



Case Report

1	Case Number	0344/15
2	Advertiser	Northern Territory Tourism
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	09/09/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Age
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The 'It's About Time' Tourism NT TV commercials feature a range of everyday Australians who are currently in their home town discussing their friends and relatives who have 'Gone to a Better Place'. That 'better place' relates to their friends and relatives being on holiday in the NT. There are three separate TVC's which form the TV component of the campaign and they have run nationally on Free-to-Air and Paid-TV from 26 Jul – 15 Aug 2015. The TV commercials consist of 1 x 60sec TVC and 2 x 30sec TVC's. The first half of the TVC's have everyday Australian talking to camera which then leads into footage of people enjoying the destination and activities available.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Suicide is NOT I repeat NOT an appropriate use of getting a product out... sigh

It is ageist in the extreme. I've already complained about this ad. And I spoke with someone from your organisation. Appalled that this is allowed on TV. Very upsetting. Ageism should be regarded as seriously as any other form of discrimination. Please pull this ad. Immediately.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The first complaint refers to the ads being 'ageist'. The complaint has no bearing as Ageism by definition is stereotyping and discriminating against individuals or groups based on their age. As you can see when you view the ads from the start we feature a range of everyday Australians in normal everyday situations including an older lady in her lounge room, an older man at the bowling club, a middle age man outside, a middle aged woman at work and children located outside their house. Within this spread of age groups we have purposely featured two older Australians as that is the target market whose attention we are trying to capture in the campaign. Currently 'Over 50's' make up over 50% of the Australian travellers who visit the NT each year and to appeal to this age group we feature and talk about older Australians in the TVC's.

In further campaigns the 'Gone to a Better Place' tag will also be featured when promoting the NT to 'backpackers', 'families and 'youth' groups depending on the target market we will be trying to attract. For the current campaign, as 'Over 50's' is our largest market segment, we are targeting this group initially and therefore need to talk to and feature them. We are definitely not trying to discriminate against them as we wish to appeal and attract this mature market.

The second complaint refers to the ads promoting 'Murder Suicide'. The only ad we can contemplate this complaint refers to is the 30sec TVC that is focused on the Top End and Darwin in particular. The shop keeper refers to her Sister being gone and taking her husband with her - she is referring to her Sister going to Darwin on holiday and taking her husband on holiday with her. Only if the ad is not seen in its entirety could someone reach a negative conclusion. Admittedly the beginning is quite sombre but this is to draw the consumer in so they pay attention and question what the shopkeeper is talking about. This question is then quickly and clearly outlined by the shopkeeper saying her sister has gone to Darwin and loves it so much they're never coming back.

No offense has been intended with these ads by using tongue-in-cheek humour in regards to a 'Going to a Better place' and that place being the NT. This humour has been used to highlight the issue of time moving very quickly and if people leave their NT holiday planning too long it may result in them missing out, and anyone who has been to the NT will confirm if you go now you'll never regret it.

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' concerns that the advertisement is ageist in its suggestion that a variety of mature aged people had died, and that it presents "murder suicide" in a humorous manner.

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 there are three different versions of this advertisement and each makes references to people having gone to a better place before clarifying that the better place is the Northern Territory.

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement is ageist. The Board noted the advertiser's response that the target market for this advertising campaign is the over 50s and considered that advertisers are free to target whichever age group or gender they wish, and can use actors of any age or gender to promote their products. In this instance the Board considered that the reference to mature aged people going on holiday was not of itself ageist.

The Board noted that the advertisements do contain a suggestion of the death of older people. The Board acknowledged that this suggestion could be uncomfortable for some people but considered that the suggestion is not strong or clear, is intended to be humorous and is quickly seen to be a reference to a holiday.

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 age.

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

The Board then considered Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety".

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement uses murder/suicide to promote the product.

The Board noted that whilst the various actors in the advertisement make reference to a person having gone to a better place and to having taken someone with them, the Board considered that these references are immediately qualified as being in reference to having gone on holiday. The Board noted that there is no mention of murder or suicide in the advertisement and considered that the advertisement is not using death to promote its product.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

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

