



Case Report

1	Case Number	0249/11
2	Advertiser	Aussie Christians
3	Product	Other
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Billboard
5	Date of Determination	13/07/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Billboard with the text 'Dear Aussie Muslims, Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am". Maybe he's more than a prophet.

THE COMPLAINT

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

*Whilst I support the current billboards that are there to promote dialogue between Christians and Muslims I see this ad as rather than suggesting the two religions both see him as a religious figure are specifically addressing Muslims to let them know they "got it wrong" that their belief of their prophet of Jesus is mistaken.
As such I see it as religious vilification rather than opening the lines of dialogue.*

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

No response from Advertiser.

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 complainant’s concerns that the advertisement vilifies Muslims because it is suggesting their beliefs on Jesus are wrong.

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 is addressed to “Aussie Muslims” and contains a statement reading, “Before Abraham was, I am. Maybe he’s more than a prophet.”

The Board agreed that some members of the community would be offended or upset by the statement as it is a statement that raises debate about the role of Jesus in different religions.

The Board noted that any religion has the right to advertise its beliefs provided that such advertisements do not discriminate against or vilify people in the community on account of their religion.

The Board considered that a statement about the beliefs of a faith or religion may be offensive to people who do not hold those beliefs but that such a statement does not, of itself, discriminate against or vilify people who hold different beliefs.

Considering the particular wording of this advertisement, the Board considered that although the advertisement is addressed to Muslims, the statement is presented in a manner that does not discriminate against or vilify Muslims.

The Board determined that the material depicted did not discriminate against or vilify any person or section of the community on account of religion 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.

