



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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**AdStandards.com.au**

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
ACN 084 452 666

# Case Report

1	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0253/18</b>
2	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>The West Australian</b>
3	<b>Product</b>	<b>Media</b>
4	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>Internet-Social-FB</b>
5	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>23/05/2018</b>
6	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress
- 2.3 - Violence Graphic Depictions

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The Facebook advertisement features the text 'A British safari park owner has been savaged by a lion after entering its enclosure in front of horrified onlookers. There is a still shot of a lion dragging a man's body and the caption: Video shows man dragged away by lion. WARNING: Disturbing footage.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*It portrays violence which is not justifiable in the context of a west Australian newspaper.*

*It does not respect the dignity of the victim.*

*Community members would not expect to be confronted with such graphic and disturbing violence when checking their friends' status updates; many people have suffered violent trauma. When such imagery is broadcast on tv (or sound via radio) it is accompanied by a warning. It*

*depicts material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.*





## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*The article referred to was not an advertisement but a news story with video on the mauling of a man by a lion in South Africa.*

*The video and news report could be seen by anyone who follows The West Australian's Facebook page.*

*It is common industry practice to pay Facebook to target certain news report at a wider audience, particularly if the story is performing well with our existing Facebook audience.*

*The desired outcome is that they will become followers of our Facebook site.*

*So, in a nutshell, Facebook is promoting our news content to a bigger audience.*

*The advertiser provided a second response stating:*

*I do not believe the Facebook post contravenes the Code of Ethics in relation to discriminatory practices, it does not vilify, there is no nudity nor bad language.*

*The post is marked Sponsored, bringing it into the realm of a marketing communication.*

*The video image accompanying the Facebook post shows an indistinct image of an unidentified man in close proximity to a lion. The image itself is not in close-up, it does not show any sign of injury, nor is there any sign of blood. Of its own, we would argue the video image does not display violence in contravention of the Code of Ethics.*

*The headline on the post, Video shows man dragged away by lion, and a warning that the video contains disturbing footage, clearly indicates to people that this is a video they may, or may not, choose to view.*

*The Facebook post links to a story that shows the man survived the attack and he is pictured in his hospital bed while speaking to the media.*

*We would argue that the man's consent to agree to an interview from his hospital bed is proof that we have abided by the Code of Ethics and not exploited or degraded him.*



*Equally, we do not believe we have contravened the Code by promoting unsafe practices. The man in the video is the safari park's owner who doubtless would be near his animals every day.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the "Panel") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement depicts inappropriate violence.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser did not provide a response.

The Panel noted that the Facebook post was clearly an advertisement as it was a sponsored post designed to promote the West Australian's Facebook page and news content.

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 that the Facebook advertisement for the West Australian featured a still-shot of video featuring a lion dragging a man's body with the words 'A British safari park owner has been savaged by a lion after entering its enclosure in front of horrified onlookers.' And featured the caption 'video shows man dragged away by lion WARNING: Disturbing footage.

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the graphic violence depicted in the advertisement is not justified in the context of an advertisement for the West Australian.

The Panel considered that the product being advertised was news media, and considered that the media often reports violent and disturbing news stories, and in the Panel's view some violence is justified in the context of the product being advertised.

The Panel then considered whether the level of violence depicted was too graphic to be justifiable in this advertisement.

The Panel considered that the advertisement featured a warning of disturbing footage and people would have to click on the advertisement to see the full video, and noted



that the still-shot of the video was all that could be seen in the Facebook advertisement.

The Panel considered the still image included in the advertisement did not feature blood or gore and considered that the image of the man in the advertisement was not clear. The Panel considered that the advertisement contained a mild level of violence.

The Panel noted that Facebook is a medium with a mostly adult audience and considered that the mild level of violence depicted in this advertisement was not inappropriate for this medium.

The Panel determined that the violence portrayed in the advertisement was advertisement was justifiable in the context of the product or service 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 complaint.

