



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Ad Standards Limited
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0406-19
2. Advertiser :	Wicked Campers
3. Product :	Vehicle
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Outdoor
5. Date of Determination	11-Dec-2019
6. DETERMINATION :	Upheld - Not Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence
AANA Code of Ethics\2.6 Health and Safety

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This transport advertisement features a spray painted image across side of campervan showing the Cookie Monster from Sesame Street pointing a gun into his own mouth, with the words "Bad Trip". QLS registration 413XUM.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Horribly violent and disturbing. Completely inappropriate when there are so many issues in society around suicide

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Advertiser did not provide a response.



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 is violent and disturbing and inappropriate in its reference to suicide.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser did not respond. The Panel 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 Panel noted that there are two common meanings behind the phrase "bad trip". One is an unpleasant holiday or vacation, and the other is a bad outcome from taking some kind of drug. In the context of the advertisement, the Panel considered that the impression that most members would take of this advertisement is that "bad trip" is referencing drugs, but considered that children would likely not come to the same conclusion and would be more likely to take the reference to mean a bad holiday. The Panel noted that the text and play on words outlined above has a minor impact on the overall tone of the image and that the use of a childhood character such as Cookie Monster with a gun in his mouth has a greater impact and appeal to a broad audience which would include children.

The Panel considered that to depict a popular character (or otherwise) holding a gun in their own mouth is an implication of suicide and an implied violent act. The Panel agreed that any advertising message that can be interpreted as condoning or encouraging suicide, represents an advertising message that is not justifiable in the context of any product advertised.

The Panel noted the genuine community concern around suicide and violence and considered that the overall tone of the advertisement and use of a popular childhood character is in extreme poor taste and determined that the advertisement did breach section 2.3 of the Code.

The Panel considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety".

The Panel considered that for the same reasons discussed under section 2.3, the advertisement did appear to encourage or condone suicide and did depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety. The Panel considered that the advertisement did breach Section 2.6 of the Code.



Finding that the advertisement did breach section 2.3 and 2.6 of the Code, the Panel upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

The advertiser has not provided a response to the Panel's determination. Ad Standards will continue to work with the relevant authorities regarding this issue of non-compliance.