



## CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	221/09
2. Advertiser	Tourism Australia
3. Product	Travel
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Nationality – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 10 June 2009
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The poster for Tourism Australia is headed “Win the WORK/LIFE Battle.

In smaller writing the poster says “There’s nothing wrong with a healthy bit of Aussie R & R. In fact, a quick break or a good old fashioned Australian holiday gives you the chance to rediscover your family, your friends and, most importantly, yourself. So if you really want to win the work/life battle, maybe it’s time you took some well deserved leave and claimed a little victory of your own. Visit [noleavenolife.com](http://noleavenolife.com) to find out how.”

The picture image is a beach setting with the rising sun in the background and a family of four raising a large beach umbrella. All four of the family members are assisting in raising the umbrella.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*I am writing to express extreme disgust that Tourism Australia would use the iconic photo of US marines on Iwo Jima raising 'old glory; and used as a rallying point during the battle for the Pacific during WW2 as a prop to sell holidays in WA.*

*I thought that we Australians would not stoop to such a level; compare it with Simpson and his Donkey to sell pony rides. I have taken this enclosed ad to my bridge club(very mixed ages and from many countries) and Probus and there was only ONE person (she is under 60) who did not immediately start saying Iwo Jima" (or in some cases "Guam") and were in complete agreement that it reflected poorly on the (young??) people in the advertising agency.*

*The 2nd ad one week later in a different newspaper has deleted the "Iwo Jima' photo so perhaps this is not the first letter of complaint.*

*I think this advertisement is a cheap copy of the famous American memorial to the troops, who fought in the battle of Iwo Jima, in the 2nd World War. I think Americans would find it particularly offensive.*

*The major photograph in the advert depicts a family on a beach attempting to raise a beach umbrella. It is a direct 'copy/parody' of the US Marines raising the flag over Iwo Jima in World War II. The image, coupled with the copy is I feel insensitive in the extreme and callous beyond belief. It makes a mockery of the sacrifices made by those who fought in WW2 and in particular during the battle of Iwo Jima. It is an affront to those with any shred of decency and history.*

## THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

*The advertisement in question is part of a national (Australian) domestic tourism campaign titled No Leave/No Life which was launched in March 2009.*

*The campaign encourages Australian employers and employees to convert stockpiled leave entitlements into Australian holidays to support the domestic tourism industry. The domestic tourism industry, worth in excess of \$60 billion to the local economy, has been impacted over recent years by an increasing number of Australians stockpiling their leave.*

*The No Leave No Life campaign aims to address some of these issues by reminding workers just how healthy an old-fashioned Australian holiday is, for them and for the country.*

*The campaign challenges the everyday Australian worker to win the work/life battle by using some of their well-earned leave to reconnect with loved ones and in doing so, do something for the country.*

*The campaign creative was inspired by historic style public 'service' campaigns of the past which encouraged citizens to "Do Something For Your Country". This inspiration reflected research which indicated that many Australians felt in a constant "battle" to balance their work and their leisure time.*

*TA has consulted widely among groups representing employers and employees across the private and public sectors, business and the tourism industry, including State and Territory tourism organisations.*

*To date 178 employers, including 35 major corporations or public service departments or agencies, have registered to download resources to participate in the program. TA has briefed more than 1,350 industry representatives on the program and business groups such as AICC, BCA and AIG are assisting with the distribution of information to their members.*

*Response to specific complaints:*

*Complaint received by email on 04/04/2009*

*Nature of complaint: Discrimination or vilification Nationality*

*Tourism Australia rejects the complainant's claim that the image in the advertisement represents "discrimination or vilification" of the citizens of the United States of America, or that it "makes a mockery of the sacrifices made by those who fought in WW2 and in particular during the battle of Iwo Jima."*

*Tourism Australia acknowledges that some Australians who are familiar with the photographic image of the raising of the US flag on Iwo Jima may well see similarities in the pose of the family and that of the US Marines depicted on Iwo Jima. However, Tourism Australia rejects the complainant's claim that the image is designed to, or does, make fun of, or hold up to ridicule that historic event. Tourism Australia would argue that in fact that its image is used in a generic sense – as a representation of a group of people united in a common cause, and marking 'victory'. In the case of this campaign the image is of a family raising a beach-umbrella to mark victory in the 'work/life' battle. There will be many Australians unfamiliar with the Iwo Jima image but who will immediately recognise the symbolism represented in the advertisement as that of 'marking victory' – that was the intent.*

*Complaint received by email on 19/04/2009*

*Nature of complaint: Discrimination or vilification Nationality*

*Tourism Australia rejects the complainant's claim that "Americans would find it particularly offensive" on two counts. Firstly, the target audience is Australians within Australia. The ad is not designed for, nor will it be used, in the United States of America or indeed anywhere internationally. Secondly, as stated above in response to the complaint of 04/04/09, Tourism Australia rejects any claim that the advertisement is designed to ridicule or make a mockery of the American armed forces.*

## **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 this advertisement evokes references to an important part of World War II and is disrespectful.

The Board considered that the advertisement may be evocative of a number of moments in history and historic public 'service' campaigns but that this evocation, of a family putting up a beach umbrella to spend family time together, was not disrespectful or in any way vilifying of any person or section of the community. The Board considered that this advertisement did not breach section 2.1 of the Code.

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