



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 220/08 |
| 2. Advertiser | Wicked Campers |
| 3. Product | Other |
| 4. Type of advertisement | Transport |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3
Language – use of language – section 2.5 |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 9 July 2008 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Upheld – discontinued or modified |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Each 'Wicked Camper' vehicle is individually painted in a graffiti style. The text is presented on the back and sides of the vehicle. This vehicle includes the text: Women are like banks - once you withdraw you loose interest.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The slogans are sexist, crude and disgusting. As I drive past them every day in the Valley I need to explain to my young children what they mean. They should not be exposed to such filth and demeaning slogans. They are NOT funny. Get them off our road!

Their slogans are inappropriate and sexist and I do not want my children to have the opportunity to read them.

These slogans on the vans are discriminatory and offensive. They can be read at any time by children.

It is sexist, misogynist objectification of women. Not appropriate for my children to read in the supermarket car park.

They are sexist, offensive, demeaning, base, and have to be read by children who want to know what they mean. They impart terrible messages to small minds about sexuality and the objectification of women.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Unfortunately, we are unable to supply you with the information you requested. The reason for this is that our campers are adorned with individual graffiti artwork concerning a wide range of themes, some of which contain a political or philosophical message. We do not deem this artwork to be 'advertising' or 'marketing communication' even in the loosest interpretation of the terms. As such, these slogans do not form part of our advertising in printed media.

Currently, no database or records are kept of the actual 'slogans' that are written on the back of some of our vehicles. Additionally, our campers are periodically repainted depending on the

condition of the artwork every 6 to 24 months so without a photo or license plate details to look up, I am unable to even confirm whether or not an alleged 'slogans' has or currently exists.

I can confirm however, that one of our campers does have the slogan "Women are like banks – once you withdraw you loose interest" having personally seen it recently and will therefore respond to the sections of the code that the complainants allege it breaches.

2.1 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, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief.

The slogan in no way conflicts with or breaches section 2.1. While it references 'women' to metaphorically compare them to an organisation that provides a critical and valued public good, it in no way is discriminatory or vilifies women. Any sexist, derogatory or otherwise negative interpretation of the slogan reflects more on the complainants own bias than the text itself.

2.5 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided.

The slogan in no way conflicts with or breaches section 2.5. It contains no obscene words or phrases, nor is it strong.

Furthermore, I note that the complaints submitted were actually in response to an article in the Courier Mail on 14 Jun 08 and not to having seen a particular slogan on one of our campers. While I am unable to verify the existence of some of the alleged slogans, a photographer from the paper was invited to our Brisbane depot to document any campers he saw fit and none of the alleged slogans were photographed or published.

In a pluralist society like ours, everyone is free to express their own views – some of which not everyone agrees with. We believe all our artwork and philosophical messages are not contrary prevailing community standards and the robust responses and debate to the article demonstrate this.

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 and reviewed the complaints under Section 2.1 of the Code which deals with discrimination.

The Board noted that while the advertiser was unable to provide an image of the van bearing the slogan he could confirm that he did in fact own a van bearing such a logo.

The Board agreed that because they had seen examples of the way in which the vans were decorated they could make a determination on this slogan.

The Board considered the slogan to be misogynistic and demeaning to women.

The Board did not concur with the Advertiser's point of view that comparing woman to financial institutions was, in fact, a compliment.

The Board further considered that the words served to commodify women and could not be considered humorous or acceptable.

The Board determined that the slogan was therefore in breach of Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board did not consider that the actual words used constituted strong or offensive language and determined that the marketing communication was not in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code which deals with the use of language.

The Board noted that because of the nature of this marketing communication - that of a spray-painted van - the enforcement of their decision may take longer to enact and complainants should be aware of this.

The Board considered it was reasonable for the advertiser to wait until the van had completed its rental term and been returned to the depot before the offending slogan was removed.

Finding that the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.1 of the Code the Board upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the determination regarding this advertisement included the following:

Wicked Campers disagrees with the boards findings that the slogan is misogynistic, demeaning to, and objectifies women. However given that the umpire has now made her decision, it would be unsporting of us not to comply and modify the vehicle in question. The slogan will be removed as soon as we can determine what vehicle is it on and be replaced with something dull, boring and suitable for anyone offended by the word 'bottom'.