



Case Report

1	Case Number	0572/16
2	Advertiser	Queensland Health
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	18/01/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Two young males then two young females talk about sexual health, STIs and getting a check-up. The peers encourage their friends to attend a free service for youths to have a sexual health check-up. The advertisement finishes with contact details for Mount Isa Sexual Health clinic (MISH) and their free services to the community it serves.

THE COMPLAINT

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

It is inappropriate for the time slot. Goes into detail how it hurts to pee after sex etc.

The overt offensively derogatory language of the actors and the times it is aired when young children can see, hear and look up to.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Dear Board Members

This Mount Isa Sexual Health service (MISH) and Young People Ahead (YPA) advertisement has been airing on Southern Cross TV. It is one of several public health efforts to reduce a high burden of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among young people in the North West of Queensland. Of particular concern is an outbreak of infectious syphilis which can cause birth defects and miscarriage.

The Queensland Department of Health supports ongoing public health initiatives to improve sexual health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. These include the Queensland Health Strategy 2016 – 2021 and North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexually Transmissible Infections Action Plan 2016 – 2021 (the Action Plan). The key goals and priorities from these strategies are to increase testing and treatment of STIs with a focus on accessible health services. Top priorities of the Action Plan are the elimination of congenital syphilis and control of syphilis outbreaks in the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Description of the advertisement

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Who the ad is targeting

The target group is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (around 16 to 25 years) in Mount Isa and North West Queensland. Most of this group are sexually active and have a very high incidence of STIs, which will not necessarily exhibit symptoms.

How the ad aimed to address the needs of the audience

The ad indirectly promotes condom use and raises awareness of STIs and the need for testing. It highlights a culturally safe and accessible service for health care. Use of local actors, environments and vernacular presents a non-threatening message to the target group.

Rationale for the approach taken

The Queensland Health control project group contracted YPA to deliver a youth initiative around sexual health. Several focus groups were conducted with local youth to ensure the health promotion messages were delivered in a culturally appropriate manner for the target audience. Participants in the focus groups were also involved in script development and as actors. The end result was a series of short media clips to raise awareness and encourage those at risk of sexually transmissible infections to take greater responsibility for their health and attend the clinic.

The media clips received support from the North West Hospital and Health Service (NWHHS) cultural advisor and the NWHHS Chief Executive and the Mount Isa City Council's Deputy Mayor. Part of this initiative was designed to promote the services of MISH and reduce the stigma associated with attending sexual health clinics. These clips were published on YPA

social media channels. For example, see <http://www.northweststar.com.au/story/4229983/the-six-films-on-youth-sexual-health-in-mount-isa/>

Rationale for the media strategy and channels

Channels such as radio, theatre, TV and social media are extremely effective in reaching our target audience, which is youth. After investigation into these media, YPA pursued Southern Cross Austereo TV, which covers three regional/remote channels in the North West region on free to air TV. So the result was one advertisement using the existing material to disseminate a message to raise awareness of sexual health services and normalising of health seeking behaviour.

Evaluation of the advertising

Informal feedback from the youth including attendees at the MISH clinic is ongoing. It is known that the local actors have created extensive interest and conversation among youth in the area, which is exactly as intended.

Addressing the complaint in detail

2.1 - Discrimination or vilification

There is no discrimination or vilification in the script or video, despite the claim of “offensively derogatory language” in the complaint.

2.2 - Exploitative and degrading

The young actors are honestly and sensitively depicting issues from their own lives or peer groups.

2.3 – Violence

There is neither violence nor reference to violence

2.4 - Sex, sexuality and nudity

This advertisement is necessarily about circumstances where the need for STI check-ups or treatment may arise. The sexual encounters are described indirectly:

“Did you get with that Stacey girl?”

“It was mad joog” (local slang for ‘it was good mate’) and “He has rubbers but we didn’t use them.”

There is neither nudity nor “overt” sexual activity. The scenes are mainly boys talking together or girls talking together.

2.5 – Language

The strongest language in the ad is “It’s been hurting down there, when I pee” - this

language is used to help the audience identify a common symptom of STIs.

2.6 - Health and Safety

The whole purpose of the campaign is to promote health and safety. While the youth discuss instances of potentially unsafe sex, the focus is on how to respond positively to protect their health.

Advertising or Marketing Communications to Children

The complainant seems concerned about “the times it is aired when young children can see, hear and look up to.”

Note: the advertisement was classified PG but the exact times of airing were left to the broadcaster.

Teenagers who are sexually active were part of the target group and therefore could be reasonably described as children. The Sexual Health services take their responsibilities regarding child protection and competency to consent to health care very seriously, and try to involve parents wherever possible. There is nothing to contradict this approach in the ad; nor is there any promotion or glamorisation of underage sex.

The advertisement delivers a health promotion message about STIs and how to access relevant services. We submit that the advertisement is not in any way displaying sex, sexuality or nudity. The language used was scrutinised on several occasions by the focus groups to ensure relevance and suitability for the target audience.

To enable the Board to put this advertisement in context I have attached evidence of the script links to the several media clips that the information was taken from along with a digital copy of the advertisement.

The outcome of the advertisement has had a positive response from those in the youth and health sector. This has also been timely as the Mount Isa Sexual Health clinic moved location the week prior to going to air and the clinic numbers have remained steady throughout this transition of the service.

Young People Ahead is located at:

7 Diane St Mount Isa

(07) 4743 1000

www.youngpeopleahead.com.au/

As part of our health service we promote positive sexual health messages through the media. We welcome and invite feedback from both the public and community for concerns regarding our media campaigns. Our service is committed to working with the community appropriately in achieving positive outcomes to lower the incidence of STIs and achieve healthy outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait island communities.

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 features offensive and derogatory language and the sexual theme is not appropriate for children.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board 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 this television advertisement features young people talking about a sexual health, including STIs and getting a check-up.

The Board noted the advertiser’s response that they are targeting young people in response to an outbreak of infectious syphilis in the North West of Queensland and that local youth assisted focus groups with the content and delivery of the advertisement to ensure it would be understood and well received by the target audience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youths aged between 16 and 25 years old.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed complaints about a similar advertisement in case 0215/12 where:

“The Board noted the advertisement encourages people to use condoms when having sex in order to prevent disease and features scenes showing health professionals passing on literature and condoms to patients.

The Board noted that the advertisement is an indigenous community advertisement and considered that the advertisement does not suggest that indigenous people all have STDs and that the focus of the advertisement is to target that community.

The Board noted that the references to sexual activity are discreet and that the language used throughout is very mild. The Board noted that some members of the community may prefer that this issue not be advertised however the Board noted that this issue is allowed to be advertised and considered that it delivers an important health message to the community.

The Board considered that the advertisement handles the issue of safe sex in a manner which is factual and which treats the issue of sex with sensitivity.

The Board noted that the advertisement has been rated PG by CAD and considered that the content is appropriate for the relevant PG audience of this locally produced advertisement.”

In the current advertisement, the Board noted that the references to sexual health issues are discreet and in the Board’s view these issues are handled in a manner which is factual rather than sensational and the overall message is informative and relevant to the target audience.

The Board acknowledged that some members of the community would prefer that the issue of

sexual health not be discussed on television but considered that in the context of a community awareness advertisement that has been rated PG by CAD, the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

The Board 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 noted that in one scene a young male says that it has been “hurting down there when I pee” and in another scene a young female asks her female if she has heard of syphilis or gonorrhoea. The Board noted that syphilis and gonorrhoea are the correct medical terms for sexually transmitted diseases and considered that in the context of an advertisement for a sexual health clinic it is not inappropriate to use these words. The Board noted the reference to it hurting when the boy goes to the toilet and considered that there are no explicit references to sexual activity and in the Board’s view this statement is mild enough to be appropriate for younger children to hear.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not use strong, obscene or inappropriate language.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

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