



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
PO Box 5110, Braddon ACT 2612  
P (02) 6173 1500 | F (02) 6262 9833

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Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
ACN 084 452 666

# Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0355/18</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Hanes Brands Inc</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Clothing</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV - Free to air</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>22/08/2018</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

- Other Social Values
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.2 - Objectification Degrading - women
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement depicts a woman in bright pink underwear looking out over a valley. A woman holding a machete and wearing black underwear cuts her way through thick wattle bushes. A woman wearing pink underwear walks through trees, with a giant log slung over her shoulders. Another woman wearing grey underwear is lying in a hammock and a large huntsman spider crawls over her stomach. All the women stand together, with another woman in tan underwear sitting on a wooden throne. She smashes a macadamia nut with her bare hands and puts it into her mouth. The words 'Join the Queendom' appear.

## THE COMPLAINT

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





*I am offended by this advert due to the unshaved arm pits this female portrays.*

*Bonds women's underwear and is demeaning to women - refers to Queendom, depicts women negatively including one particular female with very hairy underarms.*

*I feel the advertisement depicts soft porn. The girls are wearing tight underwear with hairy underarms which I think is grotesque. Legs open, very suggestive and disgusting. It is an insult to women*

*I am offended by the blatant open legs of the female showing her private parts. It leaves little to ones imagination. Also the hairy arm puts, this is really not necessary and quite offensive as well*

*One of the models wearing the bikini underpants and bra is sitting with her legs spread wide apart. The camera stops in front of her for a number of seconds. A full outline of her genitals are visible through the underwear.*

*the body hair on the girls is quite off putting to myself and my wife feels sick when the ad comes onto the screen .this is due to our religious beliefs .*

*The females practically have all their breasts exposed and sit with their legs spread in nude coloured underwear. It is sexualising the females and if a man sat there with his testicles hanging out the ad would not be shown.*

*The final scene draws your eye to the ladies vaginal area. The whole ad is subjective and rude. Borders on pornographic.*

*Many females were shown wearing only bras and underwear. I found it very pornographic, especially at dinnertime when kids are watching TV. I don't feel comfortable sitting in the room with male friends and as a woman I feel the advertisement was objectifying women.*

*The latest Bond ad is so disgusting and degrading, especially the scene at the end of the ad. There is no need for that and I find I have to change channels because it is so sexualised. Embarrassing, disgusting and perverted.*

*The lewd suggestive position of one woman in particular with her legs wide open. The fabric so scant across her vulva you could make out the shape of her.*

*The advertisement is a BONDS commercial. It is not offensive that the product is being advertised it is offensive that BONDS uses a huntsman spider crawling over a model in the advertisement. For a particularly bad phobia this catches me off guard every time*



*it comes on and there is no time to change the tv when it does come on.*

*As a woman I find it offensive that it zooms in on her vagina basically and it gives me a huge panic attack everytime I see it. Its disgusting and certainly not an add made to appeal to women. This is objectifying women.*

#### **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*We write on behalf of our client, Bonds (Hanes Brands) in response to complaints against the Bonds 'Join the Queendom' TVC, specifically relating to the following sections of the AANA Code of Ethics: 2.2 Objectification/Degrading (women) and 2.4 Sex, sexuality and nudity (general).*

*Bonds is an underwear and apparel brand, best known for creating fun and fashionable undies for the whole family. On July 18th 2018, Bonds launched a new women's Originals range of underwear and bras.*

*The 'Join the Queendom' campaign is aimed towards women, and celebrates their strength, confidence and independence.*

*The 'Join the Queendom' ad starts with a girl in her twenties looking out over a valley. We cut to a behind shot and see she is clad in bright pink Bonds underwear. We cut to a woman holding a machete as she cuts her way through thick wattle bushes. She emerges and we see she is wearing black Bonds underwear. We cut to a woman walking through trees, with a giant log slung over her shoulders. She passes the camera and we see another woman lying in a hammock slung between 2 trees. A large huntsman spider crawls over her stomach. She's wearing grey Bonds, and we cut to her face as she relaxes, unfazed by the spider. We cut to see all the women standing around together, with another woman sitting in the middle atop a decorated wooden throne. The camera zooms in as she smashes a macadamia nut with her bare hands and puts it into her mouth. A super appears 'Join the Queendom' as she chews with satisfaction, eyes straight to camera.*

*In regard to the complaints that have been made to the ASB under Complaint Reference Number 1355/18, regarding section 2.2 & 2.4 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics, we take the opportunity to refute as follows:*

*We disagree that this ad is degrading towards women. Quite to the contrary, this ad celebrates the physical and mental strength of these women, who live together as a community in the Australian bush.*



*The product is secured to cover their genitals and breasts at all times and the close ups throughout the TVCs are used to highlight product features including the fit, fabrication and colour. The close ups are intended to be of product, not a body part. The scenes are not intended, nor should they be interpreted, to be sexual in any way. We also refute any inference that women's bodies in underwear or references to underwear are inherently sexual or devaluing to women, or that women are obliged (unlike men) to sit with their legs closed at all times.*

*The scene at the end, in which the hero girl sits on the throne where she cracks a nut with her fist and eats it is intended to show her strength and confidence, as she sits among the other women of her community. There is nothing inherently sexual about the way she sits, and the key focus of this scene is on her hand action and then her face, as she chews the nuts with her piercing eyes looking directly at the viewer.*

*We refute the suggestion that showing natural hair on women's armpits is offensive or off putting. Armpits and their respective hair, are a normal part of the human body, with no sexual connotations.*

*The huntsman was specifically selected for this scene as they are deemed non-toxic and their venom isn't considered to be dangerous to humans. The scene was filmed with an experienced spider wrangler on hand, and we took every precaution to ensure that there were no risks to the spider or the talent. The intention of this scene is to celebrate the mental and emotional strength each woman possesses.*

*For the above reasons, we assert this ad also complies with section 2.2 of the Code, as well as all other parts of section 2.*

*In addition, the 'Join the Queendom' TVC received a PG classification from CAD allowing it to be broadcast during programs that are P rated. By definition, parental guidance is recommended for programs with a P rating, but they are not classified as children's programming. The media was bought with an intended audience of women aged 18 – 39 and the classification of the TVC as well as instructions to networks ensures it is not on air during classified children's programming nor during adjacent periods.*

*We trust upon viewing the TVC and our written response you will agree that the Bonds 'Join the Queendom' TVC does not breach the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Ad Standards Community Panel ("Panel") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").



The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement features scenes which are objectifying and degrading of women, are over-sexualised, depict nudity and genitals, and depict tasteless imagery.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Panel noted that the television advertisement features women in the jungle in their underwear.

The Panel 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 or degrading of any individual or group of people."

The Panel noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of the terms exploitative and degrading:

Exploitative - (a) taking advantage of the sexual appeal of a person, or group of people, by depicting them as objects or commodities; or (b) focussing on their body parts where this bears no direct relevance to the product or service being advertised. Degrading – lowering in character or quality a person or group of people.

The Panel noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement is objectifying and degrading of women.

The Panel first considered whether the advertisement used sexual appeal.

The Panel noted the advertisement featured women in underwear in the jungle. The women were variously depicted as looking out over a valley, cutting a way through bushes with a machete, carrying a log, and reclining in a hammock. The Panel considered that the depiction of the women in underwear in combination with their activities did constitute sexual appeal.

The Panel then considered whether the advertisement used sexual appeal in a manner that was exploitative of an individual or group of people.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the theme of the advertisement is 'Join the Queendom', and celebrates the physical and mental strength of the women in the advertisement.

The Panel considered that although there is focus on the women's body parts, this is directly relevant to the product of underwear being advertised, and is intended to highlight the fit and make of the product.



The Panel noted that there are scenes that show the women sitting with their legs apart and noted that some members of the community may consider that to be degrading or un-ladylike, however considered that this is not of itself a depiction of the women as objects or commodities in the context of them in the jungle acting as active women.

The Panel noted that the advertisement is using the sexual appeal of the women, but that the advertisement does not depict the women as object, unnecessarily or inappropriately focus on their body parts or lower them in character or quality. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative or degrading of the women or women in general.

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

The Panel 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 Panel noted the advertisement had been given a 'P' rating by CAD (parental guidance recommended and not in children's programs) and was aired at a time appropriate to the rating ([http://www.freetv.com.au/media/CAD/Placement\\_Codes.pdf](http://www.freetv.com.au/media/CAD/Placement_Codes.pdf)). The Panel noted that the audience for this advertisement would be broad and would include children.

The Panel noted that the advertisement did include some close ups of the women's bodies, but in all cases the focus was on the product being advertised, not on the particular body parts.

The Panel considered that the people in the advertisement were appropriately covered by the underwear and that there were no breasts or genitals visible.

The Panel noted that some complainant's raised concerns that the outline of the women's genitals was visible. The Panel considered two scenes that depicted a close-up image of the underpants.

In the first scene, a woman is wearing grey underwear and reclining in a hammock. The Panel considered that her genitals were not visible through the underpants' material, however noted that a crease was visible which may be a depiction of the outline of her genitals. The Panel considered that this crease was ambiguous and may be a crease in the material of the underwear. The Panel noted that the focus on the woman's body was clearer in this scene due to the spider, but that this scene was not strongly sexualised. The Panel considered that this scene was fleeting and was not inappropriate in the context of an advertisement for underwear.



In the second scene, a woman in flesh coloured underwear sits on a log with her legs apart. The Panel noted that some complainant's stated that her genitals were visible through the material. The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted that there is an impression of movement or shadowing by the underwear, but considered that there is not a clear depiction of the woman's genitals.

The Panel considered the level of nudity in the advertisements was mild and consistent with the promotion of underwear.

Further, the Panel considered the actions and poses of the people in the advertisement were consistent with people undertaking activities in the jungle and were not strongly sexualised.

The Panel considered the overall tone of the advertisement was not sexualised and the level of nudity in the advertisement was only mild. The Panel considered that the advertisement was appropriate to be viewed by a broad audience which would include children.

The Panel considered that the advertisement was not strongly sexualised and that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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

The Panel 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 Panel noted that the advertisement features a scene of a woman with a Huntsman spider crawling on her abdomen.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that Huntsman spiders are not toxic and their venom is not considered dangerous to humans. The Panel considered that the advertisement does not contain a call to action for members of the public to interact with spiders.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety. The Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finally, the Panel noted that several complaints referred to a scene involving a woman's unshaven armpits. The Panel noted that it cannot adjudicate on this scene. While some members of the community may find this scene in poor or questionable taste, this is not an issue under the Code and cannot be considered by the Panel.



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



