



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
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# Case Report

1	Case Number	0307/18
2	Advertiser	Carnival Australia
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	11/07/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features scenes of a cruise ship (aerial shot, suite, bar and deck) and a voiceover saying "Free room upgrade al for just a \$1 deposit". The scene shows a man on a sun lounger appearing to consider the question, then saying "Ship yeah!".

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*P&O says ship yeah, Why have ads all started this insinuation lately? Have you lowered the standards recently to allow this gutter advertising to be acceptable? We the public have had enough of this low grade rubbish.*

*It is surely bad enough that the excrement expression, among other biological crudities, is so frequently used in Australian speech, without Channel 9 supporting such usage, if only in innuendo, as acceptable and appropriate for promoting products. Are we adult viewers supposed to laugh at such things, and kids, who are repeatedly warned to eschew such language, snigger at it? Who needful as setters of public*



*standards than mass media? I request that that ad be removed.*

*I am getting sick of the use of SPOONERISM'S in current adds, it started out with only one and now they are multiplying.*

*3 P&O the catch phrase is "Ship Yeah"*

*The normalising of swear word substitution for phonically rhyming words is becoming all too common and has no apparent boundaries. The demographic that these ads are aimed at may have a giggle at the infantile, lowest common denominator humour. However, anyone who is not in the 18 to 35 age bracket may feel a sense that advertising standards have slipped to quite a low level.*

*Is "See You Next Tuesday", and "Get a Mullet Up Ya" next?*

*I could think tank a few more but if you pass this feedback to the advertising agencies responsible for these series of commercials, I would expect that they would build campaigns around them.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*P&O Cruises' Response to Ad-standards Complaint - 0307/18*

*Ad Standards has received complaints by members of the community regarding the 'ship yeah' and 'a shipload of fun' television advertisements, alleging that P&O Cruises (P&O) has breached clause 2.5 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code) which states:*

*2.5: Advertising or Marketing Communication 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.*

*It is P&O's position that there has been no breach of the Code for the following reasons:*

### *1. Language Used*

#### *Ship Yeah*

*The scene shows a person on a cruise ship reacting to an offer of a \$1 deposit for a free room upgrade and asking himself 'Am I onboard with that? Ship yeah'. The word 'onboard' is a pun, given the ordinary use of the word 'onboard' means occurring on a vehicle, aircraft or ship and the answer to the question is 'ShipYeah', a ship being the*



*method of transportation for what is on offer, a room upgrade on a cruise ship.*

*Whilst the complainants believe the implication of the swear word 'shit' was used in the advertisements, the word 'shit' was not actually used in any advertisement. While there may be an inference that the actor has said 'shit' it is clear that the word used was 'ship'. The word 'ship' does not constitute 'strong' or 'obscene' language.*

#### *A shipload of fun*

*One of the complainants takes offence to the phrase 'a shipload of fun' used in an advertisement which aired approximately two (2) years ago. The word 'shipload' means as many people or goods as a ship can carry.*

*The word 'ship' can easily be substituted to another transportation vehicle such as a bus or truck to be a 'busload of fun' or a 'carload of fun' and given P&O is advertising cruise fares on ships the phrase 'a shipload of fun' is not inappropriate given the sheer amount of fun one can experience on board a P&O ship nor does the phrase contain 'strong' or 'obscene' language.*

#### *2. Context*

*P&O is in the business of travel on ships. The phrase 'Ship Yeah' is contextualised by an image of a person on a ship.*

#### *3. Tone*

*The ad has been crafted with the ideas of light-hearted humour, a touch of cheekiness and the larrikin Aussie mindset in play. The tone is not intended to offend anyone.*

#### *4. CAD Rating*

*The 'Ship Yeah' advertisement has been approved by the appropriate regulatory body, CAD, who determine the classification of a TV commercial, and therefore the time slots in which appropriate to air, with this advertisement being given a "G" (General) rating.*

#### *5. Time slot*

*Channel Nine, who aired the State of Origin, considered the G classified TVC was suitable to run during the State of Origin. Further, section 2.3.3 of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice states:*

*Sports Programs do not require classification and may be shown at any time, however a Licensee will exercise care in selecting material for broadcast, having regard to:*

- a) the likely audience of the Program or Program Promotion; and*
- b) any identifiable public interest reason for presenting the Program or Program*



*Promotion.*

*Given the G rated advertisement was advertised during a sports program which did not require classification, P&O considers that the advertisement was aired during an appropriate time slot.*

#### *6. Past decisions of The Board*

*The Advertising Standards Board (the Board) as it was known, previously dismissed similar complaints against other companies regarding the use of the phrases 'Oh sheet!' SCA Hygiene Australasia in 0291/15 and 'up Ship Creek' by AAMi in 0064/17.*

*In 0064/17, the Board found that:*

*'Although the use of 'Ship Creek' may be described as a play on words, no inappropriate language is used within the ad and the pronunciation of the word in question is clearly 'ship' reinforced visually by the 'Ship Creek' sign (at 00:13} ... The Board noted the repeated use of the phrase 'Ship Creek' and considered that while this does emphasise the reference to 'shit creek' in the Board's view the overall tone is light-hearted and humorous and the language used is not inappropriate in the circumstances and does not amount to strong or obscene language.'*

*Similarly, in 0291/15 the advertisement showed scenes of various people reacting to a spill in their homes by saying the word 'sheet' and immediately reaching for a sheet of paper towel. The Board determined that:*

*'in the context of an advertisement for paper towel, the implication of a mild swear word is not inappropriate and would not be considered strong or obscene language by most members of the community'.*

*For the above reasons, P&O considers that the complaints should be dismissed.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainants' concern that the advertisement uses inappropriate language.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser did not provide a response.



The Panel 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 (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided”.

The Panel noted that this TV advertisement features information about deals on P&O cruises and includes a voice over stating ‘am I on board with that?’ and a man on a deckchair responding ‘ship yeah’.

The Panel noted the complainants’ concerns that the language depicted is inappropriate innuendo.

The Panel considered that the advertisement uses the word ‘ship’ and although there is an inference to stronger language the word ‘shit’ is not in the advertisement.

The Panel noted that it had previously considered a complaint about another advertisement which used the word ‘ship’ in case 0064/17, in which:

“The Board acknowledged that some members of the community may find a reference to the word ‘shit’ to be inappropriate but considered that this word is not actually spoken in the advertisement. The Board noted the repeated use of the phrase ‘Ship Creek’ and considered that while this does emphasise the reference to ‘shit creek’ in the Board’s view the overall tone is light-hearted and humorous and the language used is not inappropriate in the circumstances and does not amount to strong or obscene language..”

In the current advertisement the Panel considered that the use of the word ship was directly related to the advertised service (a cruise ship) and was used in a humorous and light-hearted manner.

The Panel acknowledged that some members of the community may find the use of the phrase ‘ship yeah’ to be inappropriate as it can be interpreted as a reference to ‘shit yeah’ but considered that the actual word used – ship - is not strong or obscene language and is not inappropriate in the context of advertising a cruise ship.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not use strong or obscene language and that the language was not inappropriate in the circumstances. The Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

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

