



Case Report

1	Case Number	0193/12
2	Advertiser	Strike Bowling Bar
3	Product	Leisure & Sport
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Outdoor
5	Date of Determination	23/05/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.6 - Health and Safety within prevailing Community Standards
- 2.3 - Violence Domestic violence

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Poster which reads, "It's all fun and games until you shoot your girlfriend" - Laser Skirmish coming soon to level 3 at Strike Melbourne Central.

THE COMPLAINT

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

*I object to and am offended by the advertisement for the following reasons
It is recognised by Australian State and Federal governments as well as international institutions such as the United Nations that violence against women is a growing and concerning epidemic in our society. Violence against women takes its toll on the wider community in several ways; it erodes and destroys the family unit causing family breakdown it takes its toll on women and children both emotionally, physically and financially. It also causes a strain on policing and court services when assaults and violence against women are dealt with in our judicial system. For these reasons I find this advertisement to be objectifying towards women suggesting that women are objects. I also find the advertisement to be glorifying violence against women suggesting in its 'pun' that shooting one's girlfriend is something that is within the realm of possibility for attendees of the Strike Bowling club. I also believe this advertisement raises issues around health and safety for the above reasons but also Strike bowling alleys are all liquor licensed venues. They are licensed Australia wide until 3am in the morning. Again it is widely acknowledged by governments, public policy*

bodies and the media that there is a connection between the consumption of alcohol and domestic violence - not to mention simple law and order issues regarding general assaults and violence on the streets at night.

This advertisement is ill-thought out, inappropriate and offensive to women and the general community in relation to the way in which it makes light of the very serious problem of domestic violence against women.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Strike is a fun and competitive place, promoting child-like entertainment to adults (bowling, laser skirmish etc) The poster in question is like many of other campaign lines promoting friendly competition, whether a large group or going out as a couple. Some examples of other lines stating competition are: (Bowling References) "Everybody Scores Eventually", "Scoring is all about the approach" and (Laser Reference) - "Friendly Fire Mandatory".

The advertisement is intended to amuse, not offend. Laser skirmish is a popular past time because it's highly immersive and in a very small way, allows the player to experience some of the intensity of going "into battle". "Shooting" and "dying" are the core actions within Laser Skirmish, and the past-time is fun because within the game, these actions have no consequences.

The line in question is a reference to the fact that while it's highly immersive, all the intensity and theatre of laser skirmish doesn't have any bearing on the "real world" unless you "shoot" your partner in the game, at which point she may become angry at you in real life. The intention of the ad was to show that this is a fun, competitive past time that can be played by both men and women. The reference to "shooting" clearly describes an activity within the game. The ad in no way encourages, endorses or suggests that people engage in criminal or domestic violence, and it is disingenuous to suggest otherwise."

We are clearly not advocating "violence against women" and in now way intended to offend. If the line was replaced to say 'boyfriend' would it make a difference? Strike is an equal opportunity workplace and have a strong female presence within our venues and management teams (where 70% of staff are female). The campaign is over now and all posters should be removed, however there could be the odd one or two around for the next week. I'm happy to take steps to remove these.

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 glorifies violence against women and is offensive and inappropriate.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised”.

The Board noted that the advertisement contains the text, “It’s all fun and games until you shoot your girlfriend”.

The Board noted that the advertisement is for Laser Skirmish which is a game where players attempt to score points by tagging each other, or targets, with a hand-held infrared-emitting targeting device.

The Board considered that in the context of the advertised game, the statement regarding shooting your girlfriend does not depict violence in a manner which would breach the provisions of the Code.

The Board considered that the advertisement does not present or portray violence and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety”.

The Board considered that the poster’s statement “It’s all fun and games until you shoot your girlfriend” is very prominent and that the overall impact of the statement is one which is suggestive of violence against a woman.

The Board accepted that the intent of the advertisement was to present a humorous way of promoting a laser game however in the Board’s view the overall message taken from the advertisement is one which is contrary to community standards on behaviour within relationships. The Board considered that it is not appropriate to suggest that you will shoot your girlfriend and that once you do, the fun and games will stop.

The Board considered that the advertisement is promoting behaviour which is contrary to community standards on safety to women and determined that the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement breached Section 2.6 of the Code the Board upheld the complaint.

ADVERTISER RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

The particular poster campaign in question has been removed from all sites and will not be used in any further campaigns.

