



Case Report

1	Case Number	0274/13
2	Advertiser	Target Australia Pty Ltd
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	14/08/2013
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Gok Wan introduces himself and says he is all about a woman's assets. He then goes on to say that 85% of women don't know their correct bra size and we see various women in their undies, being measured for a bra or walking down a catwalk. Gok then says that "your bangers will never feel more loved".

THE COMPLAINT

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

I find this advertisement so offensive to women as this celebrity appears to be very at home weaving in and out of the women dressed in their under wear. His comments on "their assets" and other innuendo is so degrading and I just expect so much better from Target as they present themselves as a family store. I have seen this ad on a number of occasions and really felt uncomfortable and disappointed. I hope Im not the only one feeling this way as I really thought that we had a healthier approach to women in Australia.

Its an offence to any decent person to watch some queer guy advertising and blaspheming and using insulting descriptive words re a woman's body and to be prancing around half dressed guys.

A female body is a beautiful thing, not to be cheapened by a poofster calling breasts "BANGERS"!!! I WAS BREAST FED, NOT BANGER FED! It's an insult to sooooo many Aussie men and woman to see poofs on tv but you let it happen. I haven't even started stirring up the national CWA clubs yet so look out!

I find it distasteful that he uses the term "bangers" to describe women's breasts. If a straight man were to use similar language during prime time TV, there would be a huge outcry by women claiming sexist behaviour. There should be no different standards of acceptable language simply because a man appears to be gay.

Gok refers to women's breasts as being their assets, while also calling them their bangers. I have never called, or ever heard another woman, or man for that matter, refer to women's breast as bangers, bangers are a slang term for a sausage, I do not want my breast referred to as meat. I do not want other people to think that is acceptable either. I also do not think other people should see women's breast as their assets, her brain, compassion, empathy etc are assets, I thought we had moved away or are trying to move away from constantly sexualising women.

I am offended by Gok calling women's breast 'bangers'. Women's breasts don't bang in any form. In Australia bangers are sausages. Our breasts are not sausages. It is degrading to women's bodies, embarrassing and disrespectful.

I find the way he describes women's breasts as 'BANGERS' as very offensive to women, even my husband agrees. It's only because he's gay he can get away with it, if a 'heterosexual' male used that term it would never have been aired!

Towards the end of the ad Gok is talking about bra fitting. He refers to women's breasts as "bangers". I don't think the language is appropriate I have sent a complaint to Target through there website.

I object to women's breasts being called Assets or Bangers. Probably Bangers is the worst. Who on earth calls their breasts bangers and why do we have to watch an obvious gay man talking about women in this way. It is insulting.

The gutter talk to sell products of womens undergarments is discusting.

I find it very offensive that breasts are referred to as bangers. It objectifies and cheapens women.

The use of the term 'Bangers' for breasts. Gok, when talking about Bras, says something like "there you go ladies, that'll keep your bangers sorted". I take objection to the use of the word bangers, it's offensive and crass. The ad is on at all times and children shouldn't be exposed to these terms on TV.

Female body parts , the breasts in particular are referred to as pieces of meat, bangers. This is demeaning to women as is the implication that women's bodies are assets and thus a

commodity.

I think to have such a person or indeed any male person doing this is demeaning to women. Women are quite capable of making clothing decisions on their own.

I object most strongly to him advising on underwear, especially having him refer to women's breasts as "bangers". This is pretty low, we don't need this sort of thing.

I sincerely hope something can be done about this.

I was offended because as a woman I do not like my breast referred to as bangers. We are not five year olds in a school yard. They have a name let's be adults and use it. This is totalling disrespectful to all women.

I object to GOK using the word "Bangers" to refer to women's breasts. It may be an acceptable term in the UK, but we don't use it in Australia and in the context of the ad it sounds quite derogatory. I have spoken to friends that feel the same. We think that they should have been referred to as breasts as that is what they are.

I find the use of "bangers" offensive as it is derogatory and demeaning in its reference to women's breasts. I also think that if Target wish to portray themselves as a place where women will feel comfortable being fitted for bras, they could at least use a female to do their advertising for this service and these products.

I find a male referring to women's breasts as "bangers" highly offensive.

I was offended as 'Gok' refers to women's breasts as 'BANGERS'. I find this extremely offensive. If they didn't want to use the word breasts I am sure they could have thought of many other cuter sounding words instead of 'BANGERS'.

This word is offensive and derogatory.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We refer to your letter dated 25 July, regarding the complaints received in relation to the television commercial (TVC) for underwear in the Gok Wan campaign Target Australia Pty Ltd (Target) is currently conducting.

The TVC is part of a campaign featuring Target's brand ambassador Gok Wan (the Gok Campaign). The TVC forms part of the suite of advertisements promoting Target's underwear. The underwear advertisements were not the first advertisement in the Gok Campaign. Other advertisements in the Gok Campaign have featured homewares and women's outerwear and contain similar messages about feeling good about yourself and the way you present yourself using products ranged at Target. Further advertisements will feature children's wear and menswear.

The TVC features Gok encouraging women to dress in correctly sized and shaped underwear to feel good about themselves. The women used to model the underwear in the TVC have a range of normal body shapes. None of them have an idealised body shape. During the TVC

Gok says “your Bangers will never feel more loved.”

Target does not consider the advertisement to breach any part of Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (the Code) or the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children (the Children’s Code).

Target submits that the advertisement does not fall within the definition of an “Advertising or Marketing Communication to Children” as set out in section 1 of the Children’s Code. The advertisement is not primarily directed to children aged 14 years or younger and is not an advertisement for a product which is targeted toward or has principal appeal for children.

The relevant sections of the Code provide as follows:

2.1 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, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

2.4 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

2.5 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided.

The complainants are offended by Gok referring to breasts as assets or bangers. Some complaints draw an inference that referring to bangers suggests women’s breasts are like meat. A number of the complainants are also offended that a gay man should refer to women’s breasts as bangers. A small number of the complaints appear offended that Target should be using a gay man in advertising.

We respectfully disagree with the complainants. The target market for the advertising is women and the main message is that the Target range of underwear is accessible to the Target customer. We consider the advertisement to be appropriate and in line with Target’s brand values.

Gok Wan was chosen as a brand ambassador for Target because of his personality and reputation, not his sexuality. He feels good about who he is as he is. He is playfully irreverent, colourful and fun. He has a great capacity for making other people feel good about themselves too. Target strongly believes that a person’s sexuality is irrelevant to their worth as a person. Target makes no apology for using a gay man in its advertising and we do not believe that this should be grounds for upholding a complaint.

More importantly, Gok is a British style icon. The brands he has chosen to provide with his imprimatur are Department Stores such as Sainsbury’s in the UK and Target in Australia - not high end fashion houses. He is about making fashion accessible to everyone and making people feel good about themselves. This is completely in line with Target’s brand values.

The Gok Campaign is about building confidence, looking and feeling fantastic and having fun. The majority of feedback that Target has received regarding the Gok Campaign, including

the underwear advertisements, is that our customers are telling us they love the honesty and quirkiness of our language and imagery.

The TVC is intended to capture Gok's playful approach. It contains words used in common parlance such as "assets" to encourage women to think about themselves in positive terms. The term "bangers" is used in wry acceptance that not everyone thinks about their breasts in positive terms. It is an irreverent term of affection. It is not designed to be derogatory or objectify women or degrade them in any way. It does not suggest that breasts are meat.

"Bangers" is more commonly used in the UK than in Australia, where "boobs" is probably more familiar. Because the term "bangers" is less familiar in Australia, this lack of familiarity in Australia will be taken into account and the term "boobs" may be substituted in some advertising.

The use of "assets" is not derogatory but in Target's view strongly supportive of women feeling good about themselves. Target does not view breasts as the only measure by which women should be valued. The advertisement does recognise that how women feel about their body image does play an integral part in many women's feelings about themselves and how they feel they are perceived. Feeling like you are wearing the right clothing in the right size for you makes a big difference.

A lot of women feel ambivalent about their body shape, including the shape and size of their breasts. The images in the TVC are positive: showing the models feeling good about who they are and what they are wearing. The images are not sexualised and Gok's interaction with the women is not sexually charged or predatory. It is in this context that Gok uses the phrase "your bangers will never feel more loved." The comment is delivered in a manner that is positive and supportive and not crass or dismissive.

The use of "assets" and "Your bangers will never feel more loved" recognises the ambivalence many women have for their bodies but still encourages women to feel good about themselves in a fun way. It should be interpreted in the context of the TVC and the Gok Campaign as a whole.

We note that the TVC was provided with a CAD rating of W, with a CAD reference TAR027530WU. It has only been displayed to the public in accordance with that rating in an appropriate timeslot from Wednesday 24th July.

We consider that the advertisement is appropriate for and reflective of our target market and would not offend the sensibilities of the general public within the context of an advertisement for women's underwear.

We note that section 2.1 of the Code prohibits advertising or marketing communications that "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, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief". We consider Target's choice of Gok Wan does not discriminate against or vilify gay members of our community. We submit that the TVC does not vilify women or objectify them. We consider that the advertisement does not breach section 2.1 of the Code.

The complaint relates to section 2.4 of the Code requiring "sex, sexuality and nudity with

sensitivity to the relevant audience". We submit the images would not be considered sexual or exploitative by the general community. We consider that the advertisement does not breach section 2.4 of the Code.

Section 2.5 of the Code requires only language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided. Target submits that the language used in the advertisement is appropriate and not strong or obscene. We consider the advertisement does not breach section 2.5 of the Code.

Target is committed to upholding the standards of the Code in its advertising and appreciates your review of our response to these complaints.

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 offensive and derogatory to women by referring to their breasts as "bangers"

The Board first 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, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted that the advertisement features Gok Wan a well - known fashion stylist as he moves around a Target store talking to the camera about women's bras and choosing the right bra size. At the commencement of the advertisement Gok states that he is "all about your assets". As some models walk along a fashion runway, Gok states that "your bangers will never feel more loved".

The Board considered that the overall tone of the advertisement is positive and light-hearted and is intended to draw the attention of women to the various bras available in store and also to the fact that it is important to purchase the correct bra size.

The Board noted that the use of the term "bangers" is not a term that is commonly used in Australia in the context of women's breasts. The Board noted that the advertisement includes women of varying sizes and shapes and that the woman appear very happy and comfortable being presented in their underwear.

The Board considered that the reference to woman's breasts and bras and the use of the term "bangers" by a male fashion stylist does not amount to material that is discriminatory of any people or persons of a particular gender and did not breach section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board then 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 women in the advertisement are seen in their underwear and are standing in a group as in a photo shoot and also walking along a fashion catwalk. The Board noted that the women are completely covered by their bra and underpants and that there is no inappropriate nudity and no exposed breasts or private areas. The Board noted that the women are not portrayed in a sexualised manner.

The Board noted the “W” rating given by CAD and noted that the advertisement had been aired in the appropriate time slot for the rating.

The Board considered that the theme of the advertisement was not of a sexual content and that the presentation and discussion about bras was factual and helpful for the target market of women who wear bras.

The Board considered that the advertisement did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and did not breach section 2.4 of the Code

The Board viewed the same advertisement on Pay TV (0283/13) and reached the same decision and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

The Board then 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 considered the term ‘bangers’ and recognised that some members of the community may be offended by the reference to women’s breasts as bangers. The Board considered that the word is not commonly used in Australia in this manner but that in this instance it is not used in a derogatory way and that the use of the term bangers is one that is used by Gok as part of his programs and persona.

The Board considered that the term ‘bangers’ is not inappropriate and not strong or obscene language in this context.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not use strong or obscene language and that it did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

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