

Case Report

Case number: 0302-25
Advertiser: Tegel Foods Ltd
Medium: TV - Free to Air
Decision date: 14-Jan-2026
Decision: Breach
Action: Ad modified

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITY PANEL

- AANA Code of Ethics - 2.1 Discrimination or Vilification – no breach
- AANA Code of Ethics - 2.3 Violence - breach

AD DESCRIPTION

This TV ad depicts a man snacking on fried chicken in his kitchen. As he opens a cupboard, an Asian lady jumps out and attacks him.



SUMMARY

Complaints

Complaints were received on the grounds that the ad was discriminatory in its depictions of Asian people, and that it depicted violence. Some complainants pointed out that the fleeting

scene where the attacker appears to consider using some of the knives on the table is particularly concerning, given the national interest in knife crime

Copies of the individual complaints are included as Appendix A.

Advertiser response

The advertiser responded that the ad humorously depicted an Asian restaurant owner trying to stop the main character from eating this meal at home. There was a deliberate decision to cast an Asian character as the Korean restaurant owner to emphasise the fact that these meals compete with authentic restaurant-quality Asian cuisine.

The advertiser pointed out that this is not an instance of someone mocking a particular culture or accent or portraying a stereotype that is unrelated to the product.

The humour in the ad is clear, and the restaurant owner is not attempting to hurt the man. She is attempting to prevent him from eating more of this meal. There is no depiction of pain or injury, and the man can be seen attempting to continue eating despite the attack. This is clearly slapstick humour, which has been accepted by the Community Panel in past decisions as unrealistic and non-violent.

A copy of the advertiser's full response is included as Appendix B.

Decisions

The Panel considered that the ad was no longer on air, but considered that there was nothing to suggest that it would never be used again. The Panel, therefore, had to determine whether the ad was in breach of any of the relevant codes.

Panel found that the ad did not breach section 2.1 of the AANA Code as the ad did not discriminate against or ridicule people of Asian descent.

However, the Panel found that the ad was in breach of section 2.3 of the AANA Code as it depicted violence in a manner that was not justified, and was contrary to community expectations.

ASSESSMENT AND DECISIONS

Section 2.1 (AANA Code of Ethics): Advertising shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

The Practice Note defines discrimination and vilification as

Discrimination: unfair or less favourable treatment

Vilification: Humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule

The Practice Note adds that:

Advertisements can humorously or satirically suggest stereotypical aspects of a group of people in society provided the overall impression of the advertisement does not

convey a negative impression of people of that group on the basis of one or more of the attributes listed above.

Panel assessment

The Panel noted that the attacker appears to be of Asian descent, and that she is portrayed as attempting to prevent the man from eating his meal. The Panel also considered that no comment is made about this person, or people of Asian heritage. The Panel considered that, although she is seen as aggressive, nothing in the ad appears to ridicule her, portray her in a less favourable light or incite any contempt or hatred towards her or anyone of Asian descent.

The Panel, therefore, was of the view that the ad did not discriminate or vilify the attacker or people of Asian descent.

Panel decision

The Panel concluded that the ad did not breach section 2.1 of the AANA Code.

Section 2.3 (AANA Code of Ethics): Advertising shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

The Practice Note states

Section 2.3 prohibits the use of violent content unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised. Although the depiction of violence in an advertisement may be relevant to the story being told in the advertisement, any violence must also be justifiable in the context of the product being advertised, or else will be in breach of this section of the Code.

Panel assessment

The Panel considered that the attack was somewhat bizarre and was clearly unprovoked. The Panel considered that the fleeting image of the knives during this attack adds to the theme of violence, and may suggest that the attacker was contemplating using knives, but then chose to use a lid.

The Panel considered that, even if the intention was to portray a restaurant owner attacking a man for not eating at her restaurant, the level of violence was disproportionate to this motivation, and was not in keeping with societal expectations around violence and violent behaviour.

Panel decision

The Panel concluded that the ad breached section 2.3 of the AANA Code.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Panel found that the ad did not breach any other section of the advertising codes.

ACTION

Tegel recognises the importance of the Ad Standards and the AANA Code. Tegel confirms the advertisement has been modified in-line with the Community Panel's decision.

APPENDIX A: COMPLAINTS

Complaint 1.

The current Takeouts advertising shows an Asian woman attacking a person who has purchased Takeouts frozen meal. The implication is that the Asian woman is angry that the person has not gone to her "Asian" takeout instead.

The ad shows the Asian restaurant owner attacking the buyer of Takeouts by jumping on his back and "strangling or attacking" him from behind. Most concerning, given community concerns about knife crime, the camera pans across and "looks" at what options are available for the attacking woman to use. The camera pauses to "look" at a set of kitchen knives, and then a pan. The pan is chosen.

The idea that a knife should be an option to attack a person is highly inappropriate, given that knife crime is now a national and state priority.

This advertisement (viewed on commercial television in December 2025, gives the viewer the idea, that in an attack, a knife (or set of knives) is an option. The momentary pause by the camera, on the knives, is highly suggestive, and is therefore, promoting extreme violence by suggestion.

The advertisement depicts "Asian women" as violent. The advertisement is also racist. Why only an Asian woman can be a Asian restaurant owner / chef?

Complaint 2.

The ad shows violent interaction between a man and woman in a kitchen. There are close ups of knives and use of a large pot lid in the attack. This ad could be upsetting for victims of domestic violence, and frightening.

Complaint 3.

The advertisement promotes violence

Complaint 4.

It is violent and shows a line of knives in the shot. As if they can be used to attack. The people in the ad are physically violent to each other. It's very off putting considering the violence we are experiencing in Australia today.

Complaint 5.

It's actually quite disturbing with an Asian woman jumping out of something to jump on an Aussie chap in his kitchen and looking at the knives on the kitchen bench then shoving a big lid in his face it's actually quite violent then it says gets these in the freezer isle

Complaint 6.

The lady jumps out and then onto the man. The camera pans as her perspective, pausing on a set of kitchen knives, then pans onto a saucepan lid which she grabs and uses as a barrier to stop the man from eating something.

The focus of the camera as her perspective, as she looks for something to use in her attack on the man is unnecessary. It promotes the situation of an attacker (be that in fun or deadly serious) may consider using a knife in a violent way.

Complaint 7.

The violence in the ad plus the inference that the kitchen knives were there to be used to attack person with but a saucepan lid was used. The aggressiveness and level of violence all over getting the food before the other.

Complaint 8.

An Asian woman having angry fit throws herself on top of a male shouders then the camera shows a set of knives the next the Asian is holing a saucepan lid held up hard against his face. It alludes to using kitchen knives as a weapon on someone.i find this inappropriate as it can plant dangerous ideas in someone's mind.

APPENDIX B: ADVERTISER RESPONSE IN FULL

We do not believe the advertisement breaches AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification\Race.

We note that the AANA Code of Ethics Practice Note defines ‘discrimination’ as “unfair or less favourable treatment” and ‘vilification’ as treatment which “humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule.”

We do not believe the advertisement conveys a negative impression of people of Asian descent for the following reasons:

- The advertisement humorously depicts an Asian restaurant owner desperately trying to stop the main character from eating the Take Outs Korean style chicken tender.
- We consciously cast an Asian actor as the restaurant owner to emphasise that the product is competitive with authentic, restaurant-quality Asian cuisine. We do not consider this depiction to be discriminatory – it is relatively common for Asian restaurants to be owned or operated by Asian members of the community.
- We consider the majority of the community would recognise that the restaurant owner is reacting to Take Outs Korean style chicken tender competing with restaurant quality Korean food.
- On face value, the advertisement does not have the effect of humiliating, intimidating, or inciting hatred and contempt toward the restaurant owner.
- If the Take Outs food and restaurant owner had both been of a different ethnicity (i.e. Italian), the scene would still make sense contextually. It does not display any stereotypical behaviours specific to the Asian community.
- There are several cues to suggest the advertisement is clearly intended to be humorous, exaggerated and unrealistic (i.e. the restaurant owner flying out of the kitchen cupboard).

We believe the following Community Panel decisions, support the points we have set-out above:

- In Decision 0229-23, the Panel dismissed a complaint about racism, noting that the character's race was “not central to his role in the advertisement” and considered that the advertisement did not reflect any cultural stereotypes associated with race. The Panel also considered that the advertisement did not contain material which would “humiliate or incite ridicule of any person or group of people on account of race.” This decision supports our position that the Asian restaurant owner's ethnicity is contextually relevant to the product (Korean-style chicken) and does not rely on stereotypes or incite ridicule.
- By contrast, in decision 00126-17, the Panel upheld a complaint about an advertisement which portrayed a Caucasian man dressed in a Chinese costume and speaking with a Chinese accent, performing various activities. The Panel found that while it is not of itself discriminatory or vilifying to depict a person dressed in clothing specific to a particular culture or nationality, the advertisement was in breach because the man was “being silly” and appeared to be mocking those of Chinese descent. In contrast to the advertisement in decision 00126-17, the Take Outs advertisement features an Asian actor in a contextually appropriate role without mockery or “being silly” behaviour.

- Again, by contrast, in decision 0017-22, the Panel considered another advertisement portraying a Caucasian man wearing a karate uniform, speaking with an exaggerated Asian accent. In upholding the complaint, the Panel noted that: (i) the lack of a link between the advertised product and Asian culture meant that the overall impression of the advertisement reduced Asian culture to a stereotype in an attempt at humour; (ii) the exaggerated and unrealistic accent was an offensive stereotype often used to denigrate those of Asian background; and (iii) the imagery showing ridiculous and laughable feats of skill leads to an impression that those of Asian background are themselves ridiculous and laughable. In contrast, the Take Outs advertisement has a clear link between the product (Korean-style chicken) and Asian culture, features no exaggerated accent, and does not portray the restaurant owner as ridiculous or laughable – rather, she is portrayed as protective of her quality cuisine.

We do not believe that the advertisement breaches AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence.

We believe that when determining if an advertisement breaches section 2.3 of the Code, it is necessary to consider whether the general community would consider the advertisement to portray violence (see decision 0067-23). The Code does not provide a definition of 'violence', but previous decisions suggest it includes both actual depictions of violence and suggested violence (e.g. a strong sense of menace or threat, sound effects etc – see decision 0138-23). Additionally, the Practice Note makes reference to both violence and menace.

We do not believe the advertisement portrays violence for the following reasons:

- The advertisement humorously depicts an Asian restaurant owner desperately trying to stop the main character from eating the Take Outs Korean style chicken tender.
- It is clear that the woman is not trying to hurt, injure or harm the main character. Instead, in her desperation, she attempts to use the lid of a frying pan to physically block the main character's ability to eat the chicken tender. The main character is depicted trying to take a bite throughout the whole advertisement.
- Given that the scene takes place inside the main character's kitchen, it is contextually justifiable for there to be knives on the counter. It is common for people to have knife sets or stands on their kitchen counter and we consider the majority of the advertisement's viewers would understand and relate to this.
- Whilst viewers see a visual of the knives positioned next to the pan, the restaurant owner chooses to use the pan lid to block the main character from biting the chicken. At no point in the advertisement does anyone touch a knife.

We believe the following Community Panel decisions, support the points we have set-out above:

- In determination 0138-23, the Panel dismissed a complaint after finding there was “no indication of any actual or threat of harm to anyone and no depictions of pain or injury.” This decision supports our argument that the advertisement does not depict actual violence or threat of harm – the restaurant owner is merely blocking the main character from eating, not attempting to injure him.
- In determination 0181-25, the Panel dismissed a complaint about violence because whilst the advertisement portrayed a woman pushing past someone, it was found to be “a slapstick, exaggerated depiction which is not realistic.” Similarly, the Take Outs advertisement employs slapstick, exaggerated humour (e.g. the restaurant owner flying

out of the cupboard) that is clearly unrealistic and not intended to depict genuine violence.

We note that the AANA Code of Ethics Practice Note provides that when considering if violence or menace depicted in an advertisement is justifiable, the Community Panel may have regard to the audience of the advertisement. Depiction must also be justifiable in the context of the product being advertised, or else will be in breach of this section of the Code. The humorous, exaggerated nature of the advertisement is justifiable in the context of promoting a food product and is clearly intended as light-hearted entertainment rather than realistic violence. For all of the reasons outlined above, we do not believe the advertisement breaches 2.1 Discrimination or Vilification\Race or 2.3 Violence.

The advertisements are scheduled to finish running on the 20th December 2025.