



Case Report

1	Case Number	0334/15
2	Advertiser	ANZ Banking Group Ltd
3	Product	Finance/Investment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	26/08/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement shows young girls together in a group. As the advertisement opens, information about the development of girls' brains, ability to speak and ability to read is quoted in a voice over. As the advertisement progresses, facts about outcomes for women in the areas of employment, government and income are read out by the girls. The advertisement concludes with the statement "Girls start off so far ahead, but the system is not designed for women to succeed. Let's create one that is".

THE COMPLAINT

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

Blatant sexism. They start off by telling us that little girls are smarter than little boys, and on it goes. Really, what are they trying to do, begin a war of the sexes.

This ad is exceptionally biased. It appears to have been written by a woman with strong feminist views. This particular advertisement insinuates that women are being disadvantaged in the business world but makes zero references to the numerous advantages that they receive over men. This ad also ends with a girl screaming "enough" in an exceptionally high-pitched tone which would be painful to many viewers.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We note that the complaints submitted pertain to section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics which states: 2.1 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people 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.

You have asked for us to comment on how our ad deals with all parts of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics:

2.1 Discrimination or vilification

The advertisement is specifically about girls and women. It does not vilify boys or men. The purpose of the advertisement is to show that systems are not designed to support women, not to be discriminatory against either gender.

Based on credible third party, primary research (which has been sourced and referenced within the advertising), the campaign aims to shine a light on the current factual statistics about how women fare globally in the areas of management, education, government and income and highlight the juxtaposition of these outcomes with the promise and potential we see reported in early developmental studies of children the world over (and which ANZ has had corroborated by an independent medical researcher - copy of assessment provided)

2.2 Exploitive & degrading

We cast girls to read the statistics as we had verified through medical research that girls on average read before boys. It was appropriate therefore to have young girls provide the statistics in the TVC.

2.3 Violence

Not applicable. There is no violence or harm done to any of the girls in the TVC.

2.4 Sex, Sexuality and nudity

All girls are appropriately dressed in age appropriate clothing. Girls are represented as young girls – not adult women and are not portraying or communicating any messaging of a sexual nature.

2.5 Language

The advertisement does not contain any offensive language

2.6 Health & Safety

Filming was supervised by a nurse and each girl's parent/guardian was on set at all times. Working time was restricted to industry standard hours for filming children.

You have also asked for comprehensive comments in relation to the complaint. These are provided below:

Response to Complaint received on 10 August 2015, Sky News Channel

Assertions made about developmental processes for girls are validated by research, which ANZ also had corroborated by an independent medical researcher. The objective of the advertisement is not to “begin a war of the sexes”, but to show facts about systems that do not help women to succeed. All the facts raised in the advertisement have been rigorously researched and validated.

Response to Complaint received 7 August 2015, Channel 9

All assertions made in the advertisement have been rigorously researched and validated – they point to outcomes for women rather than disadvantages they face in the business world. The young karate girl (Mahiro) uses a martial arts manoeuvre and call out of enough (at a regulation compliant sound level) to illustrate her frustration with the outcomes currently experienced by women around the world and to highlight the need for systems to be designed to better support women.

Additional communications within this overall campaign go on to demonstrate some of the actions that ANZ is taking to help change things for its own staff, customers and the broader community.

All information and primary research based statistics put forward in our advertising have been rigorously analysed, validated and appropriately sourced. Further information can be found in the ANZ Women's report, a comprehensive compilation of data which draws on a number of sources from the public sector, academia, non-profit and international organisation - which can be found here:

<http://www.women.anz.com/content/dam/Women/Documents/pdf/ANZ-Womens-Report-July-2015.pdf>

We have been delighted with the support we have seen for this campaign from public, corporate and government including broader campaign support from : Former Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon. Julia Gillard, who officiated the launch of the campaign; Liz Broderick, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission; and Senator, The Hon. Michaela Cash, Minister assisting the Prime Minister for Women, both of whom contributed to the opening foreword of the ANZ Women's Report.

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' concern that the advertisement is sexist in its portrayal of statistics on how the genders compare and are treated.

The Board noted the complainant's concern over the high-pitched screaming of the girl at the end of the advertisement and considered that this issue does not fall under the provisions of the Code therefore the complainant should address this issue with the advertiser or with Free TV.

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 that this television advertisement features information about how boys and girls develop differently in their formative years before quoting statistics regarding outcomes for women in the workplace.

The Board noted that the information presented in the advertisement is backed up by research and considered that it is presented in a factual manner intended to educate the viewer.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed a similar complaint about an advertisement which highlighted incidents of domestic violence against women in case 0144/11 where:

“The Board noted the advertiser's response that their advertising campaign was based on research conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which suggests that the majority of perpetrators of domestic violence are men, and that their advertisement was tailored to men for this reason.

The Board acknowledged that women are also responsible for domestic violence, however the Board noted that the advertisement does not state that only men are responsible, and considered that it was reasonable for the advertiser to target a particular demographic in order to garner the best results.”

In the current advertisement the Board noted that the advertiser is presenting validated facts with regards to inequalities between the genders and considered that consistent with its previous determination, the content of an advertisement that highlights and identifies a particular issue of inequality within the community is not of itself discriminatory.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of their gender.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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

