



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 367/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Ford Motor Co Aust Pty Ltd (Focus) |
| 3. Product | Vehicles |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Race – section 2.1 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 13 November 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a roof top car park in the city, which is empty save for a gleaming Focus XR5. Various people are seen with the car in different situations, including a sporty-looking man with ski racks on the car, an Indian woman wearing a sari and putting an orange shopping bag in the back seat, and an Asian man with a laptop bag over his shoulder. Various male and female voices announce "There is no common man. There is no common woman. The only thing we all have in common...is that we are all different. It's what defines us." The view of the car as the camera pans around it changes from an XR5 Turboto to a Focus Zetec and the colour of the car keeps changing. Other people are also shown with the car - a woman holding a plant, a male and female with a golf buggy, a young couple with a baby and stroller, a father and son with a grocery shopping trolley, a woman with tennis gear, two men with dogs and a young man with an iPod. "The voiceovers conclude "That's why at Ford we've created a range of German engineered urban cars to suit different needs, desires, aspirations and lives. Because we know...Everyone's journey is different."

THE COMPLAINT

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

The message was about difference - but the images were, with one exception, of white people (of different ages, with different haircuts etc). The exception was a woman who appeared to be Indian, wearing a sari. I think this ad breaches AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics Article 2.1 because it discriminates on the basis of race. It almost exclusively shows white people, and the exception, an Indian woman, is dressed in traditional clothing, which essentialises her ethnicity and marks her as excluded from the other people in the ad. This is an example of the worst kind of tokenism. The potential of the ad to make a meaningful statement about difference and sameness was totally undermined by the racist use of white models. A non-racist point about sameness could also have been made using models of varying ethnicities and in a truly diverse range of situations.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

At the outset, I would like to emphasise that Ford Australia takes the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics, as well as the FCAI Motor Vehicle Code, extremely seriously and is very aware of the potential impact that its advertising may have on members of the public. All of our advertising, including the Ford Focus advertisement referred to in the complaint, is carefully reviewed in that context. In this case, we do not believe that the scenario depicted in the Ford Focus advertisement is in breach of either the AANA Code of Ethics or the FCAI Motor Vehicle Code.

The proposition for these television commercials is clearly about different people at varying life

stages having different needs, with the aim being to demonstrate an understanding of their needs and provide a range of cars to suit these needs.

The talent selection was purposefully chosen to reflect and portray a variety of people from all walks of life and to represent a good cross section of Australia's multicultural population. For example we have young and old people; we have students and children, singles, couples and families. We also have people from various ethnic backgrounds including Australian, American, English, Indian, German, Korean, New Zealand, Polish & Dutch heritage.

The dress selected was varied as well; we have designer clothes, casual clothes, smart work clothes and sports clothes. The sari was chosen to match the colour of the vehicle and to add some movement to the static people shots. It was by no means selected to vilify or make an example of this woman's background or to mark her as excluded from the other people shown in the advertisement.

As responsible advertisers, we feel that the people featured in this series of ads, represents a good cross section of the population at large, helping us to appeal to as wide a range of people as possible. Furthermore, we reject in the strongest possible terms the allegation made by the complainant that the advertisement is racist. We do not believe the television commercial contravenes either the AANA Advertiser code of Ethics or the FCAI code of Practice for Motor Vehicle advertising and trust this response adequately addresses the concerns raised in the complaint forwarded to us.

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 considered the provisions of the FCAI Code, noting that the advertisement depicts a range of stationary vehicles. The Board noted that there is no depiction of the vehicle being driven and that the voice overs make no reference to any features of the car that raise concerns under the FCAI Code. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the FCAI Code.

The Board then 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's depiction of one woman in a sari was tokenism and offensive under section 2.1 of the Code. The Board noted the advertiser's response that people of a range of cultural backgrounds were depicted in the advertisement. The Board noted that none of the other people were depicted in traditional dress. The Board considered that the inclusion of the woman was not done in a way that was meant to make her appear in any way the object of derision or fun or in any way particularly different to any of the other people. The Board considered that the woman's inclusion was consistent with the theme of the advertisement and did not amount to vilification of or discrimination against Indian women.

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