



ADVERTISING  
STANDARDS  
BUREAU

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## Case Report

1	Case Number	0517/10
2	Advertiser	Aussie Boat Loans
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Billboard
5	Date of Determination	19/01/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Modified or Discontinued

### ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

On the left hand side of the Billboard there is a close up of a woman wearing a pink bikini. She has her arms raised above her head, which we cannot see, and she has a belly button piercing. The background is of a sandy beach and the sea, and the text on the right of the Billboard reads, "Boat loans should be this good... Apply on line now [www.aussieboatloans.com.au](http://www.aussieboatloans.com.au). Aussie Boat Loans 'We'll beat the banks!' 1300 769 999."

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I find the advertisement sexist, degrading and dehumanising of women. The ad features the torso of a woman in a bikini. Not even a face. Just breasts and genital area. Because it is making out that a woman's body is all for sexual pleasure. It objectifies women as sexual objects. That model has a soul, a personality, a family, and feelings. She is more than her body. Instead men driving past her picture every day ogle at her body and don't see HER. It's horrible! Australia doesn't want to encourage this kind of culture. Rape and sexual problems and crime start with junk food for the mind like this! Relevance and objectivity - sexualisation for inappropriate reasons. - offensive - contributes to objectification of women - sends a message to my daughters (and me) that it's fine for my person to be reduced to a lump of flesh - sexist and degrading - totally irrelevant I am horrified and disgusted by this advertisement. The woman is made faceless here and is only seen as a sexual object for men. This should not*

*be anywhere in the public eye for young children or easily brainwashed people to view. We already have such a huge problem in our society with the sexualisation and objectification of young girls. Men see this as how you tread women and girls and because it is so commonly see in our everyday lives it must be ok. It's not! A woman's torso in a white bikini has no relevance to boat loans. It's sexist Gratuitous depiction and objectification of the female body. A bikini-clad female torso has zero relevance to the need for marine finance. I am offended because this is yet another illustration of brain-dead advertisers with zero imagination and creativity resorting to the devaluing and objectification of women in order to sell a product. I am a woman. I am offended and ashamed that my sons have to process the message this kind of advertising sends out. Images like this normalise the regular depiction of women as solely sexual objects in our culture. It is dehumanising depicting the woman without head or face as an object to be gawked at. It dehumanises and demeans all women. I found it extremely sexist and derogatory toward women. Simply using a female torso and not even bothering to identify her face is objectification and utterly dehumanising. A picture of a woman in a bikini has little to do with loans. The woman does not have a head just a torso which reduces her to a series of body parts. This objectifies women and sends a message that women exist to satisfy men's sexual desires. Also being in full view of children can have an effect on young girls struggling with body image and eating disorder issues thinking they have to have a perfect body to be worthwhile. And for young boys also who may be warped from a young age into thinking that women exist to satisfy him and that women must look that way to have any value. 1. What has the woman's body got to do with a loan for a boat? 2. If they were going to use a woman in a bikini why not show her face. This seems to suggest that the only "good" (their words not mine) part of a woman are the sexual parts! This is objectifying women it is sexist it is demeaning of women and offers them up as sexual objects without a face and a personality. It is inappropriate for the subject of the ad and needs to be removed.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*In relation to the complaint/s received and brought to the attention of AUSSIE BOAT LOANS, we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to respond and bring to the board's attention, that AUSSIE BOAT LOANS and its parent Company AUSSIE CAR LOANS Pty Ltd are very community minded and conscious of its image, what it portrays and stands for. Aussie Boat Loans / Aussie Car Loans are very active in all aspects of the community (Logan Area) and contribute vast amounts in sponsorships to all local sporting clubs and the community at large, namely • Aussie Car Loans , Naming rights Sponsor for 3 years to the Logan / Beenleigh Cricket Association both Junior and Senior, • Aussie Car Loans , Naming rights sponsor to the Logan Cobras Footy Club, • Aussie Car Loans, PAN PACIFIC MASTERS recently help on the Gold Coast for the Cricket. • Aussie Car Loans , Sponsor Edens Landing Rugby League Juniors • Aussie Boat Loans, is a Sponsor for BASA QLD, Freshwater fishing ( 3rd Year ) • Aussie Boat Loans, is the naming rights sponsor for the Morteon Bay Sailing Regatta 3rd Year • Aussie Bike Loans, has its own MOTOR-X Race team that participates in the SUPER X and Australasian Motocross Series • Etc, the list is vast but the ones named above are represented in the local area. I bring to the board's attention the ad in question and attached, please note that the billboard itself and other ADS are rotated on a seasonal basis the ad in question portrays a " SUMMER LIFESTYLE " and highlights the unique outdoor activities in QLD , it highlights Summer, Healthy Outdoor Lifestyle, Beach and Boating, hence it being displayed during the summer season The image itself is simply of a*

*women standing on a beach “Please note the backdrop“ and the bikini goes hand in hand with summer, Healthy Outdoor Lifestyle, Beach & Boating. There are no sexual overtones, innuendo nor reference to SEX, and most certainly no degradation of the women’s body, albeit and regardless that there is no “HEAD-SHOT “. Aussie Boat Loans is capitalising on the QLD Summer and highlighting the outdoors in South East QLD. I personally have a teenage daughter, a wife as does my business partner. We are very family minded and certainly understand what family image and morals are, we completely disagree with the complaints and will continue in displaying the ad, unless otherwise advised.*

## **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 is sexist, suggests that a woman is no more than a body for someone else’s pleasure, contributes to the objectification of women and is inappropriate for children to view as it depicts women in an objectified manner, and in a manner that sends inappropriate messages about body image to young people. The Board considered the application of Sections 2.1, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6 of the Code. The Board considered whether the advertisement discriminated against or vilified women. The Board noted that it had previously considered advertisements featuring scantily clad women and that the use of such images has at times been a divisive issue for the community. The Board noted there is no relationship in this advertisement between a woman in a bikini and the product or service being advertised. The Board also noted that the advertisement comprises the image of a woman posed in a bikini, without a head or any identity, and that the text accompanying the image suggests that a boat loan should be as good as a woman’s body. In this context the Board considered that the advertisement as a whole objectifies women to the point that the advertisement does discriminate against women. On this basis the Board determined that the advertisement breached section 2.1 of the Code. In regard to the advertisement’s portrayal of sex, sexuality and nudity under Section 2.3, the Board noted that the woman is not naked, though only her torso and legs are shown - there is no image of her face or head. The woman is depicted in a posed position and the image is accompanied by mildly sexually suggestive text ‘Boats loans should be this good....!’ The Board noted that the advertisement is on a billboard and is therefore available for viewing by a broad audience. Although mildly sexualized the Board considered that the advertisement did not treat sex, sexuality or nudity inappropriately considering the broad audience to which the advertisement is available. On this basis the Board determined that the advertisement did not breach section 2.3 of the Code. The Board considered that the language in the advertisement, although contributing to a suggestion of objectification in the context of this advertisement, was not inappropriate nor strong or obscene and did not breach the Code. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach section 2.5 of the Code. The Board noted the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement is inappropriate for viewing by young women as it can contribute to negative or unrealistic views about body image and eating disorders. The Board considered that the woman depicted is slim but is not unhealthily slim and that the advertisement does not depict inappropriate body size in a manner that would be considered to be contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety and does not breach section 2.6 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement breached section 2.1 of the Code, the Board upheld the complaint.

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION**

The advertiser advised that the billboard will be brought down at the end of summer. Following discussion the billboard was removed on 21 February 2011.