



# Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0548/16</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Road Safety Advisory Council</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Community Awareness</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>18/01/2017</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.3 - Violence Bullying
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Bullying (non violent)
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Unsafe behaviour
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts different types of friends: mates v real mates. We see mates helping their friends by being supportive about a girlfriend, spotting for a friend who is weight lifting, provided a cushion for a sleeping friend's head, and we also see a 'real mate' behaving differently in each scenario: sitting between the man and his girlfriend, tickling the weight lifter and pouring water over sleeping man. a young man playing pranks on his mates, for example tickling a friend who is lifting weights. The final scenario shows the mate indicating his friend shouldn't drive after drinking, but the real mate takes the car keys from him and drops them down the drain so he definitely cannot drive. The final onscreen text reads, "Real mates don't let mates drink drive".

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*These ads show a real mate tickling his friend while he is lifting weights. This is tremendously dangerous as the friend could drop the weights smashing his face or worse*

*breaking his neck. I would hate to see a young person copy the actions in this ad and hurt his friend and possibly ruin his own life as well.*

*Firstly it is sexist. Women would never be depicted in such a negative manner, even though they have an increasing problem with alcohol abuse.*

*Secondly, the so called "good mate" repeatedly demonstrates bullying behaviour, such as pushing a meat pie into his "mates" face.*

*Thirdly, he drops his mate's keys into the drain. This looks like a full set of keys, probably including the house keys. Imagine the problems this would create. He could have just pocketed them. You can bet your boots that some of these behaviours have been copied because the ad says it's OK.*

*I have not had a problem with earlier campaigns as they made the point without being offensive or negatively provocative.*

*If the drunken mate was a woman, would it be OK for the same guy to drop her keys down a drain, or to push a meat pie into her face? Let's drop the double standard that says it's OK to take the piss out of men but not out of women.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*Men aged between 17 and 25 comprise 6 percent of the Tasmanian population but 28 percent of the fatality and serious injury (serious casualty) road crashes. Of that 28 percent, alcohol was a factor in 37 percent. These 2010 statistics were the catalyst for the Tasmanian Road Safety Advisory Council's anti-drink-driving campaign targeted at young men.*

*All advertising must connect with its target audience to be effective. The commercial's underlying premise of mates looking out for each other was based on extensive in-depth research of the target audience. Pre-market research was also done to ensure the concept connected with the audience. Post-market research consistently shows:*

*A recognition rate of more than 80 percent.*

*About 30 percent know the campaign slogan unprompted.*

*About 70 percent believe "the focus on mateship among young guys" is one of the campaign's most effective elements.*

*Pranking is common among men in this age group. Counter-intuitive though it is, the closer the mate, the more his behaviour is accepted. The popularity of pranking is evidenced by the high number of hits on YouTube clips depicting the behaviour. What could be interpreted as bullying by older people is not considered so by the target audience. The latest commercial was produced by two men aged 19 and 26. The commercial's content was discussed in detail and at no stage did they express concerns about the behaviours depicted nor any of the*

*concerns raised by the complainant. Depicting behaviour unacceptable to some is not to condone it. The Road Safety Advisory Council has received other complaints about the commercial but none from the target audience.*

## **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 showed males in a negative light and showed bullying and unsafe behaviour.

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 there are two versions of this television advertisement, both featuring different types of mates and their corresponding behaviour.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement depicted males in a negative way and women would never be depicted like this.

The Board noted the advertiser’s response that this campaign is targeted towards men aged between 17 and 25 years of age as they make up a significant portion of the statistics for fatality and serious injury on Tasmania’s roads. Consistent with its previous determinations for similar complaints about the portrayal of one gender in advertising, (0302/13, 0212/16, 0580/16), the Board considered that by featuring men as potential drink drivers the advertisement does not suggest that only men would drink drive, or that women would never drink drive.

The Board noted that the nice mate is shown behaving in a manner which is more feminine than the ‘real mate’ and expressed concern that the advertisement suggests that to be caring is to be weak however the Board considered that the most likely interpretation of the advertisement is that sometimes a mate has to behave in an unlikeable, and overly annoying manner, in order to help his friends.

Overall, the Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised".

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that this advertisement showed bullying behaviour such as tickling someone who was lifting weights, pouring water over someone who is sleeping, pushing a meat pie into someone's face and throwing someone's keys down the drain.

The Board noted the different types of behaviour portrayed in the advertisement and considered that the overall message is that a real mate will stop you from drink driving. The Board noted in particular the scene showing a man dropping his friend's keys down a drain and considered that while this is not behaviour to be encouraged, in the Board's view the slapstick nature of the advertisement lessens the impact of this behaviour and it is relevant to the important community message regarding not drinking alcohol before driving a vehicle.

The Board acknowledged that the cumulative effect of the behaviour of the 'real' mate could amount to bullying behaviour if this were to take place in the real world but considered that in the context of an advertisement trying to highlight the role of a 'real' friend in order to promote an important community message, the advertisement does not depict, promote or encourage bullying behaviour.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

The Board considered Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety".

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that tickling someone who is lifting weights is dangerous and could encourage people to copy the behaviour.

The Board acknowledged that tickling a person when they are lifting weights is dangerous but considered that in the context of the overall slapstick nature of the advertisement the Board considered that this brief scene is intended to highlight the behaviour of different types of mates rather than suggest that you should copy the behaviour. The Board noted that the weights the man is lifting do not appear to be very heavy and considered that there is no suggestion of any real danger in this scene and in the Board's view the advertisement is very unlikely to encourage copycat behaviour.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaints.

