



**ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BUREAU**

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Case Report

1	Case Number	0461/12
2	Advertiser	Wicked Campers
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Internet - Social
5	Date of Determination	12/12/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.5 - Language Strong or obscene language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Image of a Wicked Campers' van on their Facebook page. The van is painted with a slogan: "I take my women like I take my bars - liquor in the front, poker in the rear."

THE COMPLAINT

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

I really can't see I would have to explain this however it is complete objectification and sexualisation of women for no reason other than to draw attention to a distasteful brand like Wicked Campers who are free it appears to brand all of their vans with profanities, sexual comments and now sexist remarks.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The advertiser did not provide a response.

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 sexist in its portrayal of women, presents women in a manner which is objectifying, and features language which is sexualised and inappropriate.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser had not provided a response. Consistent with its decision in Fosters (0271/12) and ACP Publishing (0437/12) the Board considered that an advertiser’s facebook page is a marketing communication over which the advertiser has a reasonable degree of control and that the facebook page is created by the advertiser to draw the attention of a section of the public in a manner calculated to promote the advertiser or its products. The Board determined that material monitored and controlled by advertisers on their own internet pages does fall under advertising and marketing communications within the definition used in the Code and must therefore comply with the requirements of the Code.

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 the use of the words “I take my women” in particular was a derogatory statement about women suggesting that they are sexual objects or possessions to be used sexually and are not people in their own right.

The Board considered that this post by the advertiser was material that most members of the community would consider offensive and did amount to material that discriminated against or vilified a section of society on account of gender.

The Board determined that the advertisement breached Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board 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 and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board considered that although the facebook page did not include any imagery, the text itself reduces women to objects and that the corresponding question inviting users to comment further reinforces this objectification.

In the Board’s view this post uses sexual appeal of women in a manner that is exploitative

and degrading and does breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then 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 Board noted that the advertisement makes refers to ‘liquor and poker’ and considered that this statement clearly refers to a sexual act. The Board noted that the advertisement would be likely be viewed only by those seeking to hire a van for travel/rental purposes. The Board considered that the target audience for this product and advertising of this nature would be people over the age of 18 and young adults.

The Board considered that a reference to a sexual act is likely to be of concern to some members of the community. However the Board considered the relevant audience to be a limited audience of facebook who would most likely be familiar with the ‘wicked’ product. Considering the relevaent audience the Board considered that the marketing did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and therefore did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided”.

The Board discussed the findings of recent research conducted by the Advertising Standards Bureau around testing of Board decisions against broader community views and noted that the research indicated that the community is very concerned about matters around language, particularly where children may view that language. The Board noted that as the advertisement appears on a facebook page for an advertiser which would be of appeal to people familiar with the ‘wicked’ product, it was unlikely to be seen by children or by people who are unfamiliar with the brand.

The Board considered that in this instance the particular wording of ‘liquor and poker’ is being used in a manner which is not inappropriate and the words themselves do not amount to language that are strong or obscene and does not breach section 2.5 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did breach Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the Code, the Board upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

As of 18 February 2013 the Advertiser has not provided a response.

The ASB is continuing to work with the Advertiser to resolve this case.

7 Aug 2014: Facebook confirmed that they had removed this post from Wicked Campers' Australian Facebook page.

