

## Case Report

1. Case Number :	0348-24
2. Advertiser :	Woolworths Group Limited
3. Product :	Retail
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Decision:	22-Jan-2025
6. Decision:	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.6 Health and Safety

### DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a tractor in a shed on a farm moving a bale of hay. There is a man and child standing on the other side of a fence watching, then two other children run into the shed.



### THE COMPLAINT

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

*Safety issue on farm.*

*Woolworths Christmas ad depicts two young girls running into a hay shed where a farmer is operating a tractor with a round bale on a front end loader. Children should never be around farm equipment, especially a tractor with a load on the front, it's impossible to see.*

*I hate being a "Karen" and I realise the ad was probably done by city people but as a retired rural policeman and farmer I've seen child deaths on farm and it was probably the worst experience of my career.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

*Thank you for your email dated 20 December 2024 in relation to complaints received in respect of the "Make Christmas a Classic" advertisement by Woolworths Group Limited ("Woolworths") run on TV from 2 November 2024 to 24 December 2024.*

### *The Advertisement*

*From 2 November 2024 to 24 December 2024, Woolworths aired a TV advertisement for its "Make Christmas a Classic" campaign (the "Advertisement").*

*The Advertisement follows the story of a young girl awaiting the arrival of Santa. She is concerned that Santa may not find her family. With the help of her friends, she rallies the local community to build a "larger than life" carrot in her family's paddock to guide Santa to her family's farm on Christmas Eve. As the sun sets, a number of families gather around a table showcasing food that is often eaten during the Christmas period. The film ends with everyone celebrating as the giant carrot lights up the sky, with the young girl reassured that Santa will not miss her family in his travels.*

*The campaign was filmed at a family farm in Jeetho, 100 kilometres south west of Melbourne in country Victoria.*

### *Issues raised in the complaints*

*Ads Standards received two complaints in relation to the fact that the Advertisement depicts children running into a shed where a farmer is operating farm machinery (in particular, a tractor). The complaints allege that this is a "safety issue on farm" and that "children should never be around farm equipment" (together, the "Complaint").*

*In its letter of 20 December 2024, Ads Standards identified Section 2.6 of the AANA Code of Ethics ("Code") as relevant to consideration of the Advertisement, which provides that "Advertising shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety."*

### *Woolworths' response to complaints*

*Woolworths takes its advertising obligations very seriously and thanks Ad Standards for the opportunity to respond to the Complaint.*

*We respectfully submit that the Advertisement (and, in particular, the scene where the children enter the farming shed) does not depict material contrary to Prevailing*

*Community Standards on health and safety in breach of Section 2.6 of the Code, and that the Complaint should be dismissed.*

*The Practice Note to Section 2.6 of the Code states the following in relation to farming:*

*In relation to the portrayal of farming, the dangerous use of quad bikes, children riding on tractors or other unsafe practices involving farming machinery will be contrary to prevailing community standards relating to health and safety... Advertising which demonstrates the unsafe use of machinery, even when not the focus of the advertisement, is likely to be seen as unsafe and against prevailing community standards on health and safety.*

*Woolworths take health and safety very seriously, and all possible health and safety aspects of the Advertisement were carefully carefully planned and executed, including to ensure that the Advertisement did not show the unsafe use of farming machinery or children engaging in unsafe practices on a farm.*

*In the relevant scene of the Advertisement where children are seen entering a hay shed (see clip at seconds 12-14), the following measures were adopted (and depicted in the Advertisement) to ensure that the scene portrayed a safe farming environment (including in relation to children):*

*There is an adult present in the shed with the children at all times.*

*There is a steel fence separating the children and this adult from the tractor carrying a hay bale. It was intentional that the only person on the side of the fence where the tractor is located is the operator of the tractor, to ensure a safe working environment for the cast and crew, and to ensure that safe practices were depicted in the scene. The tractor is operated slowly and carefully in a safe manner by a competent and experienced farmer. The operator is the owner of the farm in Jeetho at which the Advertisement was filmed.*

*A Safe Operating Procedures and Safe Work Method Statement was obtained in respect of the Advertisement. The safety supervisor preparing the Statement rated the scene as low risk (rare and insignificant) due to the safety factors set out above being in place. This was the lowest risk rating that could be provided.*

*Woolworths also submits that the Advertisement does not contravene any of the other subsections of Section 2 of the Code given that the Advertisement:*

- does not portray or depict material which discriminates against or vilifies a particular section of the community;*
  - does not employ sexual appeal;*
  - does not present or portray violence;*
  - does not contain any sexual content;*
  - does not include any strong or obscene language; and*
- is clearly distinguishable as advertising to the relevant audience.*

## *Conclusion*

*For the reasons outlined above, we submit that the Complaint should be dismissed on the basis that the Advertisement does not breach the Code.*

## **THE DECISION**

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement depicts unsafe behaviour.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

### **Section 2.6: Advertising shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.**

The Panel noted the Practice Note for this section of the Code includes:

*"In relation to the portrayal of farming, the dangerous use of quad bikes, children riding on tractors or other unsafe practices involving farming machinery will be contrary to prevailing community standards relating to health and safety.*

*Advertising which demonstrates the unsafe use of machinery, even when not the focus of the advertisement, is likely to be seen as unsafe and against prevailing community standards on health and safety."*

The Panel acknowledged that safety around farming equipment is of high concern to the community and noted that advertisers should always depict responsible farming practices in advertising.

The Panel considered that in this instance the tractor is shown being operated on the other side of a fence to where the children are. The Panel considered that there is a supervising adult standing near the fence, who would be able to ensure that the children did not climb the fence or go near the equipment that was being operated.

The Panel considered that there was nothing in the short scene which would be contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

### **Section 2.6 conclusion**

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

## **Conclusion**

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaints.