



**ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BOARD**

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Case Report

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| 1 | Case Number | 0213/17 |
| 2 | Advertiser | Mazda Australia Pty Limited |
| 3 | Product | Vehicle |
| 4 | Type of Advertisement / media | TV - Free to air |
| 5 | Date of Determination | 24/05/2017 |
| 6 | DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The Mazda2 Television commercial showcases the new Mazda2 driven around the city, with a group of young people. The talent are dressed in modern clothes and jewellery with costume makeup that identifies them as stylish group of friends.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Cultural appropriation of Native American culture-jewellery and makeup. Also the use of the slogan "join the mazda tribe." Totally inappropriate. Using the cultural identity of an oppressed group is not an ok way to advertise. Especially when worn by people not of that background.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Mazda Australia does not condone cultural appropriation and would never intentionally exploit any cultures or symbols for commercial gains. Mazda Australia fully understands the AANA Advertising Code of Ethics, as such Mazda Australia wishes to emphasise the core focus of the advertising communications in response to the complaint.

The commercial is based around the insight that young women rarely do anything without their close group of friends, and that that group often has a unique style, rituals and territory that bands them together.

The commercial aims to portray the power of independent young women and their all-important friendship circle, and of course how Mazda2 becomes part of the journey by facilitating their needs and bringing them together.

Direct response to section 2 of the AANA code of advertising ethics:

2.1 - Discrimination or vilification

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, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

Mazda Australia does not believe the commercial discriminates against or vilifies anyone or any section of the community.

2.2 – Exploitative and degrading

Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.

As mentioned above, the intention with this ad was to portray the group of friends as strong, powerful, unique, stylish, with a sense of community and belonging. Mazda Australia does not believe the commercial employs sexual appeal which is in any way exploitative or degrading.

Specifically, in response to the comment ‘...the ad culturally appropriates Native American culture-jewellery and makeup’, the style of make-up employed was designed by a make-up artist that gives each talent in the group a modern individual look, while also unifying them as a group. The makeup does not directly replicate a traditional style of any ethnic group or race.

The wardrobe and jewellery worn were all purchased from popular, mainstream stores this season, again with the intention of style and fashion only. Our target audience is predominantly women 18 – 29, so the selects were made foremost to appeal to them. Mazda Australia believes none of the jewellery worn resembles any traditional or ethnic head wear.

There was no intention to exploit or degrade any individual or group of people. While Mazda Australia understands the plaintiff feels the commercial culturally appropriates Native Americans, and therefore exploits a group of people, the code specifies advertising communications should not use sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative, and the complaint does not refer to any representation of sexual appeal.

Mazda Australia respects all cultures, and would never intentionally disrespect any individual or group.

2.3 – Violence

Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

Mazda Australia does not believe the ad presents or portrays any violence what so ever. The tone of the commercial is one of community, joy and fun.

2.4 – Sex, sexuality and nudity

Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The Mazda2 commercial does not address sex or include any nudity, and Mazda Australia treats any perceived sexuality with sensitivity.

2.5 – Language

Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided

The word tribe is defined as ‘a class or set of persons, especially one with strong common traits or interests’ (Source: dictionary.com). The tagline voiced in the commercial, ‘Join the 2Tribe, is intended to refer in the first instance to the group of friends in the commercial with their Mazda2, and then generally as a call to action directed at people who are interested in purchasing a Mazda2 with the aim of creating a sense of community and belonging.

‘Tribe’ has recently become a popular term, specifically with our intended target audience (women aged 18 - 29 as outlined earlier), and is used across many advertisements, slogans, signs, headlines etc., including other automotive advertising (e.g. Holden’s ‘Spark Tribe’).

To address specifically the complaint ‘use of the slogan “join the mazda tribe.” Totally inappropriate’; to begin with, that is not the accurate voice over within the commercial. Mazda Australia believes the use of actual tagline ‘join the 2 tribe’ is appropriate based on the definition of the word, the objective of the communications, and the intended audience as outline above.

2.6 – Health and Safety

Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

Mazda Australia can confirm that the filming of the commercial occurred under controlled conditions at all times with relevant OH&S compliance adhered to in the filming of the commercial. All driving footage complies with VicRoads Road Rules, and employed a professional driver.

Mazda Australia is open to discussing the above response if there are any additional queries or if additional information and reference material is required to assist in the review process.

3.2 – FCAI Code for Advertising of Motor Vehicles

Advertising or Marketing Communications for motor vehicles shall comply with the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries Code of Practice relating to Advertising for Motor Vehicles

The commercial is for a motor vehicle and the FCAI Code applies. The commercial complies with all aspects of the FCAI Code.

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 concerns that the advertisement portrays a group using identifying features of an oppressed group that is inappropriate.

The Board reviewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that 'advertisements shall not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted that this television advertisement the advertised vehicle – the Mazda 2 being driven around the city with a group of young people watching the car, moving around and getting out of the car. The models are wearing brightly coloured jewellery, clothing and have face paint across their cheeks and noses.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement is cultural appropriation of Native American culture-jewellery and makeup and that the use of the text “join the Mazda tribe” exaggerates this.

The Board noted the historical use of the term ‘tribe’ is one that is understood by members of the community to mean a group of people specifically from a cultural group or descendants from a particular group. The Board noted the Macquarie dictionary definition of the colloquial use of the term tribe meaning

4. a family or class of people. The Board noted that the term ‘tribe’ is commonly used by young people in Australian to mean their group of like minded people they associate with.

A minority of the Board considered that there were elements of the advertisement that could be considered offensive to some people because of the links to tribes and the association with ethnic groups or tribes of ethnic heritage.

The majority of the Board however, considered that the advertisement was in line with a modern, stylised promotion including the upbeat music and brightly coloured outfits.

The Board noted that there was not a clear relationship to a cultural tribe and that in the context of a modern advertisement of this nature, the group of young people were portrayed

as friends and not a tribe per se.

Overall the Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of nationality or race and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.