



Case Report

1	Case Number	0414/16
2	Advertiser	Meat & Livestock Australia Ltd
3	Product	Food and Beverages
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	12/10/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is premised on the tagline "You Never Lamb Alone." The Advertisement is set in a typical Australian park and features a cast of Australians from all walks of life, coming together over a lamb barbeque to celebrate Australia's welcoming and inclusive society. Shot in one take, the Advertisement features appearances from Indigenous Australians including Olympian Cathy Freeman, National Rugby League player Greg Inglis and model Samantha Harris. Other featured personalities include Greek-transgender comedian Jordan Raskopoulos, established television presenter Luke Jacobz and rising Bengali-Australian actor Arka Das. These personalities all gather together to demonstrate that lamb is "the meat that doesn't discriminate".

THE COMPLAINT

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

Racism. I'm anti-racist no matter what race is being vilified including white people. This advertisement clearly states 'too many WHITE people' in its commercial which is highly offensive.

It was a great opportunity for a person of aboriginal decent to respond but throughout the advert I saw no presentation of our original landowners. I think that's wrong or at the least it's disappointing.

It's easy to associate the Australian aboriginal with only eating kangaroo but with this

current social need for "integration" in Australia, this advert falls horribly short.

I found this advertisement offensive in the racist manner it portrays a young white male and those of Caucasian descent generally.

Surely there is a more appropriate way to make lamb appeal to all racial groups without resorting to an attempt to appease those of non-white European descent by mocking the white population of Australia.

He was racist in his comments about to many white people on TV and it was racist and offended me.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Response to complaints 0414/16 and 0415/16

We refer to your letters regarding complaints the Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) has received in relation to the Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) Spring Lamb commercials.

We have considered the allegations, and for the reasons set out below, submit that the complaints should be dismissed.

The Advertisements form part of MLA's annual Spring Lamb campaign. MLA's advertisements are well-known for their satirical, tongue in cheek expression. MLA notes that the ASB has historically taken an appropriately objective and robust approach towards the content of its advertisements (see, for example, 0033/08).

This year's campaign is premised on the tagline "You Never Lamb Alone." The Advertisement is set in a typical Australian park and features a cast of Australians from all walks of life, coming together over a lamb barbeque to celebrate Australia's welcoming and inclusive society. Shot in one take, the Advertisement features appearances from Indigenous Australians including Olympian Cathy Freeman, National Rugby League player Greg Inglis and model Samantha Harris. Other featured personalities include Greek-transgender comedian Jordan Raskopoulos, established television presenter Luke Jacobz and rising Bengali-Australian actor Arka Das. These personalities all gather together to demonstrate that lamb is "the meat that doesn't discriminate".

The 90 second advertisement was published on social media platforms. The 30 second advertisement was broadcast on television and social media platforms. The CAD reference is G3MIKFDA and the CAD rating is G.

The complaints

The complaints allege that the Advertisements are discriminatory.

MLA takes these allegations seriously and contends that the complaints should be dismissed.

The Code

Section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code) states that "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people 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."

Submissions

The complainants seem to allege that the Advertisements vilify white Australians, and in particular white Australian men.

MLA submits that this interpretation is unfounded. In fact, the Advertisements celebrate diversity and do not promote any act of discrimination, prejudice or vilification. The Advertisements depict a scene which unites Australians from all sections of the community to illustrate that lamb is the meat that doesn't discriminate.

The Advertisement opens with Luke Jacobz stating that "too many perky white males are contributing to a lack of diversity on our screens". This light-hearted statement is clearly ironic because Mr Jacobz is a well-known television presenter and the former host of The X-Factor Australia. Mr Jacobz is a white Australian male and the statement is simply a nod to the common criticism that Australian television lacks diversity.

In MLA's opinion, there is no better way to address this issue than to feature Australians from all walks of life and racial backgrounds in the Advertisements. The tongue-in-cheek comment by no means treats white males unfavourably or seeks to ridicule such members of society. We submit that the reasonable viewer would not perceive this statement or the Advertisements as a whole to be racist or sexist. The Advertisements promote acceptance and tolerance - not bigotry or the incitement of hatred towards white Australian males.

Several complainants allege that the Advertisements would have contravened the Code had Mr Jacobz's comment been that there are too many males of non-white backgrounds appearing on Australian television. MLA submits, as noted in 0210/15, that the role of the ASB is to consider each advertisement on its own merit and not to address hypothetical alternatives.

One complainant takes issue with a scene where Arka Das welcomes "people of colour" to the barbeque and points to a number of people of various skin tones, including a woman covered in fake tan. The scene is clearly humorous and supports the overall message of tolerance. There is no suggestion that those present in the scene are denigrated. When viewed in the context of the overall Advertisements, MLA is confident that this particular scene is not discriminatory.

Another complainant alleges that the Advertisements do not feature any individuals of Aboriginal descent but, as noted above, the Advertisement prominently features several high profile Indigenous Australians.

Any reasonable viewer would recognise that the Advertisements use humour to promote a social message of inclusion and do not vilify anyone including white Australian males. In fact,

the Advertisements have received global praise for its message, including from TIME magazine who noted that the "[t]he Aussies just celebrated diversity in an ad about lamb and it's absolutely perfect."

For these reasons, the Advertisements should not be considered to portray discrimination or vilification on account of any social value. We therefore submit that Section 2.1 of the Code has not been breached.

For completeness, we further submit that the Advertisement complies with Section 2 of the Code in its entirety.

Conclusion

In view of the above, we consider the complaints should not be upheld.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our response. We look forward to receiving the ASB's determination in this matter.

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 states that there are too many white people on television which is racist toward white people, and that its depiction of people eating kangaroo as representative of the 'first people' is incorrect and disappointing.

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 this television advertisement for lamb depicts a BBQ attended by people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds with the tagline of "meat that doesn't discriminate".

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement is racist in its opening comment that there are too many white people on television. The Board noted the advertiser's response that the advertisement celebrates diversity and the comment that "too many perky white males are contributing to a lack of diversity on our screens" was intended to be light-hearted as well as ironic given that the man who says this line is himself a white male.

The Board noted that the opening scenes shows a white male getting his teeth whitened before talking to the camera about 'too many perky white males' and considered that this scene is tongue-in-cheek and clearly indicates that the advertisement is comedic and light-

hearted. The Board noted that there is discourse in the media about the predominance of white men on Australian television and considered that while this advertisement acknowledges and plays on this discourse in the Board's view it does so in a manner which draws attention to the issue in a humorous manner but does not discriminate against or vilify the demographic it is talking about.

The Board noted that people from different ethnic backgrounds are introduced throughout the advertisement and considered that the scene showing the variations on white skin tones further highlights the diversity of people and their backgrounds and skin tones.

The Board noted the complainant's concern that when it's asked 'who's first' this would be an opportunity to show original landowners but instead we see a couple eating kangaroo. The Board noted that the couple who answer that they were there first are indigenous and considered that they are served lamb, not kangaroo. The Board considered that the complainant's interpretation of the advertisement is unlikely to be shared by the broad community. The Board noted that the advertisement also includes well-known Aboriginal people such as the Olympian Cathy Freeman and the model Samantha Harris and considered that overall the advertisement is inclusive and the humour is employed equally across all the races/ethnicities portrayed in the advertisement.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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