



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 218/09 |
| 2. Advertiser | Thomas William Productions (Posters) |
| 3. Product | Entertainment |
| 4. Type of advertisement | Outdoor |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Religion – section 2.1
Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 10 June 2009 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Upheld – discontinued or modified |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This print poster shows a picture of the Virgin Mary with an image depicting male genitals drawn crudely on her forehead.

The image has the heading “Virgins Wanted \$20,000 ea.”

The words “B SIDE. A DOCUMENTARY MADE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY Only at the movies!” are on the left hand side. Further text “see website for details fameandfortune.com.au”.

THE COMPLAINT

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

1. I am catholic and blasphemous in my religion.

2. Its socially offensive.

3. The ad is unrated.

4. The ad was placed in a strategic high traffic location surrounded by 3 primary schools and a high school.

5. The web promotion grooms children for commercial sex.

Not only as a christian but a person with basic common decency this absolutely offends me and to think that it was allowed to be posted in the first place worries me to think were society is heading. What is sacred? How can a revered religious figure be denigrated in such a flippant manner?

The advertisement is absolutely inappropriate for a public place where children pass by. The posters near Kingsgrove Station are approx 200m from a church, primary school and high school. Many children pass by this ad every day. The advertisement is promoting the sale of virginity for cash, effectively advertising prostitution.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

The advertising campaign containing the Virgin Mary with male genitalia placed on her forehead is no longer running and will not run again in the future.

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 this advertisement, which depicts the Virgin Mary with a penis drawn on her forehead, is offensive and inappropriate for viewing by children.

The Board noted that the advertisement is an image of the Virgin Mary who is a central figure of the Christian religion. The Board considered that the image of the Virgin Mary with a penis on her forehead was disrespectful to people of the Christian belief and that the image denigrated this religion. The Board considered that the advertisement discriminated against a section of society on account of their religious beliefs and therefore breached section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board also considered that the image of the penis on the Virgin Mary's forehead was a sexually suggestive depiction that was inappropriate for this poster medium which is accessible to a broad audience including children. The Board considered that this advertisement did not depict sex or sexuality with sensitivity to the relevant audience and that the advertisement therefore breached section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did breach the Code, the Board upheld complaints.