



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

# Case Report

1	Case Number	0212/19
2	Advertiser	Roadshow Films
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Outdoor
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 outdoor 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 advert contains images not suitable for younger audiences and yes it on disposal in an outdoor setting where younger members of the public (including. My daughter aged 10) are exposed to disturbing images of ghouls, blood stained people*

*It is unfair to expose children to this poster, given the subject matter of the film and what the main character represents. My 7 and 9-year-old children are currently terrified of encountering bus stops and are having nightmares.*



*I find the image used to advertise this movie disturbing and scary especially for young children who do not understand "horror" movie themes. I later found out it is a R rated movie so am very surprised that it can be advertised in such a public place. The bus stop is along a main rd, so I cannot avoid driving past.*

#### **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 images not suitable for younger audience including ghouls, blood stained people and a murderous doll
- 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 outdoor 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 threatening and scary images 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 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 bus shelters 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.

