



Case Report

1	Case Number	0337/15
2	Advertiser	Wicked Campers
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Transport
5	Date of Determination	09/09/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Wicked Camper van, rego: 107 VKF, with the slogan, "I don't like small cars or real big wowed - but sometimes I always find myself in them".

THE COMPLAINT

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

Our six year old daughter read the back of the van, then asked me what does that mean. It's sexist and degrading to women.

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.

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 concern that the advertisement is sexist and degrading to women.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser had not provided a 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 advertisement appears on the back of a Wicked Campers’ van, rego 107 VKF, and features the slogan, “I don’t like small cars or real big wowed – but sometimes I always find myself in them”.

The Board noted the use of the word, ‘wowed’ which means, ‘women who never cease to amaze you’ (Urban Dictionary, Online). The Board noted it was not clear if the advertiser had intended to use the word, ‘wowed’ or if this was an error.

The Board noted the reference to ‘real big wowed’ and considered that most members of the community, when viewing the advertisement, would interpret the advertisement to be making reference to ‘big women’. A minority of the Board considered that by comparing a big woman and a small car the advertisement is reducing women to an instrumental function in that they are something to be used. A minority of the Board considered that the advertisement makes you think less of big women and that overall the advertisement did portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of their gender and physical characteristics.

Following considerable discussion however, the majority of the Board noted that the use of a word not in common Australian vernacular, ‘wowed’, and the overall bad grammar employed in the advertisement, meant that the meaning of the advertisement was not overly clear. The Board noted that the most likely take-out of the advertisement was that it was referring to ‘women’ but considered that the statement about not liking big women is not of itself discriminatory or vilifying.

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.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience”.

The Board noted the reference to finding yourself in a woman. The Board noted that this reference could be interpreted as a man engaging in sexual intercourse with a woman and considered that this is not an appropriate sexual reference for an outdoor advertisement.

The majority of the Board however noted that the advertisement does not use any explicit sexual language or images and considered that whilst some members of the community may find this implicit reference to sex to be inappropriate the Board considered that the advertisement is not explicit and is unlikely to be understood by children.

The Board considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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