



## CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 272/09   |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Campbell Arnott's                                  |
| 3. Product                    | Food and Beverages                                 |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | TV   |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 |
| 6. Date of determination      | Wednesday, 8 July 2009                             |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Dismissed  |

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement for Campbell's Country Ladle Soup opens with a man dressed as a typical country singer standing in a wheat field. He strums his guitar and then starts singing a song, commencing with "ain't city life grand" with typical country rhythms. As he sings, it becomes clear that the wheat field is a photograph on the side of a huge truck in the city. The guitarist walks through the city environment singing about internet cafes, adult shops, pepper spray, traffic jams, parking fines, buskers and muggers. His "Grandma Hazel" ladles out soup to city people sitting at a rustic country-style table surrounded by boxes and stands full of country produce while he sings "but best of all, the city's got County Ladle – country goodness through and through from a country kitchen just for you". The advertisement concludes with a graphic of a table full of country produce and two cans of country ladle soup with "spread the warmth" at the top and "now with wholegrain" spelt out on the table in grain.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*However this is not just a simple reference poorly dropped in an information cluster; with 'Buskers' being referenced so late into the tune creates a presupposed thinking pattern (i am assuming this was not intended and is simply a fluke accident on the behalf of cambels/arnotts) in the listener, thus subliminally referencing ALL buskers to be of an equal equivalent to pepper spray & toxic gas, and through continuing the information cluster finishing with 'muggers', helping to hide the subliminal message.*

*As I have previously stated, i have no belief that Cambels/Arnotts, would intentionally (and poorly the message is clear as day) utilize NLP/Hypnotic Language Patterns/or Subliminal Messaging to attack such a large sector of the performance art community- However the add does openly and psychologically attack an aspect of the performance arts community- one which in fact provides the Australian community with accessibly quality entertainment- Australia is internationally recognized as producing some of the best buskers in the world- with an Australian {Chayne Hultgren} winning the World Buskers Championship, in 07&08, The English Gents, and Mario Queen of the Circus {All Australian} Australia Produces many of the best buskers in the world. Busking helped to produce such Media Giants as, Cirque Du Soleil, The Wiggles, John Buttler, Doug Anthony All Stars (Paul McDermott, Tim Ferguson, Richard Fidler), Rod Stewart, James Blundell, etc etc. This advertisement, not only directly attacks us, but WILL cause us to lose money and suffer further. On a personal level, in the last 15 months i have performed over \$16,000 valued performance for various corporate charity events accross Melbourne, and am not (by a long shot) the only busker to dedicate a large amount of time and support to community groups. This add must be taken off the air.,Now.*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*The advertisement features a guitar player who is singing about some aspects of city living that people may not regularly associate with smaller, country towns. One of those aspects is buskers, who are simply mentioned in the lyrics alongside a range of other aspects such as traffic jams and Internet cafés – all things we tend to associate with larger, more populous cities.*

*As per the AANA Code of Ethics Section 2.1, the advertisement does 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.*

*Nor does it intentionally (or unintentionally via hypnotic or subliminal messaging, as alleged by the complainant) discriminate or vilify buskers.*

*We therefore believe the advertisement does not breach the AANA Code of Ethics or any of the other Codes.*

## **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 the advertisement denigrates buskers.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted that the advertisement does depict a musician singing about city life. The Board considered that the advertisement depicts and describes a range of features of city life, a number of which could be considered be negative, such as traffic jams, road rage and toxic fumes. The Board considered however that the advertisement depicted the stereotypical country singer highlighting the benefits of country life by listing some features of city life that country people may find challenging. The Board considered that the advertisement was a humorous depiction of a stereotypical country singer noting that the best thing about the city is that the particular soup is available in the city. The Board considered that most people in the community would consider that the inclusion of a reference to buskers was not a suggestion that buskers are unpleasant or should not be supported. The Board determined that the advertisement did not denigrate or discriminate against or vilify buskers in any manner and that the 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.