



Case Report

1	Case Number	0468/10
2	Advertiser	Telstra Corporation Ltd
3	Product	Telecommunications
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	24/11/2010
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The TV advertisement, "Next G Force" is promoting a BigPond Mobile Broadband product, the 'BigPond Ultimate' device through Japanese Anime, manga animation, which is a Japanese style of animation used in comics and print cartoons, and video games from Pokemon to Sonic the Hedgehog. The ad depicts a young lady sitting in the park with a laptop. When she plugs her BigPond Ultimate device into her laptop it causes her to fly through the air with great power and speed portraying to the audience that this device is very fast.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I find this ad very racially offensive. It has a voiceover of male and female characters with very bad and racially stereotyped Asian accents. I feel these voiceovers are racially offensive and the Asian equivalent of black and white minstrels. The point of the ad is to (presumably) appeal to a youth market inspired by anime and manga but by using such shocking voiceovers I'm almost waiting for Telstra to make some kind of "Asian nigger" joke. I am not normally offended by such things but this one just crosses the line from being funny or creatively light-hearted to being just plain offensive.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The TV advertisement, "Next G Force" is promoting a BigPond Mobile Broadband product, the 'BigPond Ultimate' device through Japanese Anime, manga animation, which is a Japanese style of animation used in comics and print cartoons, and video games from Pokémon to Sonic the Hedgehog. More details on this animation style can be found here: <http://Jten.wikip.ediCUlrgtwikiJAnime> and here: <http://www.japan-101.Com/anime/anime.htm> The ad depicts a young lady sitting in the park with a laptop. When she plugs her BigPond Ultimate device into her laptop it causes her to fly through the air with great power and speed portraying to the audience that this device is very fast.

A highly popular and recognized animation genre, Japanese Anime uses exaggerated visuals and characters in typical manga comic book style. The voice-overs used in the ad are in keeping with the Anime style, and fast paced action, using genuine Japanese actors skilled in the Anime style, with a dynamic delivery that is typical of the powerful, colourful style of this genre.

When casting for appropriate voice-over talent the advertising agency went through a careful selection process to ensure the delivery was authentic, and true to the style of the ad. The male and female voices in the advertisement are delivered by professional Japanese voiceover artists, both of whom gave natural performances influenced by the Anime genre. The male artist, Kuni Hashimoto, has lived in Australia since 1988 and the woman, Rie Masuda, is new to our local industry, and now resides in Australia. Rie was previously the weather girl on the huge WNI network in Japan.

Given that the voices are those of Japanese people and delivered in an authentic manner that is in keeping with the manga style, we reject the suggestion that they could be interpreted as racially offensive. Rather, they are a culturally sensitive artistic rendition that plays homage to an example of popular Japanese culture.

For these reasons we maintain that the advertisement does 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 or nationality and does not breach section 2.1 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.

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 advertisement is offensive as it uses racially stereotyped Asian accents as voiceovers.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.1 of the Code. Section 2.1 of the Code states: “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...”

The Board noted that the advertisement was a manga style animation with male and female voiceovers using Japanese accents. The Board noted the advertiser’s response that the voiceover artists are Japanese and were using their usual accents in an Anime style delivery. The Board considered that the use of the voiceover artists was in keeping with the theme and context of the advertisements. The Board also considered that the use of the Japanese voices was not depicted in a demeaning or vilifying manner.

The Board determined that, in this instance, the advertisement did not depict any material that discriminated against or vilified any person or section of society on account of their 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 complaint.