



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	584/09
2. Advertiser	Wetdreams Watertanks
3. Product	House goods/services
4. Type of advertisement	Transport
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 9 December 2009
7. DETERMINATION	Upheld – discontinued or modified

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This transport advertisement depicts the sign "Wetdream Watertanks and two women in an intimate embrace next to the watertanks".

THE COMPLAINT

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

This advertisement clearly reinforces the stereotype of women as sexual objects, and furthermore, lesbianism as a fetish for men, rather than a choice made by women.

The blatant relation between the name of the company and the two bikini clad women, dripping wet, is a clear indication that they are seen as objects of desire that will satisfy men's sexual fantasies, rather than supply water tanks.

It is advertisements such as this one would expect to be the primary target for the bureau's positive shift in review policy concerning the sexualisation of girls in advertising and the role of advertising in promoting healthy views on gender and sexuality.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Please be aware that all material regardless of origin is checked by myself or the CEO in my absence for suitable content prior to printing or installation.

The ad that has had a complaint filed against it was approved by me initially with no female content (see second image below) however when the design went back to the client for sign-off the account manager and client requested the additional visual (see first image below) be added by the designer, who unfortunately failed to follow procedure and pass the alteration onto me for final approval which would in this case not have been granted.

As a result the ad appeared on one bus window without my knowledge or approval and I subsequently ordered it to be taken down within 48 hours of being notified of its existence.

The client has since approved a replacement design featuring a shower head.

The Go Transit Media Group has approved many thousands of advertisements over the last few years as being suitable for display as well as rejecting a good many. We sincerely regret any problems or offense that this somewhat questionable advertisement may have caused and can

assure the Board that the designer in question has been solidly reminded of the need to follow procedure.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement depicted inappropriate sexualised (lesbian) images.

The Board viewed the advertisement. The Board noted that the advertiser had removed the advertisement within 48 hours of realising that the advertisement had been published but considered it important to consider the advertisement as published in order to provide guidance to industry as to what is appropriate in advertising.

The Board considered that the image in the now removed advertisement depicted two women dressed in bikinis, touching each other's bottoms and looking in a somewhat sultry manner towards the consumer. The Board noted that the dominant wording on the advertisement is 'wetdream watertanks'. The Board considered that the women were depicted in a sexualised manner which is reinforced and increased by the text that accompanies the image. The Board noted that the advertisement is for water tanks and that the image of the two women is not relevant to the product. The Board noted that the image appears on a bus and is therefore able to be viewed by a relatively broad audience. The Board considered that the advertisement was sexualised and that the advertisement did not treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience. The Board determined that the advertisement breached section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement breached the Code, the Board upheld complaints.

ADVERTISERS'S RESPONSE TO THE DETERMINATION

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the determination regarding this advertisement included the following:

I wish to advise the board that Team Transit have discontinued the advert in question and replaced it with a more suitable advertising campaign to meet advertising criteria.

I will endeavour to pass this on to Team Transit in the advert that they should publicise any similar matter for future clientele.