



Case Report

1	Case Number	0354/12
2	Advertiser	Target Australia Pty Ltd
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	12/09/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - nudity
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - sexualization of children

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement opens with a woman wearing peach coloured underpants who turns and walks away from the camera. We then see various women wearing various styles of underwear whilst a voiceover describes the Target range of underwear for all women.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This shocking advert must be taken off the screen to prevent perversion and possible rapes.

I object to both the very close up back and front shots of the woman in sheer apricot/light pink coloured briefs. On the close up front shot you can see her genitals through the fabric (nudity).

It shows young teens and older women parading scanty underwear and 'come hither' lingerie, all having a fun time together. It is not realistic, it makes the teenagers and the older women appear whorish. I object to it because it is not necessary at all for underwear to be advertised on any real model. Some of the girls in this ad appear to be very young, under 18. I cannot understand how it got past censorship. I imagine the pervs watching TV think it is a real hit.

It has blatant sexual overtones. It is inappropriate.

The first girl we see has on a pair of peach coloured undies that are all but see through. When she turns around you can see the shape of her labia. When we see her again you can definitely see the shape. It's just about pornographic.

It is inappropriate to have a sexualised close up ad of see through underwear. If viewers want to see this, then they would buy a men's magazine.

The advertisement opens with a gratuitous close up shot of a very young woman (I doubt older than 16) bottom as she saunters along a hallway, in a deliberately provocative manner. Later in the ad it shows her from the same distance but the close up is of her clearly hairless crotch (given the fact she looks old enough to have reached puberty I assume the lack of hair is a fashion decision). The random shots of 'real' or plus size woman in their underwear do nothing to soften what already looks like 'soft porn'. As a woman and a mother I have come to accept that many parts of our society no longer value the innocence of young women but it disappoints me greatly that even a 'family' brand such as Target would stoop to this cheap titillation to boost the sale of undies. Their research is clearly lacking if they think these images motivate women to buy - I'm sure my husband and teenage sons probably loved the commercial - but presumably they are not the intended audience of this product? I doubt my complaint will mean anything but it makes me feel so sad to do nothing as a generation of beautiful young girls are lost to exploitation.

I feel the ad is provocative and erring on the side of soft porn with women parading in underwear that is provocative. It sexualises women. It is unnecessary to show the women in the underwear in this particular ad and particularly in this timeslot when children and young boys/ teenagers / men could be watching. We need to protect our young people from being exposed to such images when watching TV as they are exposed to sexual images far too often. I feel that advertisers often like to push the boundaries and see what they can get away with, with their advertising and if we don't put some limitations and boundaries on this the ads will continually get more and more provocative. I feel that this particular ad has pushed the boundaries too far. I would expect to see images like that in a MA15+ movie not in an ad that is showing during family television time.

Totally see-through pair of peach coloured underpants to open the commercial. Then same girl in peach coloured underwear at the end and you can actually see the separation of her vagina and faint hair see through. Really Target, you need to edit that out.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We refer to your letter dated 13 August, regarding complaints received in relation to a lingerie television campaign Target Australia Pty Ltd (Target) has recently conducted. Target does not consider the advertisement to breach any part of Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (the Code) or the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children (the Children's Code). Target submits that the advertisement does not fall within the definition of an "Advertising or Marketing Communication to Children" as set out in section 1 of the Children's Code. The advertisement is not primarily directed to children aged 14 years or younger and is not an advertisement for a product which is targeted toward or has principal appeal for children. The relevant sections of the Code provide as follows: 2.2 Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of

people. 2.4 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience. The first complaint describes the advertisement as “provocative and erring on the side of soft porn” and implies that it would be more deserving of a MA15+ rating. The complainant considers the advertisement to sexualise women and that it is “unnecessary to show the women in the underwear in this particular ad and timeslot”. We respectfully disagree with the complainant. We consider the advertisement to be appropriate and in line with Target’s brand values. The target market for the advertising is women and the main message is that the Target range of underwear is suitable for women of all shapes and sizes in a variety of situations. We note that the advertisement was provided with a CAD rating of PG and has only been displayed to the public in accordance with that rating in an appropriate timeslot from the evening of Sunday, 12 August. We submit that it is both necessary and reasonable to depict our products being modelled in the manner intended in the advertisement. As the campaign is for lingerie, this means showing women wearing underwear. We do not consider that the advertisement sexualises or objectifies women - quite the opposite, we show confident women of all shapes and ages, in their own environments wearing Target underwear. We consider that the advertisement is appropriate for and reflective of our target market and would not offend the sensibilities of the general public within the context of an advertisement for lingerie. While the advertisement contains the word “sexy” in the context of “There’s underwear for when you’re feeling sexy”, we note that section 2.2 of the Code prohibits the use of sexual appeal in a manner which is “exploitative and degrading”. We submit that the images in the advertisement are in keeping with typical lingerie advertising and would not be considered exploitative and degrading by the general community. The second complaint relates to section 2.4 of the Code requiring “sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience”. It alleges that the peach coloured underpants shown in the opening and closing of the advertisement are “totally see through” showing the model’s vagina and pubic hair. I can confirm that the underpants in question were considered to be somewhat see through during filming and the model is in fact wearing another pair of skin-coloured briefs underneath. Accordingly, as a matter of fact, the complainant could not have seen what she claims to have. We consider that the advertisement does not breach section 2.4 of the Code. Target has however taken this complaint into consideration and removed the offending scenes from the television commercial. We advise the television advertisement, with the offending scenes referred to above removed, will continue to run until 25 August. Target is committed to upholding the standards of the Code in its advertising and appreciates your review of our response to these complaints.

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 sexually objectifies women and features close-ups of a woman’s groin which is inappropriate and not suitable for viewing.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.2 of the Code which 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 the advertisement features women of different shapes and sizes wearing different styles of Target underwear.

The Board noted that the women are presented in a manner which is clearly intended to show the underwear they are promoting and that the women appear happy and confident.

The Board considered that the women in the advertisement are not represented in a manner which could be considered exploitative and degrading.

The Board determined that the advertisements did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading and did not breach Section 2.2 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 complainants’ concerns regarding the close-up images of the woman wearing the peach coloured underwear and considered that the images are very brief and that the specifics of the model’s private area are not visible. The Board noted that it is reasonable to expect an underwear advertisement to feature imagery of underwear and considered that the manner in which the underwear is presented in the advertisement is appropriate.

The Board noted that all woman featured in the advertisement appeared to be adult and considered that the advertisement did not present the women in a manner which was sexualised.

The Board noted that the advertisement had been rated PG by CAD and considered that the content of the advertisement was appropriate for the relevant PG audience which could include children.

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