



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0441/18
2	Advertiser	Geocon
3	Product	Real Estate
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Billboard
5	Date of Determination	10/10/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Degrading - women
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This Advertisement is on hoarding around a future development. It includes the developer's name and logo, development identity, campaign imagery, renders, messaging and contact details. The advertisement includes 11 Panels, each of which contain different images of women and buildings.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The imagery is sexualised and demeaning. Geocon has been accused of using sexist and degrading images of women in their advertising on previous occasions, as shown in the RiotAct with the image of a scantily clad woman on a bicycle.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this





advertisement include the following:

We have reviewed the complaint made in relation to our hoarding design for a new development in Reid, Canberra. Having carefully considered the provisions of the Advertising Standards Board Code of Ethics, we believe our hoarding imagery complies with the provisions outlined therein. We pay particular attention to Sections 2.2 and 2.4, which have been raised in the complaint, and address them in relation to our advertisement below.

The design of our advertising hoarding aims to attract interest in the development and convey an aspirational lifestyle. Our black and white images reference the high fashion cues that have influenced our creative direction to convey the modern fast-paced lifestyle of inner city living.

The hoarding features graphical elements including developer and development logos, contact details, coloured renders of the proposed building, and black and white campaign images featuring two women. The models are highly stylised and portray a modern, contemporary look and feel that is aspirational and appeals to a demographic that is our target audience.

2.2 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 creative focuses on interpretive 'lifestyle' and is not literal in sense. The intention is to invoke the notion of fast-paced, inner city living, that is contemporary, edgy, professional, fast-paced, successful and aspirational. The women depicted are shown fully dressed, in high fashion clothing, supporting the narrative that they are modern, successful women in their own right.

2.4 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The women depicted in the images are fully clothed and there is no sex depicted in the images presented.

The models boast a high fashion style, depicting a level of glamour, sophistication and success. The imagery is typical of lifestyle publication imagery widely accepted in market, including Calvin Klein, H&M, Saint Laurent. Please refer to the accompanying document [Geocon_City_7_S2_Brand Presentation_Imagery.PDF](#) for examples these campaigns. All have a similar look and feel to the Tryst hoarding design and portray an aspirational lifestyle.

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 featured sexualised and degrading imagery.

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

The Panel 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 or degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Panel noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of the terms exploitative and degrading:

Exploitative - (a) taking advantage of the sexual appeal of a person, or group of people, by depicting them as objects or commodities; or (b) focussing on their body parts where this bears no direct relevance to the product or service being advertised. Degrading – lowering in character or quality a person or group of people.

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement objectifies women and featured degrading imagery.

The Panel first considered whether the advertisement used sexual appeal.

The Panel noted the poster advertisement featured various images of two women both separate and together. The images included:

- The two women’s bodies from the waist down. They appear to be facing each other and one of the women’s hands are on the other woman’s leg.
- One of the women standing behind the other with her arm wrapped over her shoulder from the back.
- One of the women pictured from the waist up featured in a reclining pose with her hand to her mouth.
- One of the women sitting, leaning forwards as the photo is taken from the side.
- The other woman sitting with her elbow on her knee as the photo is taken from the side.
- One of the women pictured from the shoulders up, her face tilted down.
- One of the women in the process of removing her jacket.
- A close up image of one of the women’s faces.
- One of the women pictured from the waist up, sitting and facing the camera.
- The two women pictured with their heads back, facing each other.
- One of the women pictured with her hand covering her eyes.



- One of the women standing and holding her jacket as the photo is taken from the side.

The Panel considered that the style of the photography in combination with the women's poses did constitute sexual appeal.

The Panel then considered whether the advertisement used sexual appeal in a manner that was exploitative of an individual or group of people.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not suggest either woman was an object, or was available for sale, rather the advertisement featured the women in an advertisement for a building. The Panel noted that the depiction of the women was unrelated to the product, however considered that the advertiser created a campaign around the concept of a high fashion, luxurious, aspirational lifestyle, and that the style of photography did correlate to that theme. The Panel noted that the theme is not dissimilar to perfume advertisements.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not use sexual appeal in a manner that was exploitative of an individual or group of people.

The Panel then considered whether the advertisement used sexual appeal in a degrading manner.

The Panel considered that the advertisement depicted the women as confident and comfortable, and noted that the aspirational images of sexualised sophistication were not a degrading representation of the women. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not depict the women in a way which lowered them in character or quality.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not use sexual appeal in a degrading manner.

On that basis, the Panel determined that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative or degrading of any individual or group of people, and did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Panel 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 Panel noted that this billboard advertisement is on hoarding around a future building development and is visible to people driving and walking past, and considered that the relevant audience for this advertisement would be broad and would include children.



The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement featured sexualised imagery.

The Panel considered that there is no nudity or overt sexualisation of the models in the advertisement, and noted that the images are not focussed on the models' bodies.

The Panel determined that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant broad audience and did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaint.

