



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0309/18
2	Advertiser	Caloundra Big Screen Cinemas
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Print
5	Date of Determination	11/07/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion
- 2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This print advertisement features the text "HOLY SHIT" with a censored sign through the "HI" in "SHIT".

THE COMPLAINT

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

As a Christian I am offended by, and object to, the use of the word "HOLY" linked to a camouflaged "S-T" as an attention-grabbing advertisement for family-friendly ticket prices. I am also offended by the use of thinly-disguised "S-T" in an advertisement that refers to ticket prices for patrons aged 3 and up and just before the start of the school holidays. The use of such language must surely fall below acceptable community standards. I have written separately to the cinema and the Sunshine Coast Daily with my complaints.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE





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

The advertiser did not provide a response to the complaint.

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 complainant's 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 billboard advertisement features the words 'holy s**t' with a censored sign obscuring the word 's**t'.

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the language depicted is vulgar and offensive to Christians.

The Panel considered that the word is not written in full and has been obscured by the censored sign.

In the Panel's view the word being obscured would mean that most young children would not be able to understand the word that was written.

The Panel considered that older children and adults are able to understand the inference to the word 'shit', however considered that consistent with previous determinations (0291/18, 0079/18, 0330/17, 0064/15) this language was not inappropriate for the audience.

Consistent with the Practice Note for the Code, the majority of the Panel noted that the word "shit" is generally considered to be mild, colloquial language by most members of the community and that the use in this advertisement was not aggressive or inappropriate.



The Panel noted some community concern over the pairing of blasphemy with swearing, increasing the impact of the language. Taken together, the majority of the Panel believed a broad audience would tolerate the bold headline.

The Panel considered the term 'holy' is commonly used to provide emphasis to a shocking or alarming situation and would be considered by most members of the community to not be inappropriate in this context.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not use strong or obscene language and that the language was not inappropriate. 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.

