



Ad Standards Community Panel
PO Box 5110, Braddon ACT 2612
P (02) 6173 1500 | F (02) 6262 9833

AdStandards.com.au

Ad Standards Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1. Case Number :	0275-19
2. Advertiser :	Toyota Motor Corporation Australia Limited
3. Product :	Vehicle
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Determination	11-Sep-2019
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a woman swimming laps at a pool. The woman dives into the pool and is then seen swimming across the lane rope into the next lane. The same woman then appears in a Toyota dealership where she meets Zoe, the Toyota Dealer Sales Consultant. The woman says to Zoe 'I've got trouble with the whole staying in my own lane thing'. Zoe explains that the Corolla comes with Lane Departure Alert. Zoe starts walking towards the Corolla, but the woman starts walking in the wrong direction. Zoe notices and guides the woman back towards the Corolla.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I find it sexist and believe that it feeds into the whole idea that women can't drive. The woman is betrayed as a ditz. It's an antiquated and insulting ad. Considering that the main demographic that Toyota is appealing to are women, I think it is clearly offensive.

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 recent letter dated 23 August 2019 in relation to Complaint Reference 0275/19 (the Complaint).

Your letter refers to a retail advertisement by Toyota Motor Corporation Australia Ltd (Toyota) featuring the Toyota Corolla (the Advertisement). Toyota takes any complaints relating to its advertisements seriously and responds as follows.

The Advertisement

A digital copy of the Advertisement together with the other advertisements featured in this campaign has been enclosed with this letter.

By way of general summary, the Advertisement features a woman swimming laps at a pool. The woman dives into the pool and is then seen swimming across the lane rope into the next lane. The same woman then appears in a Toyota dealership where she meets Zoe, the Toyota Dealer Sales Consultant. The woman says to Zoe 'I've got trouble with the whole staying in my own lane thing'. Zoe explains that the Corolla comes with Lane Departure Alert. Zoe starts walking towards the Corolla, but the woman starts walking in the wrong direction. Zoe notices and guides the woman back towards the Corolla.

The Advertisement is intended to present a visual analogy to explain the Corolla's Lane Departure Alert feature. By drawing a parallel between the lanes of a road and the lanes of a swimming pool, the Advertisement aims to entertain the audience by showing an unexpected lane departure in an everyday situation.

This Advertisement is one in a campaign of advertisements designed to draw unexpected parallels between the Toyota Safety Sense features and everyday situations. Other advertisements in this campaign feature male leads and demonstrate features such as Active Cruise Control and Blind Spot Monitor. They are all helped by Zoe, the Toyota Dealer Sales Consultant.

The Complaint

In your letter, you advise that the Complaint was received on 12 August 2019, which stated: "I find it sexist and believe that it feeds into the whole idea that women can't drive. The woman is betrayed as a ditz. It's an antiquated and insulting ad. Considering that the main demographic that Toyota is appealing to are women, I think it is clearly offensive".

You have advised that the Complaint falls under section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (AANA Code). Toyota responds to each of the subsections in section 2 of the AANA Code below.

Toyota Response to Complaint

Section 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification

Toyota does not believe that the Advertisement shows unfair or less favourable treatment based on gender or any other basis. Toyota also does not believe that the Advertisement engages in vilification of any particular group.

In particular, Toyota believes that the Advertisement does not support a stereotype that women are bad drivers. The Lane Departure Alert feature exists to assist all drivers, regardless of gender.

The feature has been designed because many drivers, both male and female, can inadvertently drift out of their lane. Lane departure can occur for many reasons,



including bad road conditions, poor visibility or a momentary lapse in concentration. It is not necessarily a reflection of the driver's ability.

Toyota cast a female in the lead role because our research indicates that the majority of Corolla buyers are female. If Toyota were promoting the same feature in a car with a majority of male buyers, Toyota would have cast a male swimmer for the lead role. It is Toyota's intention for the Advertisement to resonate with the intended market demographic.

Furthermore, Toyota does not believe that the Advertisement engages in vilification of a particular gender, particularly because both leads in the Advertisement are women.

Section 2.2-Exploitative or Degrading Material

Toyota believes the Advertisement does not contain any sexual appeal and is not exploitative or degrading in any way.

Section 2.3 - Violence

Toyota believes that the Advertisement does not depict violence of any form.

Section 2.4 - Sex, Sexuality or Nudity

Toyota does not believe that the Advertisement contains sexually suggestive images or language.

2.5- Language

Toyota does not believe that the Advertisement contains any language which may be offensive to the audience.

2.6 - Health and Safety

Toyota does not believe the Advertisement contains any images that:

- are contrary to public health and safety, or*
- promote unsafe practices, bullying or unrealistic body image.*

2.7 - Clearly Distinguishable Advertising

Toyota believes that it is clear to the relevant audience that the Advertisement is commercial in nature.

In light of the above, Toyota submits that the Complaint misinterprets the content of the Advertisement and that the Advertisement has not breached the AANA Code.

Consequently, Toyota requests that the Complaint be dismissed.

If you require any further assistance or information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (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 is sexist as it shows the woman as a ditz and feeds into the whole idea that a woman can't drive.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Panel 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 Panel noted this television advertisement features a woman at a public pool. The woman dives into the pool and is then seen swimming across the lane rope into the next lane. The same woman then appears in a Toyota dealership where she meets a salesperson. The woman says 'I've got trouble with the whole staying in my own lane thing'. The salesperson explains that the Corolla comes with Lane Departure Alert. The woman starts walking in the wrong direction and the salesperson notices and guides the woman back towards the Corolla.

The Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.1 provides the following definitions:

"Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment.

Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule."

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the advertisement is intended to present a visual analogy to explain the Lane Departure Assist feature by drawing a parallel between lines on a road and swimming lanes, and that a female was cast in the advertisement as the majority of people purchasing the advertised model are female and is not commenting on the driver's ability.

The Panel considered that the woman in the advertisement is depicted in a humorous manner and equates swim lanes with vehicle lanes in order to highlight the features of the advertised vehicle and was not a depiction related to gender.

The Panel considered that the woman in the advertisement was not depicted as receiving unfair or less favourable treatment, and was not depicted in a way which humiliated or ridiculed her on the basis of her gender.

The Panel considered that the light-hearted depiction of one woman having trouble staying in her lane, or walking in a straight line when she has water in her ear, was not a suggestion that all women would have this same issue.

The Panel considered that there is an existing negative stereotype that women are bad drivers, however in this instance the advertisement does not use or suggest this stereotype.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaint.