



Case Report

1	Case Number	0304/10
2	Advertiser	Red Bull Aust Pty Ltd
3	Product	Food and Beverages
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	14/07/2010
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This is a cartoon style advert. Buildings are shown at the top of mountains and you can hear sitar style music in the background.

Inside one of the buildings we see a man wearing orange robes and glasses. He is hovering cross-legged above a raised chair, and kneeling in front of him are a man and a woman. They appear to be travellers and they are bowing to the hovering man. The kneeling man says, "Oh Grand Master! Finally we've found you..."

The travellers then go on to ask the Grand Master to show them the ways of meditation, and he gives them each a can of Red Bull.

A male voice over then says, "Red Bull gives you wings. Also as Red Bull energy shots."

We hear symbols clashing and the travellers are shown flying out of the window over a long queue of people waiting to see the Grand Master.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The Ad implied/inferred the house of worship is in Tibet and at his Holiness's Palace at Dharamsala. The couple arrive seeking "enlightenment" and are given a can of Red Bull each.

I am absolutely NOT a religious person but I find this depiction offensive for several reasons. The Dali Lama is a head of a religious movement (like the Pope or the head of any Religion e.g. Buddhist or CofE etc) and should not be depicted in this way. The Tibetans are an

oppressed nation and should not be exploited in this fashion. Spiritual Enlightenment is not about a caffeine drink it is about goodness and spiritual thoughts and deeds etc. This is not the first Red Bull advertisement that has offended me it is just the most offensive so far which is why I feel moved to complain this time. A previous Ad implied the drink gave you special powers (namely of a sexual nature). It is, as far as I am aware, a rather addictive caffeine based drink. I am not against caffeine or alcohol but I am against it being depicted as "sexy" and giving you special powers. It is a drink not a cure for life's woes as the Company might have you believe.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The Red Bull Energy Drink television advertisements demonstrate the (independently proven) energising effects of Red Bull Energy Drink in a spirited, fresh and cheeky way via cartoons portraying humorous stories or scenarios. The stories are fictitious and are not intended to be taken literally or too seriously.

The story used in this advertisement was created to demonstrate the energising effects of Red Bull on body and mind. The story line and imagery is not intended to offend viewers. The advertisement does not make reference to, or directly identify any particular religious group, nor does it discriminate against or vilify a person or section of the community on account of their beliefs.

'Red Bull Gives You Wings' is a light-hearted advertising slogan (not a claim made by Red Bull Energy Drink) used in our advertising campaigns and refers to the energetic 'lift' that Red Bull gives the consumer.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code") and the AANA Food and Beverages Advertising and Marketing Communications Code (the "F&B Code").

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement inappropriately depicted the Dalai Lama, Tibetan people and spiritual enlightenment and considered the application of Section 2.1 of the Code, relating to discrimination and vilification on the basis of religion and ethnicity.

The Board noted that the advertisement used cartoon depictions of the Dalai Lama and other visual and audio elements to imply the cartoon characters are in the Tibetan mountains.

The Board considered the references to stereotypical aspects of the Dalai Lama were light-hearted and intended to be humorous. The Board considered that there was no negative depiction of any aspect of the Dalai Lama or his followers and their beliefs. The Board considered that, while some people may be offended by this depiction, the advertisement did not discriminate against or vilify the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan people or any other identifiable section of the community. The Board therefore found no breach of Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board noted that it is the advertiser's right to refer to a product as having particular attributes provided that such statements comply with the law and the requirements of the Code.

The Board also noted that it found no breaches of the F&B Code.

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