



Case Report

1	Case Number	0420/16
2	Advertiser	Suzuki Marine
3	Product	Sport and Leisure
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	12/10/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress
- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Suzuki Marine's Lean Burn Control System is an innovative fuel technology found in a range of our outboard motors and provides greater fuel efficiency by optimising fuel delivery to the engine. Our TVC shows a father "on the water for longer", thanks to our Lean Burn technology, and is enjoying his time on his boat fishing and cruising around. Before we see the father, the TVC shows his family in several sequences doing things around the house that dad would normally do or be part of – such as kicking a footy around with his son, eating dinner, etc. to show that his family is missing him while he's gone out on his boat.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I object to this commercial for a few reasons. One, I believe it promotes or at least makes light of the serious situation families may be struggling with when one member of the family has abandoned them. Second, it would be highly distressing for children in this situation to see a commercial such as this and to think that his or her father or mother may be enjoying life much more without them around.

I think women & children whose husbands/fathers "went fishing (or various other things) one day & never came home" would be very upset by this ad. They may have left to start another

life, had an accident, or committed suicide. I'm sure there are people out there that get very distressed whenever this ad is aired. I initially laughed, but then thought about someone who was left in a similar situation (he left to go to the gym but committed suicide instead), & thought about what she would be feeling if/when she saw this ad. I'm not a "PC" person & like to have a good laugh, but think this ad could cause too much distress to too many people. Thanks for your consideration.

The commercial is upsetting because it portrays people who are suffering from a loss of a loved one but then shows a scene of the father enjoying himself. For anyone who has lost a family member who just didn't come home this would be insensitive.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We refer to your correspondence regarding our Lean Burn Dad television commercial (TVC) and complaints received under Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.

We provide the following information as requested:

Description of the ad:

Suzuki Marine's Lean Burn Control System is an innovative fuel technology found in a range of our outboard motors and provides greater fuel efficiency by optimising fuel delivery to the engine. Our TVC shows a father "on the water for longer", thanks to our Lean Burn technology, and is enjoying his time on his boat fishing and cruising around. Before we see the father, the TVC shows his family in several sequences doing things around the house that dad would normally do or be part of – such as kicking a footy around with his son, eating dinner, etc. to show that his family is missing him while he's gone out on his boat.

Suzuki Marine's comments in relation to the complaint(s)

Please note, it was not our intention to offend anyone with our ad and we have taken the feedback received on board.

As well as being distributors of Suzuki Marine outboard motors (we have been the exclusive distributor in Australia and New Zealand since 2001), The Haines Group is also a boat building business. We have been in the industry for over 57 years and the safety aspect of boating is a total focus of our business and brands and we would never intentionally aim to offend anyone or make light of the subject at the expense of others. The safety of our customers is paramount to our business.

Our ad was designed to show boating in a positive light with the subject focused on our Lean Burn fuel technology, giving boaters extended time on the water, due to its fuel-efficient capabilities. We focused on a character, in the father, and wanted to highlight him enjoying his time on his boat while being safe on the water. Dad is shown with happy expressions and is generally enjoying his day out – total boating fulfillment thanks to Lean Burn. In the TVC's opening scenes, the family is shown to be doing things around the house that dad would

normally be part of – pushing his daughter on the swing, kicking the footy around with his son. The family is missing dad while he is out and he’s been out a bit longer than usual this time because his Suzuki Lean Burn motor uses less fuel.

Showing the family dog eating dad’s meal at the dinner table (“but Jessie’s loving it!”), was one way of injecting humour and our ‘larrikin’ nature into our TVC and at no time was any reference made to how long dad had actually been out – whether it was only a couple of hours, a day or a weekend – the extended period in which the father character is out is inferred only.

This ad is the first in a series focusing on this family, and as the series continues, the family will be seen together, happy and safely enjoying their boating experience. This particular TVC concluded airing on Sunday, 2 October 2016. Immediately following this, TV viewers will see our Lean Burn Cash TVC, which is the retail promotional campaign to support Lean Burn and will use the same father character image. Then in November/December, the follow up TVC to Lean Burn Dad will air showing the family out boating together.

Our aim was always to show the family in a series of ads, which would be aired over a number of months. By seeing the family in a follow up TVC, we hope TV viewers will see that the focus of our ad was always about having fun on your boat, and never to exploit or make light of anyone’s misfortune or circumstances.

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 suggests a father has died which is distressing and inconsiderate to people who have lost someone.

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 this television advertisement features a mum talking about how she and her children haven’t seen the dad, Mike, since he left one morning to go fishing and hasn’t been seen since.

The Board noted that some members of the community who have lost loved ones could find the advertisement to be distressing but considered that although the initial suggestion that Mike is dead is an unusual way to open an advertisement for a fuel efficiency system in the Board’s view advertisers can use whatever theme they wish and in this instance it is made clear that Mike is alive and enjoying the extra time he can spend on his boat fishing.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not present or portray violence and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

The Board considered 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 Board noted that the final scenes in the advertisement show the dad, Mike, on a boat.

The Board noted the advertiser’s response that Mike is wearing a life vest under his top. The Board noted it had recently dismissed a similar complaint about the use of appropriate safety equipment on a motor boat in case 0221/16 where:

“The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement depicted people without life jackets and considered that the PFDs used in the advertisement, which feature a waist strap design, are visible on some of the occupants. The Board acknowledged that as technology has introduced new and innovative products only an audience with an awareness of this type of PFD may see that it is being worn and the lack of a traditional and more obvious PFD does not make it unsafe.”

The Board noted in the current advertisement that we see Mike steering the boat with one arm in the air and considered that part of his life vest appears to be visible and in the Board’s view there is no suggestion that Mike has not taken the appropriate safety measures which would include wearing a suitable life vest.

The Board noted that there is currently a community awareness campaign regarding the use of life vests/jackets when on a boat and considered that as Mike was shown to be wearing an appropriate life vest, the content of the advertisement was not contrary to this important message.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

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