



Case Report

1	Case Number	0378/17
2	Advertiser	BCF
3	Product	Sport and Leisure
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Mail
5	Date of Determination	13/09/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This BCF advertisement is a 20 page saddle stitched booklet which promotes specific BCF products as part of the Father's Day Sale. The front page headline is 'Kit Out The BCFing Old Man' and features an image of a man with a foot resting on a kayak.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I think every Australian is well aware that when we use the word "F ing" then we are using a word that is not printable in newspapers and magazines across Australia.

I am extremely offended by this marketing phrase, the offensive part F...ing overrides the message and instantly projects offensive undertones, even if it is not intentional. It is very tacky and denotes the company logo. I've thrown my catalogue out and will not be stepping foot in a BCF store or buying any products whilst it produces this sort of advertising.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In regard to advertising complaint reference 0378/17, BCF Australia expresses the wish to respond to the complaint raised under Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics for review by the Advertising Standards Board. BCF Australia has taken the liberty to interpret the above complaints in order to correctly respond to the advertisement of concern. (An electronic copy of the advertisement is attached to the document.)

The BCF advertisement under review is a catalogue adaptation of the brand TV advertisement which has previously been dealt with under Complaint Reference 0434/16. This complaint was dismissed by the Advertising Standards Bureau on 26th October 2016. The catalogue version of this advertisement (which is the subject of this complaint) is a 20 page saddle stitched booklet which promotes specific BCF products as part of the Father's Day Sale. The front page headline is 'Kit Out The BCFing Old Man'.

As previously outlined in BCF's response to Complaint Reference 0434/16, the strategic position of the campaign is intended, given the nature of the business, to broaden the appeal of boating, camping and fishing as a way for anyone to escape the humdrum of the working week. The complaint refers to the meaning of 'BCFing' in the headline, suggesting that the 'F' denotes offensive language (Section 2.5 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics). This is not correct as the letters BCF have a direct translation to Boating, Camping and Fishing which is our core business and brand name. On the front cover, the headline 'Kit out the BCFing Old Man' has a direct translation to 'Kit out the Boating, Camping, Fishing Old Man', referring to father's who enjoy these outdoor past times.

With over 45% of BCF's target audience identifying as a family unit with children living at home (Stellar Market Research, September 2016); it is never our intention to use language that is offensive or inappropriate for children. We have tested the campaign concept with our customers through focus groups without issue, and have received a CAD Classification of W for the TV adaptation, which indicates the advertisement is suitable for broadcast at any time except during P and C programs or adjacent to P or C periods. With a clearly defined target audience of men aged 25-54, at no time do we ever target children.

BCF Australia regrets any offence taken by the complainants pertaining to this advertisement however BCF suggests that the advertisement is within the AANA code of ethics, community and Government standards, and that a reasonable person would not have grounds for complaint as it does not display any notion of offensive language.

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 features inappropriate language and is offensive.

The Board reviewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code.

Section 2.5 of the Code states: “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 Board noted that this print advertisement for BCF features an image of a man and a young girl surrounded by various boating, camping and fishing products and a headline which reads, “Kit out the BCFing Old Man. Your Father’s Day gift guide”.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed complaints about a similar print advertisement for the same advertiser in case 0578/16 where:

“The Board noted the current advertisement features on the cover of BCF catalogues and considered that the word ‘BCFing’ has less impact in its written form as it is clearly presented as an extension of the acronym ‘BCF’. The Board acknowledged that some members of the community could find this use of extending a word not normally extended to be crude and suggesting of a swear word but considered that most members of the community would find the advertisement to be cheeky but not inappropriate for the relevant audience of a boating, camping and fishing catalogue aimed at customers of such a store.”

The Board noted that the current advertisement is very similar in layout to the previously dismissed print advertisement and considered that consistent with its previous determination, the use of the word ‘BCFing’ is not strong or obscene language and the reference to ‘BCFing old man’ is a shortened way of saying ‘Boating, Camping, Fishing Old Man’ rather than ‘Fucking Old Man’, and is not likely to be seen as aggressive to a person. Overall the Board considered that in the context of a print advertisement left in letterboxes the language used in the advertisement is not inappropriate in the circumstances.

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

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.