



Case Report

1	Case Number	0267/13
2	Advertiser	Woolworths Supermarkets
3	Product	Retail
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Print
5	Date of Determination	14/08/2013
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Cover page of the Big W catalogue for the week of Thursday 25 to Wednesday 30 July 2013. An image of three women wearing bras to promote the "new and exclusive to Big W" Wonderbra range.

THE COMPLAINT

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

*The pics on the front pages of the catalogues contain pics of scantily dressed young women. Pics of this nature can easily be accessed by young children.
In the highly sexualised world in which we live these pics are more fitting for a playboy mag rather than the catalogue of a family friendly store.
These pics are offensive and they should certainly not be on the front page of dept store catalogues.*

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Big W does not consider the advertisement to be in breach of the Code because:

- The catalogue predominately focuses on women's apparel, clothing and related accessories;*
- It is not uncommon nor considered offensive for most retailers which have a women's fashion focus to have intimate apparel appearing on such catalogue, newspaper or other print advertising; and*
- Big W has not received any complaints from its customers in relation to this catalogue.*

Big W seeks to address the needs of all customers in the goods and services we sell every day and takes particular care in its advertising as our female customers are most important to us.

Big W does not consider that the purpose or intent of the advertisement was to be 'highly sexualised' nor would we compare it to pictures from a Playboy magazine or similar. The Wonderbra launch was advertised to drive awareness that the brand was relaunching in Australia and that it was exclusively at Big W. The brand was launched in response to some research that Hanesbrand Inc undertook which found "Most Australian women (71%) aged between 18-44 years feel more confident when wearing a bra that enhances their bust." The imagery used on Big W's catalogue was used to depict this confidence and in no way was intended to exploit young females, but empower them.

Big W would not seek to do anything which would offend our customer base.

Woolworths appreciates the ASB's careful consideration of a complaint and will accept Big W's submission that this complaint should be dismissed.

Thank you for your assistance.

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 features images of women in underwear that is sexualised and inappropriate for viewing by children.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience”.

The Board noted that the front page of the catalogue is promoting a range of a “new and exclusive” underwear range for women and includes photos of a model in three different bras and visible from the waist up. The text around the image refers to the prices and sizing information.

The Board considered that as a retail outlet the store often includes products from the entire

store in their catalogue which includes toys and games that will appeal to children. The Board considered however that the bras shown in the catalogue are clearly targeted to women who may be buying these products and considered that the level of nudity is relevant to the product being advertised. The Board noted that the woman featured in the advertisement is an adult and considered that the advertisement did not present the models in a manner which is offensive or overtly sexualised.

The Board noted that the underwear completely covers the woman's breasts and that her private areas are not visible and that the text describes the particular sizes and low price of the underwear. The Board noted that it is reasonable to expect an underwear advertisement to feature imagery of underwear and considered that the manner in which the underwear is presented in the advertisement is appropriate.

The Board discussed that the type of images used in this particular catalogue are in line with what is usually contained in a retail and department store catalogues and that the pose of the woman in this instance is not sexualised and is sensitive to the relative audience.

The Board noted that the image is on the front page of the catalogue and is very prominent and therefore likely to be seen by a broader audience than images inside however still considered not sexualised, no nudity and not inappropriate for relevant audience.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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