



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	227/09
2. Advertiser	Wicked Campers
3. Product	Travel
4. Type of advertisement	Transport
5. Nature of complaint	Language – use of language – section 2.5
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 10 June 2009
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The sign on the back of this Wicked Camper says “BE CAREFUL OF WHOSE TOES YOU STEP ON TODAY, AS THEY MIGHT BE CONNECTED TO THE ARSE YOU HAVE TO KISS TOMORROW.” The sticker on the back window of the van reads “Fuck Online” “WICKED CAMPERS.COM.”. One side of the van depicts a cartoon person throwing some pills into his mouth. The other side of the van depicts what appears to be a pig with a cigarette protruding from its bottom.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I find this language offensive, particularly in public places. It is also mobile, being stuck on the rear of a vehicle.

I, along with other members of the public, have no choice as to whether we view this slogan or not. It's very difficult to NOT view it if you are following the vehicle.

I don't to view it, and I definitely don't want my primary school-aged children viewing it. Other children will be subjected to this slogan as well. This is completely inappropriate by parental, community and societal standards as far as I'm aware.

I've worked in State schools for many years. If this happened in the context of a State school, there would be immediate and severe action due to the duty of care for children. A vehicle displaying this slogan would not be allowed on school property again until it was removed.

I object to seeing the word "fuck online", it's crude and our children shouldn't have to read these things when we're sitting in traffic because when they read it, they repeat it and start thinking/asking about what it means.

A picture tells a thousand words, a man taking pills/drugs, drug taking is not what we should be encouraging our children to do, this image normalises taking drugs. A pig with a cigarette/joint in its bum is very vulgar and I don't wish to have to look at this image or have our children having to see this. There is nothing funny about smoking or having something hanging out of a pigs bum. Stop trying to normalise the inappropriate. We deserve better!

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*We have had a few problems recently with people editing the 'book online' on the backs of our vans to 'f*** online.' I can assure you 100% that this is not something that a Wicked employee or affiliate has done and is likely to be either a customer or a random passer-by in the street.*

I would also like this opportunity to inform the board and the complainants that all vans are

*currently having all of the sticker wording on the back wind shields removed i.e. Book Online and Rent Me, leaving just the website address in order to eradicate the problem of people tampering with the stickers to create crude sayings. Having said that, I believe that to 'f*** online' is quite popular these days although I have never tried it myself...*

With regards to the van in question, 'a man taking pills/drugs.' Personally, I have never seen this van before in my life and can neither confirm or deny its existence without proof.

I have just been informed that the van in this photo is at the workshop as it arrived broken down on the back of a tow truck last week. I asked the mechanic to confirm the image on the side of the van and he said that there was not an image but it looked like the van had been recently re-sprayed.

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 complaints about various aspects of this advertisement.

The Board noted that the sticker on the van stating 'book online' appears to have been altered to now read 'fuck online'. The Board agreed that this is not a modification that the advertiser has made and that it is not part of the advertisement.

The Board considered that the slogan on the back of the van was relatively inoffensive and that the word 'arse' was not used in a manner that was inappropriate in the circumstances. The Board considered that most members of the community would consider this in bad taste but not strong or obscene language.

The Board noted the image of the man throwing pills into his mouth and considered that while some people may construe this as a reference to taking illegal drugs, there was no suggestion that the pills are in fact illegal. The Board considered that this image was not a depiction of activity in contravention of community standards on health and safety and did not contravene section 2.6 of the Code.

The Board then considered the image of the pig. The Board considered that this image was in extremely bad taste and that some members of the community that came into contact with the van would find the image offensive. However the Board considered that the image did not breach any provisions of the Code.

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