



Case Report

1	Case Number	0348/15
2	Advertiser	AAMI
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	09/09/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

We open on a mid-shot of man staring rather despondently to camera, in a leg brace on crutches. He's in the chintzy surrounds of his retired mother's house.

VO: If you're suddenly without an income, you may have to move back in with Mum.

We pull out to see the man, quite a burly, 'tradie' type, standing in the door way to the kitchen, catching a glimpse of his Mother allowing the dog to give her a big wet slobber on the face. The man looks dead ahead eyes wide in horror, as his toast falls out of his mouth.

VO1: Luckily, with AAMI Income Protection you won't have to. Get a quote today.

SUPER: AAMI Income Protection Insurance. Get a quote online today.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Seeing unnatural behaviours like that is sickening. AAMI should know better. How perverted acts like this will affect the public. This ad has been aired months before as well.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We would like to address some of the concerns and provide commentary relating to our advertising approach and the specific claims raised against Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.

At AAMI, we use character-driven humour across all our advertising to entertain and engage. The “Mum” ad mentioned was created to dramatise the consequences of not having income protection through a light hearted and humorous moment, with our “son” having to move back in with Mum. His Mother’s actions were designed to make the point about how “awkward” it would be moving back in with Mum.

In responding to all aspects of Section 2 of the AANA Advertising Code of Ethics, we would also maintain that the ad in question does not portray people or depict anything which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community (relating to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief). At AAMI, we feature both men and women in our character-driven ads, in various scenarios.

We also maintain that the advertising does not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people, and that there is no presentation or portrayal of violence. There is no use of strong or obscene language in this or any other AAMI advertising.

Finally, we also believe that the advertisement makes the point, with appropriate sensitivity to the interaction with Mum’s pet dog which was intended to be “awkward” and was believed to add to the humour rather than portray any kind of inappropriate or perverted acts. We complied to all health and safety regulations and the performing dog featured in the commercial was accompanied by its trained handler and owner during the making of the commercial and was at no time distressed. We believe in the duty of care to all animals and feel confident that the performing dog in the commercial was treated with care and respect at all times.

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 shows a woman kissing a dog which is unnatural and inappropriate.

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

The Board 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 that this television advertisement features a man who has moved back home witnessing his mum kissing her pet dog.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that kissing a dog is unnatural.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that it is not natural for a woman to kiss a dog. The Board noted it had previously considered a similar complaint about an advertisement featuring a dog licking a child’s face in case 0070/13 where:

“The Board noted the advertisement is for a flea prevention product for animals and depicts a dog licking a girl’s face. The Board noted that the girl is with her parents and considered that whilst many parents might not condone animals coming in to such close contact with their children, the action of a dog licking a child’s face is common within dog-owning households. The Board considered that most members of the community would agree that the practice of a dog licking a child’s face, whilst not to be encouraged, is not of itself a breach of community standards on health and safety.”

In the current advertisement the Board noted that it is common for pet owners to show affection to their animals, either by petting them, cuddling them or, in more extreme cases of pet ownership, to kiss them. The Board considered that the depiction of the woman kissing the dog in this advertisement is not sexualised but intended to reflect her over the top affection for her pet. The Board noted that this depiction is presented as undesirable and considered that the advertisement does not promote this behaviour between a pet owner and their animal.

Consistent with its previous determination the Board considered that whilst kissing a dog, or allowing a dog to lick your face or mouth, is not to be encouraged it is not of itself a breach of 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 complaint.