



Case Report

1	Case Number	0291/14
2	Advertiser	Beyond Blue
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	27/08/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Mental Illness
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement features various scenes that include Indigenous people being made aware of the circumstances they have been left in.

The scenes include:

- A young man left on a bench seat
- A woman getting milk from a fridge in a store

- A young woman at a job interview
- A man on a bus
- A man at a bar

In each scene a man appears near as the voice telling the non-Indigenous person how to behave.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad only depicts "white" people as the offender of the vilifying the victims, this in itself is reverse racism. I don't disagree with the concept of the ad in general but I'm know that white Australians aren't the only race in Australia that bully and racially victimise others. The advert as it is at the moment is more than likely going to promote/incite more situations of what they are trying to reduce.

The advertisements are incredibly racist and generalising towards white Australians. By categorising all white Australians that we are racist towards aboriginals is racist within itself. In today's age, racism is less of a problem than it was 10 - 20 years ago. As a child some of my closest friends were aboriginal, and as valuable members of society, they are like any other friend, regardless of colour.

These advertisements imply that Caucasian Australians are racist towards aboriginal Australians, which is totally contrary to reality and the truth.

These advertisements marginalise Aboriginals by showing that such is prevalent in our society. The population learns through observation, and what poisoning lessons are being learned through these advertisements.

Unfortunately racism is across the board in all cultures and ethnicities, in our country we have a myriad of ethnicity's who sadly do discriminate against one another; you're hard pressed to find somebody in today's society of any skin colour who hasn't encountered discrimination and racism once let alone multiple times, but I fail to understand why in this ad is it only Caucasian people portrayed in such a fashion?

There is a big enough rift as it is between Caucasian and Indigenous Australians.

This is an unfair and untrue bash-up of Australian people and I resent these left-wing racists exposing my children to this kind of allegation against them, accusing white Australians of dislike and distrust of nice, clean, good, honest, respectable and well-mannered aboriginal people due only to their aboriginally. With a closing statement of, "nobody wants to be made to feel like crap", what is this advertisement doing to our children? exactly that - making my children feel like 'crap', inferring and subconsciously instilling into them a belief that they are, or could be racist, and bringing them up with ingrained feelings of guilt and debt for something that is simply not true. I also find it interesting that they found it necessary to place this racist ad in the middle of a children's show - although it does make sense, as this is typical of the kind of brainwashing that goes on in the majority of our schools and government departments these days. I feel that this type of advertising rather than helping eliminate racism, actually widens the gap, and causes resentment on both sides. As a family who is surrounded by very close friends and relatives from many races and skin colours, we do not "see colour", but it is commercials like this that make sure that people do. The overwhelming proof for this statement was when my 7 year-old and 10 year old daughters (both white Caucasian, whose best friends, incidentally, are 'dark-skinned' Fijian Indian / Philippine), asked me, "Why don't they trust them? What's wrong with Aboriginal people?". So they never even knew there

was a problem, but now, thanks to BEYOND BLUE, racial and skin-colour differences have been pointed out, focused on, and put under the magnifying glass. So a racial issue now exists that was never there to begin with. I find this advertisement highly offensive and insulting, as it focuses on the actions and ideals of a few of the lesser quality Australians in our society, and infers that these are the majority. And far from helping and empowering

indigenous people, it portrays them as helpless victims, who, according to this commercial, "no one likes or trusts, which is untrue, and insulting and degrading to indigenous people.

It is racists - it stereotypes white people as being anti-social, prejudiced, discriminatory, racists bigots while portraying Aboriginals as impeccably behaved bastions of civilisation who are victims of evil white people. I am a white inner city resident, well-educated from The University of Sydney, and I have been racially abused for being white by Aboriginals many times. This ad implies that it is only white people who are rude, disrespectful and racist. This type of negative stereotyping of white people is extremely offensive, unacceptable, inappropriate and deeply racist.

If this ad were to be impartial, it should be aimed at the whole community, and should show examples of Aboriginals and blacks being racist and behaving in an unacceptable anti-social manner (of which there are many, many, many examples) and give them the message (as well as to white people) to "Stop, Think, Respect".

SUMMARY: this ad is negative stereotyping of white people, implying that it is only whites who are racist against blacks, whereas there are just as many examples of Aboriginals and blacks being racist and disrespectful to white people.

It is in fact all people from different races religions and ages are targeted by any other person from race or religion. Take Iran Iraq Ukraine Russia at the moment or Muslims who are targeted as terrorists just because of the extremists. Anglo Saxons Asians and Indians etc Who are targeted just for being so as well. It doesn't matter who we are in this world at some point we will face racism or sexism, being bullied as a teen by other teens or as adults which will cause depression anxiety and stress. This ad should be changed to fit all races in Australia rather than taken off. I'm sure others have taken offence at this as it doesn't really matter where and who we are as it happens to all of us at some point.

I don't object to the ad itself, actually I think it's brilliant as I am 100% against all types of racism and bullying. All I wanted to say was that the ad makes out like it's somewhat okay to be horrid to other races, however you can't be horrible to aboriginals.

I just feel like there should be a way in which they can sort the ad out so that it can't be misconstrued.

I understand that it is more than likely a aboriginal company or something that has organised it, and I respect them for that. I just think that if they have an ad like that they should also have something to say that you shouldn't bully or be racist towards other races either, which may just simply be fixed by instead of saying something such as "Aboriginal bullying is bad." to "Racism is bad." If you get what I mean??

I would just like to stress that I have no issue with the idea behind it, I love it, I just think that it would be nice to stress that racism is bad no matter what race it is.

Thank you for your time. Have a lovely day.

I was offended by this ad because it only showed how aboriginals are affected by racism and how this causes depression and anxiety for them. I am not a racist person I grew up in a multicultural society but this ad is perceiving that all white people are racist against only aboriginals. This ad is making society worse by separating them once again and i treat

everyone the same no matter who they are but this ad is telling me that I am the problem and society is only racist toward them.

I was offended as the add portrays every day Australians as being biased or racists against aboriginals, which is not an accurate portrayal.

The add also suggests that only aboriginals suffer from depression when treated this way. Anyone can suffer from depression when treated in this manner.

I am offended that only white Australians are depicted as racist. As a Deaf Disabled white Australian I am sick of being depicted as the only racists in Australia. I experience racism on a daily basis by print and visual media and on social media racism against whites is rampant.

Although I think the issue of racism and discrimination is a serious issue and one of great importance, I think the ending of the advertisement is worded poorly and in itself a form of discrimination. The voice over at the end of the commercial states: "Discrimination leads to depression and anxiety in indigenous Australians. No one should be made to feel like crap just for being who they are." I think this statement should be changed or removed because in fact discrimination leads to depression and anxiety in people of all races that are discriminated against. If the advertisement is only dealing with issues of racism against Aboriginal communities then that's fine but the wording should imply that discrimination only affects Aboriginal Australians in a negative way.

I am strongly offended by this as it pointedly promotes Caucasians as the ones who are being the discriminators. I do recognise that discrimination is very real within the community, however it's real for all cultures within Australia not just the Aboriginal population. Many people within Australia, regardless of culture can develop depression and/or anxiety as a result of discrimination.

Though I recognise it is present within the Aboriginal community I feel that it was poorly executed, and offensively portrayed.

I was offended by the inference that white people always consider race in every decision they make. It is offensive and wrong. I pride myself on treating everyone equally and this made me feel like I had to avoid minorities rather than embrace them.

The commercial with #StopThinkRespect on Channel 10 is disrespectful to some people. It must not be shown.

I would like to lodge a complaint about Beyond Blue's anti discrimination ad, which I first viewed on channel 9, Tuesday July 29th. It ends with the words 'Nobody should be made to feel like crap because of who they are'. My husband looked at me after the ad and said 'Well if they didn't feel like crap before, they surely WILL after this ad!'

The ad only perpetuates negative stereotypes of aboriginal people i.e.

- The young aboriginal man who is moved away from, because...he might be violent?*
- The aboriginal woman... who might be a shoplifter?*
- The aboriginal bartender....who is an alcoholic?*
- The professional aboriginal man in the bus who rather than sit next to, the young lady would prefer to stand. Why? Does he smell??*

The ad makes it look as though racist thoughts are justified, but shouldn't be acted on. It is likely to make aboriginal people feel 'paranoid' or even 'depressed' about how society perceives them [according to this ad anyway!] I know that the target audience is people who display 'subtle' racism - not aboriginal people. However, the message could and should be delivered in a way which does not perpetuate a negative stereotype.

If I was trying to bring up an Aboriginal child, this ad would MAKE me 'depressed', so congrats Beyond Blue on a successful campaign!

No mother wants their child to feel 'different' or think they will be shunned by society...it destroys confidence and put them at an immediate disadvantage. Positive stereotypes that empower could have been used/marginalise the 'racists' with a negative stereotype - 'bogans'? That might be more effective.

This advertisement is blatantly racist against white people!

The advertisement masquerading as an ad for depression which actually affects all people of all skin colours and nationalities!

The theme of the advertisement is white people give people of different skin colours depression?

All of our family straight away said what a racist and strange advertisement.

If the people who so called did media studies properly in our country, they would know what is and is not a racist advertisement and would not make such a terrible ad.

Please take these ridiculous and racist advertisements off the television.

I have 2 issues with the Tvc. Firstly it only depicts indigenous people as the victims of prejudice whereas all kinds of people are on the receiving end of this at times. It gives the strong impression that if you are indigenous, regardless of your place in the community, you are regarded as a pariah or undesirable outcast. As someone who has indigenous members of my extended family I think this is highly offensive the Tvc could of easily depicted a range of groups who may experience some form of exclusion or judgment rather than singling out this part of our community. It also exclusively depicts white Anglo Saxons of all walks of life and ages as the perpetrators of this form of exclusion. Really offensive on both fronts. As someone who also has a family member who suffers from depression, I feel this TVC really set us back I terms of how the majority of Australians respect and treat each other.

I am highly offended by this ad created by Beyond Blue. I understand the overall message that it is trying to portray to the general public- to stop racism and decimation as there is a huge impact on the wellbeing of people's lives, however, this is highly offensive to insinuate that the indigenous community are more prone to racism and discrimination than any other culture! Racism is happening every day to EVERY culture/ background/ ethnicity and not just to the indigenous community. How could they put up an advertisement to increase the

general awareness by targeting to only one specific group! To this day ALL cultures experiences a degree of racism and discrimination on a daily basis. And ALL cultures would experience the same type of mental health issues, depression, anxiety and distress. This advertisement that Beyondblue has published is discriminatory and offensive in itself! The main message that I got out of this advertisement, is that racism needs to stop against the indigenous community, but its still okay to be racial to other cultures because the indigenous community are the only ones that are affected by racism/discrimination.

Please see this link below:

<http://youtu.be/ZBdYvN49eRU>

This is an example of racism that happened within our own backyard only 4 weeks ago. You cannot influence the minds of the general public that racism and discrimination ONLY happens to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Why hasn't Beyond blue taken this into consideration. EVERY culture is at high risk of mental health issues- impacting on the social and emotional wellbeing of all who is affected whether it is directly or indirectly. This ad needs to be removed immediately as it is highly offensive to all cultures! A public apology would also be appropriate since this is broadcasted nationally. If this ad was designed to be more generalised to our multicultural society, I am sure that the message would still make a huge impact and increase the overall awareness to reduce the unwanted behaviours!

The advertisement displays all people as being racist towards aboriginal people. It also suggests aboriginals are the only people who suffer from depression and are judged based on appearance. I find this ad deeply offensive and I believe it sets back the cause of depression sufferers who struggle everyday with this disease regardless of race.

I found the content of the anti-discrimination ad to be in itself discriminative. I was appalled and offended by the way white Australians & ONLY white Australians were depicted as discriminating against Aboriginals. The advertisement DOES NOT IMPLY ANY OTHER RACE, RELIGION OR NATIONALITY discriminating against Aboriginals.

Whatever happened to personal choice. I am a fair skinned white Australian and would never discriminate against anyone, however, that does not take away my right to decide for myself who I talk to and who I sit next to. I too have travelled on countless public transport and made a space for someone to sit down and they simply chose not to, or been in similar situations depicted in the advertisement and not been the chosen one. Personal choice is a fundamental right of everyone. The same thing can happen to white Australians and any other race, religion or nationality.

You don't see any ads complaining about the fact that white Australians are discriminating against because we don't have all white footy teams, interpreters to help us, special allowances because we are white Australians. No! This is because to do so would be singling white Australians out and create more animosity towards us. We simply just want to get along.

The ad shows an Aboriginal man on a train making space for a white Australian lady to sit down but she chooses somewhere else to sit. Well, it doesn't matter what colour, race, religion, nationality that woman was, most women will sit elsewhere if there is a seat available rather than sit next to a man of any colour, race, religion or nationality.

I believe the advertisement should be removed because all it does is create an us and them scenario. A more positive ad would be to show Australians of all colour, race, religion playing sport together, working together, socialising together and simply being Australians together for a united Australia.

It's racist. And quite frankly disgusting. Even if it is trying to get a point across to stop racism.

It is prejudice against all Australian's that aren't aboriginals. It causes friction between the races not to fix the friction between the races. Also I feel it prejudice against me when I don't want to sit or be near racist smelly and rude aboriginals.

I was watching this ad, and only at the end realised what it was about. The point that was trying to be made was treating Aboriginals as inferior and not giving them a fair go could cause depression for the Aboriginals. I was offended initially by the way they were being treated, and then by the fact that the ad appeared to be making the point that this is the way the majority of Caucasian Australians think of and treat Aboriginals. I feel that the ad actually incites racial intolerance, by implying that this is the way we all think. I understand that depression is a problem for many Australians of many ethnicities and agree that help is needed and available, but I did not approve of the way the message was being given in this ad.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Intention of the communication

The intention of the communication is to draw attention to the hurtful and harmful discrimination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This campaign targets non-Indigenous men and women who do not consider themselves to be racist and who want to be seen as tolerant, however they may believe negative stereotypes, tell racist jokes or make insensitive or offensive comments out of fear, ignorance or habit. The campaign seeks to explain the negative effect that racism has on the lives and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which can lead to depression and anxiety.

2.1 Discrimination or vilification

We do not believe the advertising campaign is in contravention of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (Code). Our intention is not to deride, nor encourage discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or any other group of Australians including 'white' Australians.

This campaign is designed to make people question their behaviour towards Indigenous Australians. These actions and behaviour are sometimes unintentional but for Aboriginals these actions can be hurtful and cause pain long after the act. This type of discrimination we call

'subtle' or 'casual' racism. We know that there is a strong association between racism and distress, depression and anxiety.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to confront racism and discrimination on an almost daily basis; from the general public, at work, when accessing and using services and with the law and justice system. Depression and anxiety is a particular concern for Indigenous people and racial discrimination is a contributor to this. Nearly one in every three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults experience high levels of psychological distress, more than twice the rate for non-Indigenous Australians, according to The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, October 2010, ABS.

Racial discrimination takes many forms including being judged or viewed differently (awkward, clumsy or funny vibe); being ignored or being refused service/lesser service; being watched or followed by shop staff or security guards; hearing racial slurs and jokes; being stereotyped as being dumb, alcoholic, unreliable or good at sport; assuming that they are getting 'government handouts' or 'special treatment'; a lack of understanding about Aboriginality and misconceptions of skin colour; and a lack of respect for culture and traditions.

In addition, national survey data shows demonstrates at least one quarter (27 per cent) of Indigenous Australians regularly experience racism.¹ More detailed local-area research has found that up to four out of five Indigenous people regularly experience racism.² Over half (56 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who experience discrimination report feelings of psychological distress.³

beyondblue's Depression Monitor has found that 70 per cent of people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander have experienced or know someone who has experienced depression, which compares with 64 per cent of general respondents. Victorian data suggests that the prevalence of depression and anxiety is greater among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared to non-Indigenous Australians, with 34 per cent of Victorian Aboriginal people having being diagnosed with depression or anxiety, compared to 20 per cent of non-Aboriginal people.⁴

This campaign focuses on the fact that the discrimination causes anxiety and depression. Even unintentional racism, intimidation, avoidance and negative commentary online can have a lasting effect.

The campaign's intention is not to be racist against other people in Australia, but to get people to think about their actions around Indigenous people. It is also not designed to create or incite bad feelings between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians.

2.2 Exploitative and degrading (Objectification)

The scenarios depicted within the commercial are not intended to exploit or degrade people, Indigenous or otherwise.

They are intended to demonstrate the range of places where Aboriginal people experience discrimination on a daily basis including at work, on public transport, in restaurants/cafes/bars, in shops and on the street. These are real examples of where discrimination occurs, taken from research groups conducted with Indigenous people as part of the campaign development.

beyondblue established a national advisory group to guide this project's development and ensure all campaign materials were culturally sensitive. The group included a mix of representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, other organisations

and individuals with specific knowledge and expertise. beyondblue also engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and community forums.

In addition, market research conducted for beyondblue in 2013 canvassed the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people across six metropolitan and regional locations. Focus groups and interviews were held with a total of 98 people (39 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and 59 non-Indigenous people), helping to shape the campaign. The campaign concept was also tested with the target audience through a series of focus groups to ensure it reflected the real-life experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2.3 Violence

There are no examples of violence depicted in the scenes within the commercial. The commercials show the disappointment of the Indigenous people within the scenarios. However this doesn't constitute violent or aggressive behaviour.

2.4 Sex, sexuality and nudity

The commercial doesn't suggest that any person of a particular gender or sexual orientation is at risk of being discriminated against or being the discriminator.

2.5 Language

We use the word 'crap' in the voice over of the commercial to highlight how Indigenous people feel when they are discriminated against. The word 'crap' is in common use in the Australian vernacular as detailed in the Code.

2.6 Health and Safety

This section of the Code refers to 'bullying'. The commercial's intention is not to encourage bullying of Indigenous people but to demonstrate the everyday situations where Aboriginal people feel 'under the spotlight' and discriminated against. beyondblue's aim is to promote acceptance and understanding of Aboriginal people so that discrimination becomes a distant memory in Australia's future.

In conclusion, beyondblue does not believe this advertising campaign contravenes Section 2 of the Code. Our mission is to provide national leadership to reduce the impact of depression

and anxiety in the Australian community for people of every age and at every stage of life.

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 stereotypes Caucasian people and is racist and offensive.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s 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, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted the advertisement features various scenes that include Indigenous people being made aware of the reactions of the people around them including a young man left on a bench seat, a young woman at a job interview and a man on a bus. In each scene an Indigenous man appears nearby as the voice telling the non-Indigenous person how to behave. The Board noted that the advertisement uses Indigenous people as an identifiable category of people in order to base the overall theme and purpose of the campaign. The Board considered that most members of the community would understand that the purpose is to draw attention to the harmful effects of unconscious discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and in general the increased risk of depression associated with such discrimination and bullying.

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement stereotypes Caucasian people as the only people who discriminate against others.

The Board considered that the depiction of a group of people questioning their own behaviour toward another person because of the doubt placed in their minds by the Indigenous man was a powerful metaphor to demonstrate the unacceptability of discriminating against individuals for being who they are.

The Board considered that the message given in the advertisement relating to discrimination against Indigenous people is not intended to offend Caucasian people but rather the mechanism to demonstrate various levels of discrimination in order to get the important message across.

The Board noted that the focal point of the advertisement is the Aboriginal people and the focus of seeing what an Indigenous person feels. The perpetrators are incidental and in the Board’s view there is not a negative view of “Caucasians,” rather only a negative perception of unconscious discrimination.

The Board considered that this type of demonstration did not of itself amount to discrimination against a person or section of the community and did not breach section 2.1 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 noted that toward the end of the advertisement the voiceover states: “... no one

should be made to feel like crap...” The Board considered that the use of the term "crap" in this context would be understood by members of the community as common vernacular to describe feeling not wanted or made to feel bad.

The Board considered that the term crap is not considered strong or obscene and did not breach section 2.5 of the Code.

The Board noted that it also considered the same advertisement on Pay TV (0292/14) and the complaints were dismissed in that medium also.

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