



Case Report

1	Case Number	0361/12
2	Advertiser	Bonds Industries Ltd
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Outdoor
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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The print ad shows two female models posing 'in character' wearing Bonds underwear. One woman represents the 'The No Shows' dance tribe. She is posing side on, arm out in front of her with her head turned towards the viewers. The other woman represents the 'The Tails' dance tribe. She is replying to the other models dance move, posing in the opposite direction with her face turned back facing the other model. The copy at the bottom of the print ad sits next to a QR code and reads "Explore your shape". The QR code directs you to shop for your shape on the Bonds website.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I am upset that women are again being sexually objectified for an underwear commercial. It's unnecessary to have these women dancing provocatively with some shots in slow motion with close ups of the groin areas. They are both between a size 8 & 10 which is not the average Australian women sizes. I find these ads offensive in nature, nakedness and the message it is sending to young women and men about women's bodies and worth in society.

The lady in black underwear with the rose in her hair has her mouth slightly open in a really provocative manner. This is inappropriate as this objectifies to women and a sexual selling point and this poster/ad is in a family/tourist area.

I object to this advertisement as I believe it displays shamelessness. Children are exposed to shamelessness everywhere. This advertisement is displayed in an area where children can easily see it. It is disrespectful and I do not want to have to see something which is against my religious beliefs every time I drive into my street.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

This print advertisement has been developed as part of a multi-media campaign which extends across TV, Digital, Outdoor, In store and PR channels. The campaign objective was to show that Bonds has a wide range of underwear styles for all types of men and women. The advertising creative is built on the idea that consumers' choice of underwear is determined by their personality and lifestyle. Bonds uses its products physical features to personify the different Bonds wearers – grouping them into male and female 'underwear tribes'. The TVC brings the 'underwear tribes' idea to life with a 'dance-off'. Each tribe has a signature style, theme music and dance movements based on their underwear design and functionality. No one tribe is better than the other, they are all equally as important, and they are all very different. Bonds aim is to get consumers to identify with a tribe/style and shop for that style – the campaign slogan being 'Shop Your Shape'. The print creative features two female 'underwear tribes'. They are in poses, acting out their signature dance moves from the TVC. The tone of voice is playful, essentially the Bonds tone of voice. The models are wearing underwear as this is the product we are advertising as an underwear retailer. We challenge that this is sexually objectifying or offensive given it is in an appropriate context – we are selling underwear and that the creative context is lighthearted and playful. It is a dance-off.

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 is not appropriate for viewing by a broad audience.

The Board noted the complainants' concerns regarding the size of the models in the advertisement being smaller than the average Australian woman and noted that as this is not an issue which falls under the provisions of the Code the Board cannot consider this aspect of the complaint.

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 two women wearing Bonds' underwear and high heeled shoes and that the text reads, "explore your shape".

The Board noted that the women are posed 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 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 that the advertisement is visible to a broad audience that includes children. The Board noted that the poses of the women are playful rather than sexualised and considered that most members of the community would find the images used in these advertisements to be not inappropriate for a broad audience. The Board considered that it is reasonable to expect an underwear advertisement to feature imagery of underwear.

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