinitiv released its 2019 Diversity & Inclusion Index after analysing more than 7000 listed companies around the globe. To create a welcoming environment for team members and guests alike, The Star launched its Diversity and Inclusion program in 2014 focusing on four key areas of Gender, Multicultural, LGBTQI and Age.*

*At a multi-cultural level, The Star team members are fluent in over 70 languages and more than two-thirds identify with ethnic and cultural groups other than Anglo-Celtic. Furthermore, The Star's teams reflect not only the local communities and cities in which they operate but also the 21 million visitors the Group welcomes every year to its properties in Queensland and Sydney. The safety hoardings reflect The Star's commitment to promoting and supporting employment opportunities as well as visitation from people of all races, all cultures.*

*The safety hoarding design that has been referenced makes up more than 500 metres of safety hoarding that surrounds the Queen's Wharf Brisbane construction site. It is featured along Margaret St, George St, William St, Alice St, Queens Wharf Rd, and at South Bank (i.e. the boundaries of the development).*

*The design of the safety hoarding provides continuous information about the development and should be considered by Ad Standards as a whole (as per the attached). The safety hoarding design seeks to educate the community on the benefits of the development including operational jobs, new public space, upgraded cycleways, construction jobs, repurposing of heritage buildings and features that will draw visitors to Brisbane.*

*The individuals featured in the designs are individuals who volunteered their time and image to be included in the design (including staff, local business representatives and industry body representatives).*

*The image of the person who has been identified in the complaint came to us from a Queensland tourism industry body wanting to represent her community. The design also includes a number of chefs, concierges, wait staff, engineers, designers, and family members featured across the design, all of whom represent many cultures and nationalities. The particular section of the hoarding design which is the focus of the complaints should not be considered in isolation. We have represented many communities and nationalities across our design. Accordingly, we submit that the*



*hoarding does not breach Section 2.1 of the Code nor do they breach any other provisions of the Code.*

*We further note that the design has been in place for more than three years since construction started in 2017, has not received any previous complaint of this type, and does not form part of paid advertising.*

*We wish to allay the concerns of the respective individuals by confirming that DBC and its partner, The Star, stands proudly committed to diversity and inclusion across every aspect of society. Notwithstanding the unfortunate and mistaken perceptions of the complainants in regards to the positive intent of the hoarding, DBC will replace it as a gesture of goodwill.*

## **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 is racist in its depiction of a woman of colour in a service role.

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 provides the following definitions:

*"Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment.*

*Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule."*

The Panel considered that the advertisement does feature other minorities across the entirety of the hoarding, however noted that viewers are unlikely to see the advertisement in its entirety given its 500 metre length.

The minority of the Panel considered that the advertisement features mostly Caucasian people with few other racial minorities. The minority of the Panel noted that other racial minorities include an Asian woman who appears with the text "welcoming" and appears to be a concierge, an Asian woman who appears with the text "tempting" and appears to be a waitress, and a dark skinned man who appears with the text "developing" who appears to be in a managerial role based on his shirt, tie and high-vis vest and hardhat.



The minority of the Panel considered that with the exception of the dark skinned man, all the other racial minorities in the advertisement were depicted in service roles and were women.

The minority of the Panel considered that the depiction of the woman of colour in a service role who is smiling gave the impression that all people of colour should be grateful to have jobs and that a service role is all they will ever achieve in this advertised development, as enjoying the facilities is only feasible for Caucasians.

The minority of the Panel considered that while some members of the community may consider that the depiction of the woman of colour in a service role may not necessarily fit the definition of racism due to the lack of specific reference to her race, it demonstrates a level of obliviousness to the ongoing effort of people of colour and contributes to systemic racism in the community.

The majority of the Panel noted the interpretation of the advertisement by the minority of the Panel, however the majority considered that the advertisement makes no reference to people of colour and the only text accompanying the woman depicted is “Brisbane employing...we’ll have 8000 operational roles when we open”.

The majority of the Panel noted that it is only able to make determinations within the provision of the Code, and noted that Section 2.1 specifically states “advertisements must not *portray or depict* material...”[emphasis added]. The majority of the Panel considered that while aligning the various roles with the images of the people featured in the advertisement may depict a level of insensitivity or lack of awareness on the part of the advertiser, there is no reference to the woman’s race and she is not depicted in a derogatory manner.

The majority of the Panel considered that while some members of the community may consider it in bad taste to depict a person of colour in a service role, it did not depict material which humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule of people of colour or depicts them receiving unfair or less favourable treatment.

The majority of the Panel considered that the Code provides that an advertisement be discriminatory or vilifying in order to breach the Code, and the Panel considered that the advertisement did not reach that threshold.

The Panel considered that casual racism was a significant issue in the community and noted that sensitivity to this issue was predominant at the moment due to the Black Lives Matter movement. The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that the advertisement had been displayed for the past three years.

The majority of the Panel considered that the decision of the advertiser to put a woman of colour in a service role was an unfortunate connection, however acknowledged that this does not appear to have been intentional on behalf of the advertiser. The Panel considered that advertisers should take care to consider how



their advertisement is presented and to ensure that any efforts to represent diversity in an advertisement is not presented in a discriminatory manner.

Overall the Panel considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code, the Panel dismissed the complaints.