



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	242/05
2. Advertiser	Holden Ltd (Astra Coupe & Wagon)
3. Product	Vehicles
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 September 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The first scene in this television advertisement depicts a young couple leaving their house wearing nothing but footwear. The breasts and genitals of the man and woman have been pixilated. The couple are shown to get into the new Holden Astra parked in their driveway. The voiceover states: *“Introducing the new Astra Coupe. With four airbags and ABS standard, the Astra Coupe provides you with incredible confidence. But in the end the real confidence comes from having a great body. The sexy new Astra Coupe, it’s a confidence thing”*. The coupe is shown to drive along city roads passing by a bus of inquisitive senior citizens before parking in a city street. As the couple leave the car, the male driver bends over to place the keys in his sock. The unsuspecting onlookers turn away in disgust. The Holden logo is then shown with the words “Drive On”.

A similar advertisement is shown for the Astra Wagon. A young naked couple are shown to leave their house carrying a large box each. They place the boxes in the car and leave the driveway. The car is shown to stop in a city street by a charity clothing bin. The young couple retrieve the bundles of clothes in the back of the Astra Wagon. The couple dispose of the clothes in the charity clothing bin. A voiceover states: *“With the flexibility of a wagon and four airbags and ABS standard, what else do you need? The new Astra Wagon, it’s a confidence thing”*.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

“... their nudity is paraded and flaunted...”

“The advertisement uses blatant, prolonged full nudity of both men and women... I find it offensive because nudity is not a normal part of everyday life ‘on the street’, and it ignores the normal boundaries which society places on itself... The time slot of 8.30pm is still family time, when many children and young people would be watching. This is something I do want my children exposed to, ... It is not humorous or clever, it is offensive and inappropriate...”

“... Not only am I totally offended by this form of advertising but I am disgusted that it was shown during this time slot when my children are watching one of their favourite shows.”

“... There is no need for this form of nudity to be on television, it does nothing to encourage myself and people I know to buy this vehicle, it has the exact opposite effect in fact...”

“... I think ads should at least be relevant to the product, and not just sensationalising sex and nudity and bad, VERY BAD taste.”

“... This commercial does not condemn the illegal act of indecent exposure - rather it glorifies it. It should be taken off the air if only for this reason.”

“... Featuring nudity in this fashion is gratuitous and Holden have overstepped the line of decency, or even humour in this ad.”

“... Public nudity on suburban streets is an offence in Australia , thus, this ad depicts an illegal act in order to sell its vehicles. I am totally offended that an Australian company that I have always respected and admired would treat the Australian public with such disrespect.”

“With the moral dichotomy that our young children and adults are placed in, such ads only blur the distinctions between what is appropriate behaviour in public and what is not.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“We believe that... the appearance of nude people (no actual clear nude images are shown as all nude images have been pixilated) in the advertisements supports the core communication that clearly demonstrates that with four airbags and ABS, the Astra provides you with a level of confidence and, as such, is a valid analogy. Furthermore, and in addition to the pixilation, great care was taken in the execution of the advertisement to ensure that the nudity was portrayed in a very natural and not suggestive or sexual manner.”

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 that the scenes depicted in this advertisement were clearly exaggerated and did not represent a realistic situation. The Board was of the view that the nudity depicted in this advertisement was not sexualised in any way and determined that the images were not pornographic. The Board considered that the advertiser was not specifically using highly sexualised images to promote this car rather it was using the images to convey the central theme of the advertisement being: “confidence”.

The Board further noted that the breasts and genitalia of the characters in the advertisement had been pixilated and that the images are not overly graphic as no breasts or genitals are shown.

The Board considered that in the context of prevailing community standards the majority of people would not find this advertisement offensive. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the provisions of the Code relating to the portrayal of sex, sexuality or nudity.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds the Board dismissed the complaint.