

Case Report

1. Case Number :	0089-25
2. Advertiser :	Motto
3. Product :	Clothing
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Transport
5. Date of Decision:	7-May-2025
6. Decision:	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.2 Exploitative or Degrading
AANA Code of Ethics\2.4 Sex/sexuality/nudity

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This bus advertisement shows a woman wearing fitted black pants, standing backwards. The woman has both her hands placed on her thighs below her buttocks. The words "Motto Miracle Pant. Better from Behind" appear next to her.



THE COMPLAINT

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

It has a extremely inappropriate and sexualised message. My concerns are this: as the mother of two teenage daughters, the sexual pressure that I have witnessed both through myself and heard from them, is a massive concern. The pressure that women and girls experience, and the sexualisation we experience is getting to crisis point. This ad normalises the sexualisation of girls with this 'double entendre' around a certain

sex act is inappropriate. I believe that this ad from Motto.com.au is extremely inappropriate, and should be removed effective immediately.

The advertisement grossly sexualises women in the physical pose of the model and in the statement of the advertisement 'better from behind'

Highly sexual and suggestive. People don't need to see that without their consent. Children don't need see that. Besides it being sexually suggestive, alluding to anal sex is just really unnecessary for the general public.

The caption "better from behind" along side a photo of a lady holding her bottom. And using the word "miracle" to describe the pants.

Sexualised imagery, unnecessary, inappropriate, sexual innuendo right in our line of sight.

It is currently on the back of buses in Sydney. Shows a woman from behind in tight trousers with her hands spreading her buttocks and the caption « better taken from behind ». It's quite sexist (would the same image/slogan) be used for a male model and unnecessarily sexualised and offensive.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

This pant is built to enhance your booty so its literally what the pant does! We thought the insinuation being "behind of the bus" made it a double whammy.

I hear you though, and absolutely did not mean to offend. We are a very women led and empowered company, I encourage my team to think big and outside of the box.

We are a company that's focused on disrupting our space (always for the greater good) I do empower my team to take risks, and I think being open our sexuality is something we should encourage, not be offended by.

I cant say that I agree with your perspective on this (I actually think it empowers women to be comfortable with their bodies), but I hear you and understand where you are coming from, I respect your contemplation and appreciate your view.

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 objectifies women and is not appropriate for a broad audience.

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

Section 2.2: Advertising shall not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative or degrading of any individual or group of people.

The Panel noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of the terms exploitative and degrading:

- *Exploitative - (a) taking advantage of the sexual appeal of a person, or group of people, by depicting them as objects or commodities; or (b) focussing on their body parts where this bears no direct relevance to the product or service being advertised.*
- *Degrading – lowering in character or quality a person or group of people.*

The Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.2 states:

“For material to breach this section of the Code, it must contain sexual appeal. Models in underwear or lingerie surrounded by or next to fully clothed models may suggest a power imbalance and be found to be exploitative or degrading. Material can be found to be exploitative or degrading even where the model is looking confident where the model is being depicted as a product or commodity or the focus on body parts is not relevant to the product or service being advertised. Advertising which used sexual appeal and suggests that a person is a product, or that they exist only for the enjoyment of others has been found to breach this section of the Code. Likewise, advertising which uses attractive models in revealing clothing, where the use of the model is not relevant to the product, has been found to be exploitative.”

Does the advertisement use sexual appeal?

The Panel noted that the advertisement features a close-up of a woman's buttocks in tight pants, accompanied by the text “better from behind”. The Panel considered that the text, the framing of the image and the placement of the woman's hands all contribute to the advertisement containing sexual appeal.

Does the advertisement use sexual appeal in a manner that is exploitative?

The Panel acknowledged that the pants are the product being advertised and found it reasonable for the woman in the advertisement to be shown wearing them. The Panel considered that it is common for items of clothing to be promoted as shaping or enhancing particular body parts, and the focus on the woman's buttocks was relevant to the promotion of these pants. The Panel considered that the focus is on the pants, and the woman is not depicted in a manner which suggests that she is an object or commodity.

The Panel considered that the advertisement does not depict the woman in a manner that is exploitative.

Does the advertisement use sexual appeal in a manner that is degrading?

The Panel considered that it is reasonable for the focus of the advertisement to be on the part of the woman's body that the product is meant to enhance, and that this depiction does not lower the woman in character or quality.

The Panel considered the advertisement does not depict the woman in a manner that is degrading.

Section 2.2 conclusion

The Panel concluded that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

Section 2.4: Advertising shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The Panel noted the Practice Note for the Code states:

"Overtly sexual images are not appropriate in outdoor advertising or shop front windows.

Although not exhaustive, the following may be considered to be overtly sexual:

- *Poses suggestive of sexual position: parting of legs, hand placed on or near genitals in a manner which draws attention to the region."*

Does the advertisement contain sex?

The Panel considered whether the advertisement contained a depiction of sex. The Panel noted the definition of sex in the Practice Note is "sexual intercourse; person or persons engaged in sexually stimulating behaviour".

The Panel noted the complainants' concern that the text "better from behind" may be a reference to a sexual position. The Panel considered that some members of the community may interpret the text to have a sexualised double entendre, however considered that the most likely interpretation of this phrase is that the pants would make the wearer look better from behind. The Panel considered the advertisement did not contain sex.

Does the advertisement contain sexuality?

The Panel noted the definition of sexuality in the Practice Note is "the capacity to experience and express sexual desire; the recognition or emphasis of sexual matters".

The Panel considered that the focus on the woman's buttocks created by the framing, wording and the placement of the woman's hands meant that this image did contain a mild level of sexuality.

Does the advertisement contain nudity?

The Panel noted that the definition of nudity in the Practice Note is "the depiction of a person without clothing or covering; partial or suggested nudity may also be considered nudity".

The Panel considered that the woman was fully clothed, and that the advertisement did not contain nudity.

Is the issue of sexuality treated with sensitivity to the relevant audience?

The Panel noted that the definition of sensitivity in the Practice Note is "understanding and awareness to the needs and emotions of others".

The Panel noted that assessing whether sexual suggestion is 'sensitive to the relevant audience' requires consideration of who the relevant audience is and how they are likely to react to or feel about the advertisement.

The Panel considered that this advertisement was on the back of a bus and the relevant audience would be broad and would include children. The Panel considered that the level of sexuality in the product was mild and relevant to the product being promoted. The Panel considered that the sexuality in the advertisement was treated with sensitivity to the relevant broad audience.

Section 2.4 conclusion

The Panel found that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Conclusion

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