



## **CASE REPORT**

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|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Complaint reference number | 307/08  |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Holden Ltd  |
| 3. Product                    | Vehicles  |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | TV  |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3<br>FCAI - Other |
| 6. Date of determination      | Wednesday, 13 August 2008                                       |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Dismissed   |

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

This television advertisement opens on a man sitting in a cafe looking through the car guide section of a newspaper. A female voice over advises "Choosing a small car can be a big decision. Do you go big on safety (a child is seen in a dinky car wearing a crash helmet and knee/elbow pads)...big on style (a female model is seen strutting the catwalk)...or big on oomph? (a boy is seen jumping into a swimming pool with a huge splash)." A red Holden Astra is seen driving along a city street as the voice over continues "Well, here's your answer. Holden Astra SRi. A punchy ( a young woman is shown in boxing gear throwing an air punch) fuel-efficient, 6 airbag, European-designed bundle of Yes (a woman is seen writing Yes with a sparkler), with stability control for an exclamation mark." The car is seen driving into the sunset as she continues "The Astra has 4 cylinders for economy (7.2l per 100kms), 5 stars for safety (a mother is seen driving with a baby in a capsule) and 6 stars for fun (young people are seen driving)." The advertisement ends with a shot of a silver Astra with a young couple sitting on the bonnet and the voice over concludes "The Astra's big where it counts". text on screen reads "New Holden Astra SRi. Go better."

## **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*The Holden Astra commercial asserts that the Astra is "big where it counts". It is drawing a long bow to portray the Astra as a phallic symbol because its shape is nothing like a penis or a male crotch. The commercial ends with a young lady imploring listeners to "go down"; she is presumably (well she is, we all know it) urging watchers to perform fellatio. Now when you are watching TV with, say, your mother-in-law or perhaps your pubescent daughter, it is embarrassing, vulgar and crude to be subjected to matters involving oral sex. I am not a prude or a wowser but there is a time and a place. Can you explain how this advertisement has not been deemed to be distasteful (pardon the pun).*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*We refer to the recent complaint made to the bureau regarding the latest Astra TVC. The campaign, titled "the small car that's big where it counts", refers solely to the extensive features available on this model.*

*The assertion made in the TVC is that choosing a small car is a big decision and with the options available, we suggest that choosing an Astra will not compromise on either style or safety.*

*Discerning buyers researching vehicles within this segment are interested in the key features the Astra has to offer, namely the excellent safety and fuel efficiency of the model. The TVC serves to highlight that the Astra offers a number of these key features which are high or 'big' on the customer's consideration list, despite being a small car.*

*The use of 'big where it counts' is in no way intended to infer any sexual connotation or to portray the vehicle as a phallic symbol nor does it infringe section 2.3 of the AANA code. It highlights that this small car offers a large array of features. Furthermore, the TVC does not implore listeners to "go down" as incorrectly stated by the complainant; the voice over actually says "Go better" which is a Holden logo used on a range of our advertisements.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") was required to determine whether the material before it was in breach of the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries' Advertising for Motor Vehicles Voluntary Code of Practice (the "FCAI Code"). The Board determined that the material before it was an "advertisement for a motor vehicle" and therefore that the FCAI Code applied.

The Board then went on to consider the substantive provisions of the FCAI Code. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach any of the clauses of the FCAI Code and accordingly dismissed the complaints.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement breached any of the provisions of Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics. In particular the Board considered whether the advertisement treated sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity.

The Board considered that this advertisement did not contain any sexual references or even any sexual innuendo.

The Board noted that the phrase that was of concern to the complainant actually stated "...go better" not "...go down" as the complainant had attested.

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