



Case Report

1	Case Number	0390/14
2	Advertiser	General Pants Group
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Poster
5	Date of Determination	08/10/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - sexualisation of children
- 2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Images in the store windows of General Pants co featuring women in bikinis with the text, "Wet Dreams" in neon writing.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This is sexual objectification of women. It is completely inappropriate to have in a shopping centre where children can see. I don't want to have young children asking me what a 'wet dream' is, not do i want young girls seeing those pictures and thinking they have to look sexy enough to cause a 'wet dream'. It's so inappropriate on so many levels and as a society we should be above that.

It is in a public space and objectifies women. The advertising suggests that 'wet dreams' are the result of the models behind the light up sign.

I object to the use overt use of sexually connotative language 'Wet Dreams', accompanied by sexually exploitative and objectifying images of females, particularly as the advertisement was in the shop window of a large shopping complex - clearly visible and accessible, confronting passers by.

*It suggests that women are nothing more than a wet dream. The clothing is advertised towards teenage girls. Terrible advertising! Girls as young as 8 buy their clothing there. It's the title wet dream that I have a huge problem with!
Girls being used as sex things for boys to dream about.*

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The complaints allege the wording in the Advertisement could be considered offensive due breaches of section 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (Discrimination or Vilification Gender, Objectification Exploitative and degrading – Women and general Sex / sexuality / nudity). General Pants is careful to consider the seriousness of these complaints and would like the Board to consider the following information in its review.

- *General Pants Co. is a retailer of popular fashion brands – our business is built on the brands we carefully edit to stock.*
- *General Pants Co. is launching swimwear for the first time*
- *General Pants Co. internal values state we exist to 'disrupt the average' and this attitude is seen in everything we do (including this campaign)*
- *We launched Swimwear campaign with 22 male and female models wearing our product while going down a Giant Waterslide Runway Show – see video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6PaC0NMFG8>*
- *General Pants Co. collaborated with twelve (12) selected brands to develop this Swimwear campaign*
- *Store windows, General Pants Co. website and social channels (such as Facebook) are a portal to our product offering including launch of new products such as Swimwear*
- *In the case of the Advertisement, General Pants Co. devised a campaign with the tagline Wet Dreams – phrased tongue in cheek and therefore not intended for the audience to take seriously*
- *We partnered with Atlantis, the Palm, Dubai who have the largest water slide in the Southern Hemisphere to offer a competition as part of the Swimwear campaign*

- *The competition is a trip for two (2) to go to Atlantis, the Palm, Dubai and go to their Water Park hence the tagline win your ultimate “Wet Dream”*
- *The imagery in the campaign was generated from the Swimwear launch which is why the models are wet – they have just gone down a giant water slide*
- *At no time were any such references of discrimination, exploiting or degrading women or to be offensive to the audience in our vision.*
- *The overall message of the campaign is about the collective of brands, not a focus on any one image.*
- *General Pants Co. is a supporter of youth employment (employing 1500 team members annually) and youth related community organisations*
- *We officially partner with Oasis Youth Support Network to provide employment support, event partnerships (City to Surf, Christmas parties), cash and product donations and other like activities and would not go to market with offensive imagery or content to our youth or women.*

The further complaints now allege the wording in the Advertisement could be considered offensive breaching section 2.5 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics. General Pants is careful to consider the seriousness of these complaints and would like the Board to consider the following additional information in regards to the campaign wording in its review

- *General Pants launched swimwear by having a non-traditional runway show to showcase the collections. An event was created using a giant 50 meter waterslide, where both male and female models slid down a slide and got wet. You can view the content here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6PaC0NMFG8>*
- *Part of the campaign is centred around giving away a prize to ‘Atlantis - The Palm Dubai’ where consumers can win a trip to one of the world’s largest waterslides/water parks. This is conveyed through our creative of people going down a slide and a factor in the campaign wording. <http://www.generalpants.com.au/content/competition-atlantis-the-palm>*
- *The wording ‘Wet’ was used to represent models down the slide and the relevance to swimwear and ‘Dream’ was used to represent the dream holiday people could win.*

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 depicts images of women that are exploitative and degrading and inappropriate for viewing by children. The Board noted concerns surrounding the use of the term “wet dream” and that it is inappropriate and offensive.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that 'advertisements shall not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted that the advertisement featured women modelling various styles of bikini’s with accompanying text that reads: “wet dreams” in neon writing. The poster is a full shop window height and is visible from outside the store.

The Board considered that women in the advertisement are depicted in swimwear that is available in store and that in the context of a fashion store, it is reasonable to expect that the advertiser uses images of women wearing bikini’s in this context.

The Board determined that the depiction did not amount to discrimination of a section of the community and does not breach section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board then 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 and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board noted that in order to be in breach of this section of the Code the image would need to use sexual appeal in a manner that is both exploitative and degrading. The Board noted that the swimwear is available for purchase online and in store and that it is reasonable to expect the advertiser to use available product in the advertising for that store. The Board considered the depiction of women in swimwear promoting a fashion store that now includes a swimwear range and noted that the pose of the models in the image is in keeping with typical swimwear advertising and that the swimmers fully cover all the models’ private areas and does not amount to a depiction that is inappropriate.

The Board noted that the primary focus of the page relates to women’s bikini’s and that the styling and colours used are consistent with the type of swimwear which is aimed at the

female market. The Board considered that the advertisement is aimed at young adults and that the use of women modelling swimwear to appeal to other women is not inappropriate and in this instance does not amount to an overall image which uses sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading. The Board considered that the images do not portray the women in a negative light 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 models are wearing swimmers that are sold in the shop and that the advertisement links to further in store information and the opportunity to enter a competition to win a trip to ‘Atlantis the Palm, water park in Dubai.’ The Board considered that the images are relevant to the product.

The Board noted there is a level of community concern about the representation of women in advertising and noted that the advertisement appears in the store window and would be able to be viewed by children. The Board noted that the women are not inappropriately exposed and they are not posed in a manner that is sexualised. On balance, the Board considered 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.

Finally, the Board considered section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided”.

The Board noted the term “wet dream” is a colloquial reference to an erotic dream that results in an involuntary ejaculation of semen and that most members of the community would prefer that this wording wasn’t used in advertising. The Board considered however, that the reference to “wet dreams” is linked primarily to the competition to win an overseas trip to Dubai. The Board noted the sexual connotation of the phrase and acknowledged that some members of the community may be concerned with the inclusion of that phrase in the context of images of women in bikinis.

In the context of a promotion to win an overseas holiday linked to the swimwear range available, the Board considered that the advertisement did not use language that was strong or obscene and did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

The Board noted that it had also considered similar images on both the advertiser’s own website (0394/14) and facebook page (0393/14) and dismissed these matters.

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

