



Case Report

1	Case Number	0326/11
2	Advertiser	Bonds Industries Ltd
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	14/09/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Sex/sexuality/nudity Treat with sensitivity - Sexualization of Children
- 2.3 - Sex/sexuality/nudity Treat with sensitivity to relevant audience
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Sex

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A young woman is shown walking through a garden and then jumping in to a swimming pool. She is wearing different sets of Bonds underwear in different scenes. The words "Feel the colour. Microfibre and Mesh hipsters" appear on screen.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I am a midwife. I feel it has a strong sexual connotation; it makes it look COOL to wear them in public, so natural! The truth is males will see that as a sexual arousal, it is almost pornographic.

The ad focuses on the young girls bodies and zooms in on their wet underwear. It is offensive and sexualises young teenage girls. It is embarrassing for men and boys to watch and is a paedophile`s dream.

It`s a girl in under wear that doesn't leave much for your imagination. I was watching it with my parents and they are disgusted as well we change the channel but sometimes we cannot make it before it comes on. This is not accepted and if it was ok then I'm never watching TV! I even discussed it at work and the girls agree... the guys at work said what type of bonds knickers do we wear. This is enough evidence how offensive this ad is for women. Please take it off air and give bonds a written warning or something please.

It was too sexualised and was too focused on the lady's bottom especially when in the pool. Too inappropriate.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thank you for inviting our response to this complaint.

In this ad, we follow actor and Bonds ambassador Rachel Taylor, dressed in a Bonds bra, singlet and hipsters walking down a staircase and through a garden. The ad ends with her jumping into a swimming pool in her bra, chesty and hipsters. Super comes up: Feel the Colour, new mesh and microfibre hipsters.

Bonds takes its role as an advertiser very seriously. In this particular ad we engaged actor Rachel Taylor aged 27 years who has a realistic and healthy body shape to appear as our hero. Rachel is a successful actor and a strong female role models for all women particularly our target audience of women 20 + yrs.

In the ad, she is set in the privacy of her back yard and is dressed in a Bonds bra of full coverage, a singlet of full coverage and either mesh or microfiber hipsters. The hipsters are either mesh underwear which are fully lined or the microfiber underwear which are in no way see through. In the final frame when she surfaces from jumping into the water, we briefly see her lying above the water in the mesh underwear, this was again fully lined allowing for complete modesty. We then cut to her facial expression of laughing and youthful fun.

We deny vehemently that the ad contravenes any aspect of section 2 of the standards, specifically:

- It does not sexualise children – the actor in this case is 27 yrs.*
- The actor has a realistic and healthy body shape*
- The ad is set in a private backyard setting*
- The underwear allows for complete modesty*

Please let us know if you require further information.

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 complainant’s concerns that the advertisement features highly sexualized images of a young woman in her underwear.

The Board reviewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board first 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, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief.'

The Board noted that the advertisement features a woman walking through a garden in various different coloured pairs of underpants and singlet and eventually jumping into a pool.

The Board considered the complainants' concerns that the advertisement is offensive and objectifies women. The Board noted that the advertisement shows close-up images of the young woman and that the slow-motion camera shots focus on her groin area. The Board considered that it is appropriate for an underwear advertisement to draw attention to the colours and detail of the underwear and that, in the Board's view, the focus is on the underwear and not a demeaning or exploitative depiction of a woman.

Based on the above, the Board determined that the advertisement did not objectify women and did not depict any material that discriminated against or vilified any person or section of society. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant programme time zone".

The Board noted that the product being advertised is a range of underwear and that it is acceptable for the advertiser to advertise its product to demonstrate how it is worn and to highlight what differentiates it from other brands. The Board noted the advertisement featured no nudity and that the focus of the advertisement was clearly on the underwear worn by the woman. The Board considered the woman's movements were intended to evoke fun and youthful vitality and were not sexually suggestive.

The Board noted there is a level of community concern about the sexualisation of children and considered that the advertisement did not bring the issue of sex to children, or depict or encourage excessive interest or involvement in sexual activity. The Board considered that the woman in the advertisement is young in appearance but is clearly an adult woman, and that it is not inappropriate for her to be portrayed in this way for the purposes of promoting underwear.

The Board also considered that the women in the advertisement did not appear to be unrealistically thin and that the advertisement did not depict the woman in a manner that was exploitative of young women and did not present unhealthy body shapes.

The Board considered that the advertisement was not sexually suggestive or sexualised and did treat the product and target audience with sensitivity and therefore did not breach section 2.3 of the Code.

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