



**ADVERTISING  
STANDARDS  
BUREAU**

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## Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0395/13</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Adventure World</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Tourist Attractions</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>Billboard</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>27/11/2013</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A large format billboard featuring an image of a faceless hooded character, similar to the Grim Reaper, the Adventure World logo and text which reads, "We know what you're doing next summer. Our \$12M world class roller coaster coming soon".

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I find the ad frightening and distasteful and not appropriate to all ages in our community. I have a two year old who sees this image when he looks out of his carseat and I do not want him exposed to such grim and scary figures such as a massive over-scale black Grim Reaper Character with a faceless black hole for a face.*

### THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*The advertisement concerned shows the main character as featured in the theming of our new product that stands over 3 acres within a family focused theme park.*

*The product has been marketed featuring this character and the same or similar text in a cross channel transmedia campaign (including TV, Digital, Online, Shopping Centre*

installation, OOH, experiential and social media) that commenced in July 2013 and is still in market (4 months)

*The character is a Guardian of our new roller coaster "Abyss". He has special powers to save you from the thrills of the ride. He is an ancient character and his robes and personality reflect this. In the same context as a Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings character might bring to a film, he brings an essence of wisdom, power and intrigue to the ride experience. He carries a staff with a silver version of the middle letter Y in the word Abyss and uses it to protect you from the power of the Abyss. The guardians are heavily featured in the ride theming and they also stand as sentries at the ride gates, at a kiosk and within the ride zone. The character cannot be a "Grim Reaper" as suggested in the complaint as he does not feature any of the commonly indicated features in portrayals of a Grim Reaper. He does not carry a scythe. He is not a black wraith, he wears a brown blanket over his monk-like robes. His stance is proud, powerful, strong and informative rather than hunched, threatening or menacing. His message is one of foresight and knowledge of your plans for the future, not death or a threat to one's safety. For these reasons, we do not believe the image to be "unduly frightening or distressing to children" (2.6a AANA Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children) and we do not believe the advertisement presents or portrays violence in any way as indicated in the complaint (2.3 AANA Code of Ethics) We also do not believe the advertisement portrays or depicts 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 (2.1 AANA Code of Ethics, 2.6b AANA Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children)*

*The advertisement does not employ sex, sexual appeal, sexuality or nudity (2.2, 2.4 AANA Code of Ethics)*

*The advertisement uses informative language appropriate to the introduction of our new product. It is neither strong nor obscene (2.5 AANA Code of Ethics)*

*There is no material featured in the advertisement that contradicts Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety (2.6 AANA Code of Ethics)*

*We believe this complaint to be that of a single point of view and not the general or even minority point of view. Direct feedback from a cross section of demographics relating to the warm reception of the new ride can be viewed on Facebook page of over 21k fans ([www.facebook.com/AdventureWorldOfficialPage](http://www.facebook.com/AdventureWorldOfficialPage)) not to mention the rave reviews that are also summarised on our website newsfeed ([http://adventureworld.net.au/#/news-events/praise-for-abyss!/?](http://adventureworld.net.au/#/news-events/praise-for-abyss!/)).*

*One of many recent comments from the Facebook page clearly demonstrates the ride to be family friendly "Anne Gray: Myself and my whanau came on Sunday. We were there from open till close. What a premo as time we all had. My 9 yr old girl rode the roller coaster 3 times myself 2x ...No matter how many times I rides the coaster it will never get boring! We will be back again just not sure when. Thanks adventure world, you guys rock!"*

## **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 a scary image of the Grim Reaper which is frightening and not appropriate for viewing by children.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised".

The Board noted that the advertisement features an image of a character suggestive of the Grim Reaper next to red text which reads, "We know what you're doing next summer".

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that this image is too frightening for display on a billboard next to a road.

The Board noted that the character's face is not visible and all we can see is black space where a face would be under a hood. The Board noted that this image might be frightening to some young children; however the Board considered that the image was not inappropriate in the context of an advertisement promoting a scary ride.

The Board noted that it had previously dismissed a billboard advertisement featuring a more realistic depiction of the Grim Reaper in case number 565/09 where it found that "...the depiction of the Grim Reaper...was not suggestive of violence..."

Consistent with its previous determination the Board considered in this instance that the image of the hooded figure is not suggestive of violence and is not inappropriate for an outdoor advertisement which could be viewed by children.

Based on the above the Board considered that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

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