



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0196/19
2	Advertiser	Roadshow Films
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Billboard
5	Date of Determination	10/07/2019
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This billboard advertisement is promoting the movie 'Annabelle Comes Home'. It features a doll in a blue dress sitting in front of a red background, with various images including people, a monkey toy, a horned helmet and a skull-like figure wearing a hood.

THE COMPLAINT

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

It has petrified my children, aged 11 and 8

The image is highly frightening to small children. To have such a scary evil image visible in an openly public space is inappropriate.

This is a particularly scary image. The billboard has been erected in a residential street which contains families with primary school aged children (under 10). This is an inappropriate image and frightening image for the children to have to see in their street/in close proximity to their homes



THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The outdoor creative contains no discriminatory material, strong or obscene language, nudity, no material contrary to health and safety standards and does not depict violence - the doll in the creative could potentially be seen to contain scary/supernatural themes however the main image is of ANNABELLE herself which is relevant to the film being advertised and accordingly unavoidable.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (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 too scary for display in areas where children are likely to view it.

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

The Panel noted that this billboard advertisement was promoting the movie 'Annabelle Comes Home'. The Panel noted that the advertisement features an image of a doll in a blue dress against a red background which contains various images, including people, a monkey toy, a horned helmet and a skull-like figure wearing a hood.

The Panel considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 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 Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement features a threatening and scary image which would be particularly frightening to a young audience.

The Panel considered that the doll in the advertisement was posed in an inanimate way and not in a threatening manner, and was not interacting with anything. The Panel considered that there was no blood or gore in the advertisement and no actual violence depicted. The Panel considered that the dishevelled appearance of the doll gave an impression of neglect rather than violence. The Panel considered that the large size of the billboard advertisement did add to the impact of the images. The Panel considered that the dark colours of the advertisement, the horror-style images



in the background, and the doll combined to give the advertisement a menacing tone. The Panel considered that the low level of menace was justifiable in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie.

The Panel acknowledged that some children and others viewing the advertisement on a billboard format may be frightened by the menacing images but considered that these images did not constitute a portrayal of violence that would breach community standards and in the Panel's view the menacing tone was justifiable in the context of the product advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

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

