



Case Report

1	Case Number	0199/11
2	Advertiser	Steer Bar & Grill
3	Product	Restaurants
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Mail
5	Date of Determination	22/06/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Sex

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Postcard ad. Double sided. One side features female legs with short skirt and high heels with the text: 'Find a great bit of skirt at Steer.'

Reverse side features a meat tray and a cooked steak with text detailing steak varieties etc available at Steer.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad is demeaning to women, sexist and offensive. The front of the postcard was the lower half of a woman's body clad in a very short denim skirt and high heels. The slogan is 'Find a great bit of skirt at STEER'.

Turn the card over and there is a photo of cuts of raw meat a photo of a grilled steak and the words 'you'll also find a lovely ribeye scotch fillet sirloin rump . . .'

What is offensive is the woman on the front (who is only legs not a whole person) is being equated with raw meat that you can 'get' at Steer.

The message is indicating that a woman is a collection of body parts to be appraised or 'gotten' in order to satisfy a man's appetite. I have never placed a complaint about an ad before but this just sickened me.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In response to the complaint of the postcard advertisement for Steer Bar & Grill (reference 0199/11), we in no way constructed it to be disrespectful or offensive to women. On the contrary, we have the utmost respect for women, having daughters, female partners and female employees.

The ad in question was intended to be a humorous play on words and was used in an entirely innocent manner. The management of Steer in no way considers women to resemble meat nor believe they should be seen or treated that way. Whilst the ad was intended to be cheeky and humorous, to draw a conclusion that women = meat just because there is meat on the postcard we believe is looking far too deeply for ill intention which was never designed into the ad.

The meat tray that appears on the back of the postcard is not a reference to women but rather shows the various cuts of meat available at Steer (including skirt steak). This display of meat is used within the actual restaurant and is also used in all of our marketing campaigns. It is not unique to this particular advertisement.

We always circulate a proposed advertisement amongst friends and staff prior to printing or publishing to gauge potential response (good, bad or otherwise). This particular ad did not elicit a negative response from anyone that previewed it, many women included. Everyone saw the humour in it. We therefore went ahead with the ad with confidence it would be received well. There was no indication from anyone that this was potentially offensive.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code") and the AANA Food and Beverages Advertising and Marketing Communication Code (the "F&B" Code).

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement was comparing a woman's body to a piece of meat and is overtly sexual.

The Board considered the application of Section 2.1 of the Code, relating to discrimination and vilification on the basis of sex and Section 2.3, relating to sex, sexuality and nudity.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.1 of the Code. Section 2.1 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or Section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief."

The Board noted the advertiser's response that "the advertisement is intended to be a humorous play on words.'

The Board noted that the advertisement includes the headline: "Fancy a tasty bit of skirt' and noted that it had considered a similar advertisement 59/09 Australian Gourmet Meat in which it had upheld complaints on the basis that the advertisement:

"...did imply a comparison between the women's bottoms and the different grades of meat. The Board considered that such a comparison was offensive and demeaning to larger women. The Board also considered that any comparison of women to meat was vilifying and discriminatory. The Board considered this comparison was vilifying of women generally and that the advertisement was in contravention of Section 2.1 of the Code."

The Board considered the present advertisement, which depicted the lower half of a woman wearing a short skirt, with the text 'fancy a tasty bit of skirt' and then, on the following page, images of various cuts of meat. The Board considered that, although the image of the woman is separated from the image of the meat, the logical connection from the entire advertisement is that the advertisement is comparing a woman to a cut of meat.

The Board considered that this advertisement does objectify women and that it would be likely that people would make a comparison between a woman and pieces of meat. In the Board's view this image amounts to discrimination or vilification of women. The Board noted the advertiser's intention for the advertisement to be a humorous play on words but in the Board's view reasonable people viewing the advertisement would readily infer a comparison between the woman and cuts of meat.

The Board determined that the advertisement breached Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board then 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 treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant programme time zone".

The Board considered that the image of the woman was very mildly sexually suggestive as a result of the wording 'fancy a tasty bit of skirt'. The Board considered that the mild sexual suggestion was not inappropriate to the relevant audience which is primarily adults. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Determining that the advertisement breached Section 2.1 of the Code the Board upheld the complaints.

ADVERTISER RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

I wish to confirm that as a result of the findings of the Advertising Standards Bureau regarding the above matter, Steer Bar and Grill has now discontinued its use of the offending advertisement.