



Case Report

1	Case Number	0245/12
2	Advertiser	Fosters Australia, Asia & Pacific
3	Product	Alcohol
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Print
5	Date of Determination	27/06/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- Other Social values

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Depictions of a husband and wife with similar appearance and styling and the question "Spending too much time with the wife?" There is a picture of a bottle of Carlton Mid beer next to the image of the couple, and the text, "Stay a little longer".

THE COMPLAINT

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

This advertisement implies that men should choose sharing a drink with a mate ahead of spending time with his spouse. It attacks the fabric of our society suggesting (humorously) that time shared with family will cause the husband to appear effeminate. Many Australian families are already time poor and it is the influence of alcohol consumption and lack of time together which is contributing to the breakdown of family life.

This advertisement is destructive to family life and denigrates the institution of marriage. The ad defames family values by suggesting you should drink more beer than spend time with your family (wife).

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thank you for your correspondence in relation to complaint 245/12. The five complaints we have received are for the Carlton Mid print campaign, which included three individual print executions. Of the five complaints, we note that four of the complaints are almost identical in their "reason for concern" and all complaints are dated long after the advertisements ceased to appear in market.

In each print advertisement a man and woman have become 'one' in terms of their appearance – same hair do, same clothes and same expression and in one case, same fake tan. The man looks like the woman. The woman looks like the man. The couple has become one – there is no sense of individuality. The tagline "Spending too much time with the wife?" is accompanied by an image of a stubby of Carlton Mid and the brand's tagline "Stay a little longer". For your information, these print advertisements (with a 1.1 million readership in Western Australia) ran between November 2011 and February 2012 in WA, NSW and Queensland.

Each print advertisement shows such a completely exaggerated image that it is difficult to take them seriously – it is very clearly a tongue in cheek advertisement. The advertisements suggest to blokes, in a fun way, that they enjoy some time with their mates over a Carlton Mid beer. It does this in a humorous way that grabs your attention and the exaggerated images play an important role in achieving this. The concept of occasional time away from your partner/spouse is commonly brought to life in popular culture and so too in the real world for both sexes (both men and women have nights out/weekends away with friends). You could in fact argue that some time spent outside of a relationship can strengthen it. It's important to remember that the advertisements are making a cheeky comment that relates specifically to the exaggerated situation/imagery it presents (couples who have literally become one) – it's not making a general statement or recommendation about how couples should manage their relationships and we don't believe the 'average' viewer would interpret it as such.

In relation to the AANA Code of Ethics we believe the humorous tone and the subject matter ensures the advertisements do not discriminate or vilify as per the definitions that are outlined in the ASB Determination Summary - Discrimination and Vilification in advertising. Furthermore we believe the advertisements comply with the AANA Code of Ethics in its entirety.

In relation to the complainants' concern about alcohol consumption, alcohol abuse can negatively impact families however we don't believe that this advertisement, as suggested, "...attacks the fabric of our society... many Australian families are already time poor and it is the influence of alcohol consumption... which is contributing to the breakdown of family life. This advertisement is destructive to family life and denigrates the institution of marriage". The latter view is a long bow to draw given the tone/material presented and we don't believe it would be the view taken by an 'average' person.

Importantly, the representation of the alcohol is a stubby image and brand slogan and there is no imagery or wording that implies or encourages excessive consumption. During their development the advertisements were carefully considered against the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code and were also prevetted by the Code's independent pre-vetters. Carlton Mid traditionally promotes blokes enjoying a beer at the footy or a quiet beer at the pub and as a reduced alcohol beverage it offers one standard drink per stubby.

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 is contributing to the breakdown of families and implies that men should choose to drink with friends rather than their wives.

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

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 that the advertisement depicts various images of husband and wives together with similar appearance and styling and the question "Spending too much time with the wife?" There is a picture of a bottle of Carlton Mid beer next to the image of the couple, and the text, "Stay a little longer".

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement is destructive to family life and denigrates the institution of marriage in its suggestion that a husband would be better off spending time with others rather than his wife.

The Board noted that the images of the couples are deliberately designed to make the couples look as similar as possible and is intended to be humorous. The Board considered that the images used are almost ‘unfashionable’ and exaggerated in their attempt at making a male and female look identical. The Board considered that the similarity between the couples and the link to ‘spending too much time together’ is a humorous approach which would be recognizable to many married couples.

The Board noted that the tagline stating “Spending too much time with the wife?” is targeted to the husband and suggesting that a man should spend time with mates and others so as to avoid ending up looking like his wife. The Board considered that this suggestion of spending time with people other than the wife is not discriminatory to the point of vilification.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not discriminate against or vilify any person or section of the community on account of sex and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.

