



# Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0500/14</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>RAC of WA (Incorporated)</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Automotive</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV - Free to air</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>26/11/2014</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement shows a station wagon parked by the side of a road with a popped bonnet. Standing next to the station wagon are four elderly nuns, dressed in their full religious habit of long black dresses and wimples covering their hair. They're staring disapprovingly at something across the road. It's a group of four young women dressed in party nuns costumes. They are on a hen's party, which we can see by the pink "bride to be" sash on one of the ladies in the convertible car. The voiceover describes that RAC Roadside Assistance rescues someone every minute. So when it happens to you, make sure you're with WA's largest roadside assistance network."

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*Catholic nuns do not go around displaying their underwear. They are considered religious and holy people and committed to The Lord not portrayed as prostitutes.*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*Section 2.1 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics – Discrimination or vilification – “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”*

*The advertisement portrays two groups of people - real nuns and women dressed as nuns on a hen’s night. The real nuns depicted in the ad are dressed in full religious habit, of ankle length dresses with long sleeves, high necks and wimples. At no point are the nuns shown displaying underwear. Care was taken to ensure an accurate and respectful portrayal of ‘real nuns’ during production of the advertisement, and RAC and JWT Perth consulted with Our Lady of the Missions in Maylands, Western Australia, in relation to both the script and the costumes.*

*The ladies within the convertible vehicle are clearly portrayed as friends on a hen’s night, not prostitutes, as evidenced by the “bride to be” sash and pink feather boas.*

*The nuns are not depicted displaying underwear during the course of the 30 second advertisement.*

*Section 2.2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics – Exploitative or degrading – “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading or any individual or group of people”.*

*The basis of the advertisement is humour, and in no way portraying anything that could be considered by the relevant audience or even the broader audience as exploitative or degrading to any individual or group of people, specifically in relation to the nature of the complaint, nuns. In no way are the nuns in this advertisement depicted as anything other than conservative and dignified, strongly evidenced by their attire.*

*In relation to the other group of ladies on the hen’s night, only one lady is visible full length as the rest are seated within the vehicle, and is wearing a fancy dress costume.*

*Section 2.3 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics – Violence – “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context or the product or service advertised”*

*There is no portrayal of violence within this advertisement.*

*Section 2.4 – Sex, sexuality and nudity – “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience”*

*There is no nudity or sex within this advertisement. The limited degree of sexuality which is hinted at with the lady at the front of the broken down convertible is offset by her high neckline top, long sleeves, and the humour around her pulling down the bottom of her dress as she knows it is too short.*

*Section 2.5 – Language – “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.*

*There is no obscene language within this advertisement.*

*Section 2.6 – Health and Safety – Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to the Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.*

*Prior to filming of this advertisement, a full safety risk assessment was undertaken, and during filming, due care was taken to follow standard breakdown safety protocol, with all people portrayed as RAC members at a safe distance off the road and either in the vehicle or on the sidewalk. The RAC Patrolman also approaches the breakdown at a controlled safe speed, with hazard lights on and indicates to pull over in an appropriate manner.*

*We have taken the comments made within the complaint on board, and will incorporate this feedback into future advertising planning and campaigns.*

## **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 concern that the advertisement portrays nuns in underwear which is offensive.

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 the advertisement features two groups of women who are waiting for assistance due to their vehicles being broken down. One group are Nuns and the other group is a hens’ party and features young women dressed as ‘sexy’ nuns.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that nuns do not dress in a manner which exposes their underwear. The Board noted that the religious nuns in the advertisement are depicted as dignified and considered that they are clearly wearing the appropriate dress according to their religious beliefs and traditions. The Board noted that the group of women wearing the sexy outfits are clearly depicted as being part of a hens’ night and considered that it is part of common Australian tradition to dress up for hens’ nights. The Board noted that the hens’ party all attempt to cover themselves when they see the real nuns and considered that this indicated a mark of respect for the nuns. The Board acknowledged that some members of the community would find the practice of dressing up as ‘sexy nuns’ to be inappropriate but considered that overall the advertisement is not suggesting that nuns would or should dress in this manner. The Board considered that it is not of itself discriminatory against members of a religious order for members of the community to dress up in sexy versions of their dress and that the advertisement does not present real nuns in a manner which is inappropriate or offensive.

Overall the Board considered that the advertisement does not portray nuns exposing their underwear and that the depiction of a group of women dressed up for a hens’ party is not a depiction which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of their religion.

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.

