



Case Report

1	Case Number	0271/14
2	Advertiser	Wicked Campers
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Transport
5	Date of Determination	13/08/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Not Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.5 - Language Inappropriate language
- 2.5 - Language Strong or obscene language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Wicked Camper van, rego 1CXK 403. The text on the back of the van reads, "...In every princess there is a little slut who wants to try it just once..."

THE COMPLAINT

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

I find this branding/promotion extremely offensive to women. Not only does it lack respect for women, it even seems to condone sexually coercive behaviour towards women because apparently, despite outward appearances and objections, all women 'want to try' all sexual acts.

It is degrading and offensive to women. But furthermore, attitudes like this only go to further promote gender inequality and tolerance of misogyny.

Offensive language and incredibly offensive and sexist message.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The advertiser did not provide a response.

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 complainants’ concerns that the advertisement depicts material which is sexist and demeaning to women, and that the language used is sexual and inappropriate for outdoor display where children could easily view it.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser had not provided a 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, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief.'

The Board noted that a copy of the advertisement had been provided by a complainant and that the advertisement contains the statement, “...In every Princess there is a little slut who wants to try it just once...”

The Board noted the complainants’ concerns that describing a woman as a ‘princess’ or a ‘slut’ is offensive and discriminatory. The Board noted the Macquarie Dictionary’s definition of slut:

“1. (derog) A woman who has many sexual partners.”

The Board noted that the word ‘Princess’ is often used as a descriptor for a variety of reasons: to describe a little girl who likes dressing up, to describe someone (male or female) who wants special treatment and so on. The Board noted in this instance however the word is being used alongside the word ‘slut’ and considered that most members of the community would find the use of both of these descriptors (‘princess’ and ‘slut’) to be derogatory sexual references towards women.

The Board considered that the advertisement did present or portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a section of the community on account of gender.

The Board determined that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of

people.”

The Board noted that in order to be in breach of this section of the Code the image would need to use sexual appeal in a manner which is both exploitative and degrading.

The Board noted that the advertisement does not contain any pictures but considered that the words themselves can be considered as an image.

The Board noted that the advertisement suggests that women want to try an (unspecified) sexual activity and considered that the implied suggestion is that this sexual activity is not ‘normal’ for most women. A minority of the Board considered that by focusing on a woman’s sexual activities in this manner the advertisement is employing sexual appeal in a manner which is both exploitative and degrading.

Following considerable discussion however the majority of the Board considered that whilst this focus on a woman’s sex life may be degrading in the Board’s view it does not meet the test for material which is exploitative.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.

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 it had previously considered a number of similar slogans on Wicked Camper vans in cases 535/09, 607/09, 0375/12, 0078/13 and 0028/14.

In this instance the Board noted the definition of the word ‘slut’ and considered that this advertisement is implying that women are willing to participate in sexual activity. The Board noted the placement of the advertisement on the back of a van and considered that the sexual content of the advertisement is not appropriate for a broad community which would include children.

The Board determined that the advertisement did breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided”.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed the use of the word ‘slut’ in an advertisement promoting ‘Slut Walk’ (0450/11). In that instance:

“The Board accepted that the word “slut” would be considered offensive by some members of the community and its use on a poster does make it visible to a broad audience including children. The Board considered however that the phrase “Slut Walk” was clearly intended to refer to the campaign and to raise community awareness of the group referred to in the poster. The Board noted the important message of the advertisement and considered that the advertisement is suitable for display on public posters.

The Board considered that the context in which the term is used is not aggressive, threatening or demeaning, that the language is not strong or obscene and that the use of the word “slut” is not inappropriate in this instance.”

In the current advertisement the Board noted the sexualised context of the use of the word ‘slut’ and considered its use in this instance is offensive and inappropriate as it is referring to women in a manner which is demeaning.

The Board considered that the advertisement did feature language which is inappropriate, strong or obscene in the circumstances and that it did breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did breach Sections 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5 of the Code the Board upheld the complaints.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

The advertiser has not provided a response to the Board's determination. The ASB will continue to work with the relevant authorities in Queensland regarding this issue of non-compliance.