

Case Report

Case number: 0311-25
Advertiser: Easy Tiger St Helens
Medium: Facebook
Decision date: 14-Jan-2026
Decision: Breach
Action: Ad removed

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITY PANEL

- AANA Code of Ethics - 2.1 Discrimination or Vilification - breach
- AANA Code of Ethics - 2.3 Violence - breach
- AANA Code of Ethics - 2.6 Health and Safety - breach

AD DESCRIPTION

The Facebook ad features a man standing at the back of a ute and a woman laying in the back of the ute tied up. The man says, 'People always ask me, "Jason how do you feel about your staff getting coffee elsewhere?" As he rolls the woman over and closes the back tray door, he says, 'And I just say, "You know what? You're free to do whatever you want".'

The caption reads, 'Join the Easy Tiger crew! And don't worry - you're totally free to visit all the other amazing cafés in St Helens. (But yes...we are hiring. Send us a DM!)'



SUMMARY

Complaint

A complaint was received on the grounds that the ad is in extremely poor in the context of addressing violence against women. It isn't a theme that should be joked about and is not humorous.

Advertiser response

The advertiser did not submit a response.

Decisions

The Panel found that the ad was in breach of:

- Section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics, as the ad depicted discriminatory behaviour towards women,
- Section 2.3 of the AANA Code of Ethics, as the ad depicted violence towards women,
- Section 2.6 of the AANA Code of Ethics, as the ad depicted workplace bullying.

ASSESSMENT AND DECISIONS

Section 2.1 (Code): 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 as 'unfair or less favourable treatment'. It also states:

Negative depiction of a group of people in society may be found to breach Section 2.1, even if humour is used.

Harmful gender stereotypes are unacceptable because they perpetuate unconscious bias and rigid norms of femininity and masculinity that shape what it means to be a girl, woman, boy or man. Advertisements should take care to avoid suggesting that skills, interests, roles or characteristics are.

Panel assessment

The Panel noted that the ad suggests that the man has tracked, tied and effectively kidnapped one of his employees who got coffee at a competing venue. The Panel acknowledges that the scenario does not appear aggressive or violent, and that the ad is intended to be seen as humorous.

However, the Panel considered that the post appears to indicate that the advertiser was actively looking for new staff, and that the depiction of a hog-tied woman thrown on the back of a vehicle was excessive and irrelevant to this intention. The Panel considered that this depicted unfair and unfavourable treatment of women for no justifiable reason.

Panel decision

The Panel found that the ad breached section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics.

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 hog-tying someone, locking them up on the back of a ute, and then closing the roll-top cover, could be considered as portraying violence. The Panel acknowledged that the ad was probably intended to be humorous, and that employers would, presumably, not behave in this manner if their staff purchased from a competing store. However, the Panel considered that the actions shown were not justifiable in the context of an ad for people to join the advertiser's team of employees. The Panel considered that the violence depicted was not justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

Panel decision

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

Section 2.6 (AANA Code of Ethics): Advertising shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

The Practice Note states:

BULLYING The age of the people depicted in an advertisement, their relationship to each other and the nature of the communication are relevant in determining whether an advertisement constitutes bullying and is contrary to prevailing community standards. More care must be taken when the people depicted in an advertisement are minors or if there is an unequal relationship between the people in the advertisement, e.g. student and teacher, manager and worker.

Panel assessment

The Panel noted that the ad suggests a subservient relationship between a boss and an employee, with the employee being tied up and kidnapped. The Panel acknowledges the attempted humour in the ad but considered that this unequal relationship was being exploited at the expense of an employee, which could be considered workplace bullying.

While the Panel accepts that the intention was to portray a humorous scenario, the Panel considered that making light of workplace bullying could be interpreted as condoning such behaviour, or at the very least, not condemning it. The panel considered that prevailing

community standards do not tolerate workplace bullying, and that there was no justification for depicting behaviour that runs contrary to prevailing community standards on employee health and safety.

Panel decision

The Panel determined that the ad breached section 2.6 of the AANA Code of Ethics.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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

ACTION

I would like to confirm that we have discontinued this advertisement.

ABAC

Alcohol marketing is subject to both the AANA codes and the ABAC Scheme. The advertiser is a venue that sells alcohol, and as such, this complaint has been referred to ABAC. While ABAC applies specific alcohol marketing standards, the Panel's review under the AANA codes considers general advertising standards that apply to all products and services. This advertisement faces potential assessment under both the ABAC Code and the AANA codes.