



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0356-21
2. Advertiser :	Gympie Music Muster
3. Product :	Entertainment
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Billboard
5. Date of Determination	19-Jan-2022
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.5 Language

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This billboard advertisement features a promotion for the Gympie Music Muster. A flying crow in a hat and boots has a speech bubble reading, "2022 Farrk yeah!"

THE COMPLAINT

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

*The word Farrk has been used as a swear word.
The billboard is in public view of young children.*

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*In response to the complaint raised under Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics we submit the following justification for consideration at the forth coming meeting of the Ad Standards Community Panel (the Community Panel).
The crow mascot originated from our famous venue at the Muster, "The Crow Bar" and is an integral part of our marketing strategy. I have included an additional promotional video demonstrating the use of our mascot to promote our region and event.*



We believe the only relevant section of the code is 2.5 – Language. We draw your attention to the following guidelines provided by the AANA.

The “f” and “c” words are generally viewed as harmful, unacceptable and not permitted.

Advertising which uses rhyming words, or similar words to strong language, will not be seen to be strong or obscene when used in a light-hearted and humorous manner.

Words and phrases which are innocuous and in widespread and common use in the Australian vernacular are permitted provided they are used in a manner consistent with their colloquial usage, for example with gentle humour, and not used in a demeaning or aggressive manner.

Nonverbal representations of the “f” word are also generally not permitted. Words and acronyms that play on the ‘f’ word, e.g. WTF and LMFAO, but do not use the actual word are normally considered acceptable if used in a light hearted and humorous way, are in subtitle rather than spoken word and are appropriate to the situation.

- *The expression of “Farrk Yeah” by the crow is a humorous version of the more explicit “F... Yeah”.*
- *The “F” word has not been used.*
- *Words such as Farrk, Friggin (0589-17 Youfoodz) and Freakin (0338-10 Retail Food Group) are rhyming or similar words and have exactly the same meaning in the context.*
- *Unlike the use of “Forking” (0466-17 Youfoodz), “Farrk” is in written text in a speech bubble, made by a crow not a child.*
- *“Farrk is a similar word to the “F” word and has been used in a light hearted and humorous manner. Graham Kennedy and Bert Newton first used the similar bird call as a joke on television in March 1975 and has been ubiquitous in the community since.*
- *The expression “F... Yeah” is commonly used colloquially for celebration and jubilation. E.g. The expression was used by an Olympic swimmer on television in response to winning a gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics. The sign depicts our crow mascot relaying jubilation in response to our announcement of the 2022 Gympie Music Muster after 2 consecutive years of cancellation due to COVID-19 with an appropriate substitution representing a crow’s call.*
- *In no way is the language or intent of the advertisement aggressive, demeaning, sexual, discriminatory, demeaning or exploitative.*

We believe we have complied with all the standards set by the AANA. Prior to releasing the billboard, we consulted and sought approval on the content from our relevant government partners who assisted in funding the promotional material. We are a not-for-profit organisation with the purpose of bettering the Gympie and rural communities. In all our endeavours we are cognisant of community expectations and as such we will cooperate fully with the AANA findings in relation to this matter.

THE DETERMINATION



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

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement contains a swear word which can be viewed by children.

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

Section 2.5: Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided.

The Panel noted that the Practice Note for this section of the Code includes:

"The "f" and "c" words are generally viewed as harmful, unacceptable and not permitted. Nonverbal representations of the "f" word are also generally not permitted... Advertising which sufficiently beeps or censors language so that it cannot be understood will not be seen to be strong or obscene language."

The Panel noted that the billboard advertisement was by the side of the road and would be seen by a broad audience including children.

The Panel acknowledged that many members of the community would consider the word 'fuck' to be inappropriate due to strong language, however noted that the word used in the advertisement is actually "Farrk".

The Panel considered that to understand the implication of the language in the advertisement, the viewer would already need to be aware of the swear word, and considered that most young children would be unlikely to make this connection.

The Panel considered that the word was used in a positive manner and was not aggressive or demeaning.

The Panel considered that the use of the words 'farrk yeah' was appropriate to the circumstances of the crowd mascot being excited about the event, and was not inappropriate for the relevant broad audience and did not constitute strong or obscene language.

Section 2.5 conclusion

The Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaint.