



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
ACN 084 452 666

# Case Report

1	Case Number	0211/19
2	Advertiser	Roadshow Films
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Transport
5	Date of Determination	10/07/2019
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This transport 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:

*The image of the possessed doll on this poster is confronting and terrifying to me as an adult. I have serious concerns about the reactions my small children would have to seeing this image. It is wholly irresponsible to display an image such as this on public transport where it is impossible to ensure it will be kept away from areas frequented by small children. This horror film is rated M and as such I would expect that its advertising material should be restricted or at least limited in the public space from viewing by those under 15.*

*The horror themes of this movie are clearly intended for adults, and shouldn't be in*



*public domain visible to children. It's a recipe for nightmares, even go adults.*

### **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:

- features an image of a possessed doll which is confronting and terrifying to both adults and children;
- is for a horror movie rated M and should not be advertised in an area where children can view it.

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

The Panel noted that this transport 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 noted the complainants' concerns that it is inappropriate to advertise a movie rated for adults to a child audience.

The Panel acknowledged that some members of the community would prefer for this type of product not to be advertised where children are likely to see it, however considered that this product is legally able to be advertised in a public space. The Panel considered that the provisions of the Code do not cover the placement of advertisements and that it was only able to consider the content of the advertisement itself.



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 disheveled appearance of the doll gave an impression of neglect rather than violence. 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 that horror movie.

The Panel acknowledged that some children and others viewing the advertisement on a bus 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.

