



Case Report

1	Case Number	0342/16
2	Advertiser	LK Property Group Pty Ltd
3	Product	Real Estate
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Promo Material
5	Date of Determination	24/08/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement is a Marketing Brochure used to promote the advertiser's new development: Capitol Grand. The opening page of the brochure features the text, "Lead me into temptation" and is followed by pages featuring images of how the development will look both inside and out. Some images feature the actress Charlize Theron wearing evening wear and jewellery and in a variety of poses.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I felt the material was inappropriate, objectifying women and associating them with images irrelevant with buying real estate.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Complaint Reference No.: 0342/16

Advertising complaint: LK Group Capitol Grand campaign featuring Charlize Theron.

We refer to the complaint made to the Advertising Standards Bureau on # regarding an advertisement campaign for LK Group's showcase iconic six-star residential and luxury retail destination property, Capitol Grand South Yarra, featuring its brand ambassador Charlize Theron (Advertisement).

The campaign has been running for about 18 months now and will soon come to an end. We are not aware of any other complaints being received in connection with the Advertisement. LK Group takes all complaints seriously and is committed to ensuring its advertising complies with the law.

The complainant's reasons for concern are that the Advertisement is “inappropriate, objectifying women and associating them with images irrelevant with buying real estate”.

The relevant section of the Code which the complaint appears to be under is Section 2.2, in connection with the images within the Advertisement of Charlize Theron.

Section 2.2 provides that: Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.

We have carefully considered the complaint and the application of the relevant provisions of the Australian Association of National Advertisers Code of Ethics (Code). We believe that the Advertisement complies with the Code and, having regard to prevailing community standards, is appropriate in its depiction of Ms Theron and women generally, given the nature of the product, the intended audience, the concept and messaging, the nature of the images.

We have set out below further detail about the Advertisement and its concept below.

The vision for Capitol Grand is to be Australia's most iconic six-star residential and luxury retail destination offering six-star residences with unprecedented amenities akin to the world's best hotels. It is to be a development like no other. The Advertisement is aimed at a particular adult audience who are elite purchasers on an emotional level beyond a usual real estate campaign. The medium in which the Advertisement appears is electronic and print copy as well as hoarding on the actual development site and associated sales office. At some special events, for example Formula 1 Grand Prix, poster size printouts of the Advertisement were placed at strategic locations within the event.

To portray Capitol Grand's exclusivity and as a luxury destination, the advertising campaign was inspired by 7 positive principles. Each featured image in the Advertisement is a positive metaphor of the unique luxury attributes of Capitol Grand, such as:

- the beauty of the architecture;*
- the luxuriousness and comfort of the interior design;*
- the fine gourmet food;*
- fresh produce and retail experience that are available nearby;*
- luxury health and wellness amenities; and*
- the desirability of the destination.*

Ms Theron was engaged to be part of the campaign as she was considered a real life representation of what Capitol Grand embodies, being an internationally renowned sophisticated, independent and strong woman and also a style icon. Featuring Ms Theron in this way was directly relevant to the messages the Advertisement was seeking to convey about

the product.

A leading fashion photographer and Academy Award cinematographer were engaged to ensure the messages, that Capitol Grand is not just another real estate but a real estate with a luxury lifestyle and an elite status, are portrayed on a visual and emotional level.

Furthermore, each image was personally approved by Ms Theron and her management team to ensure that they correctly portrayed the intent of the Advertisement.

It is a sophisticated and artistic campaign which has been tastefully executed. It conveys luxury and sensuality in a respectful, positive and appropriate way. The Advertisement does not show nudity or overtly display any sexual images. The featured shots portray a real woman in a strong and sophisticated way. They do not vilify, exploit or degrade Ms Theron or women generally.

Finally, we note that this is a high profile campaign which has been running for a long period of time with no adverse community reaction.

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 images of women in a manner which is objectifying and has no relevance to the product advertised.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board noted that this real estate brochure features external and internal images of the new development as well as images of the actress, Charlize Theron, posing in evening wear.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed a similar complaint about the use of a woman to promote furniture in case 0279/16 where:

“The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the use of a woman to promote furniture is gratuitous. The Board noted that advertisers are free to use whomever they wish in their advertisements and considered that furniture products are not a specifically male or female product. The Board noted that the woman in the advertisement is presented as a typical ‘promotions girl’ ...

... The Board acknowledged that some members of the community could find the use of an attractive woman to promote furniture to be exploitative but considered that the woman in the advertisement is complimentary to the advertised product rather than the main focus. The Board noted the woman is shown reclining on lounges or walking past furniture and considered that she is not posed or presented in a manner which is sexual or degrading.”

In the current advertisement the Board noted the advertiser's response that Charlize was chosen because she emulates many of the qualities they associate with their brand. The Board noted the images featuring Charlize and considered that she is presented in a manner which shows her as strong and empowered. The Board noted that Charlize is a well-known movie star and considered that by using a famous woman, with her consent, to promote a product is not exploitative and in the Board's view the manner in which Charlize is depicted is not degrading to her or to women in general.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading to any individual or group of people.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

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