



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 546/08 |
| 2. Advertiser | BCF |
| 3. Product | Leisure & sport |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 21 January 2009 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement from BCF for its boating, camping and fishing gear introduces Josh who is seen playing a computer game. The voice over tells about Josh's exploits on internet games and also that Josh calls himself 'Sword of Justice'. The voice over then says, "That ain't living Josh. This is living." Viewers then see a boat speeding on water, a waterskiier, a tent and other shots of people in the outdoors. It ends with BCF logo and the voice over saying, 'The place to get it is at BCF - Australia's greatest boating, fishing and camping store'.

THE COMPLAINT

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

In essence the ad describes the weekend of a internet/computer user in a derogatory fashion and proclaiming this as "not living" and frankly as an IT professional I find this offensive personally and professionally and would like to see it removed. Surely there are smarter ways to sell lifestyle products without isolating and ridiculing a single group of individuals.

I find this ad completely against anyone who likes to play games on their pc, this add shows people who regularly play games are in their house in the dark clicking all night long and looking generally horrible with no social life. This is a complete misconception and I find this insanely insulting to everything I hold dear. I work at a games company, I spend a lot of time playing games, going to a gaming shop and playing miniatures and cards, these people are stating that I have no life and that what I like to do is worthless and pointless, not everyone likes boats, going out fishing etc etc, I find those things insanely boring but this add seems to tell me each time that it comes on that i am worthless and wasting my life. I am sick of being constantly insulted every time the add comes on.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

BCF have been running the 'This is Living' campaign for over twelve months in an array of mediums, including Television, Radio, Print and Online. The strategic position of the campaign has always been intended to juxtapose between two distinct lifestyle choices and given the nature of the business, encourage people from all walks of life that 'life is better in the outdoors'. Past times such as boating, camping and fishing, as depicted by the campaign as a whole, are suggested to be healthy outdoor pursuits that promote healthy work life balance. Such pursuits are constructive, wholesome activities that are available to all members of the community and are believed to genuinely have a positive lifestyle influence.

The intention of the advertisement is merely to portray a lifestyle and in no way is there any reference to a distinct or specific portion of the community that discriminates on the basis of sexual preference, as suggested by the complainant. (Refer section 2.1 of the AANA code of Ethics)

The essence of the advertisement is designed to be comical in nature by means of an over the top portrayal of an individual that it is deemed to be totally unrealistic when applying a reasonability test. For example, "He thinks that Batman would beat Spiderman in a fight but Superman would beat them both," is not a typical statement envisaged to be made by many adult Australian's. This extreme representation is very much intentional so as to remove any reference toward typical behaviours. By building a character through an array of specific behaviors, creates a situation whereby the character is more removed from a typical member of society.

The campaign utilises humor to create the theatre of the advertisement depicted in both scripting and creative execution. This element of humor is not suggested to immunise an advertisement from ABAC standards however is suggested to impact the overall impression that an advertisement would have upon a listener.

BCF Australia regrets any offence taken by the complainant pertaining to this advertisement however suggests that the advertisement is inline within the AANA code of ethics as it is expected that the campaign is inline with community standards and that a reasonable person would not infer any reference of discrimination.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board considered the application of Section 2.1 of the Code, relating to discrimination and vilification.

The Board noted the character in this advertisement is depicted as focussed on gaming, comic books and action figures, and the voiceover then suggests he should get into the outdoors instead.

The Board considered the advertisement is aimed at promoting the advertiser's boating, camping and fishing products in a humourous manner, by suggesting there is more to life than staying indoors. The Board considered the depiction of the main character was not a serious depiction, but clearly tongue-in-cheek. Even if serious, the Board considered that the message of the advertisement is that it is more fun to be in the outdoors, but does not amount to vilification of people who choose to undertake indoor activities.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not discriminate against, or vilify, any identifiable section of the community and therefore found no breach of Section 2.1 of the Code.

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