



ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BUREAU

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Case Report

1	Case Number	0179/14
2	Advertiser	Wicked Campers
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Transport
5	Date of Determination	28/05/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Not Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

White Wicked Camper van with the slogan, "If you love God, burn a church" written across the side panel and the image of a devil like character.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I object because I believe that it is designed to incite religious hatred and encouraging people to commit an unlawful act ie. Arson.

I was offended because of my Christian beliefs.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The advertiser did not respond.

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 encourages religious hatred and the committing of the unlawful act of arson.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser had not provided a response. The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that ‘advertisements shall not portray 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 preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.’

The Board noted the advertisement features the slogan, “If you love God burn a church” written across the side panel of a Wicked Campers vehicle with a devil like image.

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement “is designed to incite religious hatred”.

The Board noted that the quote and the image had been attributed to Jello Biafra, lead singer of the music band The Dead Kennedy’s and that the intended meaning of the quote is that churches do not accurately represent or reflect God’s teachings.

The Board noted that whilst the true meaning of the quote is a sophisticated theological argument regarding the link between religious beliefs and how they are taught, in the Board’s view the overriding message to the community is still the same: that churches should be “burnt”.

The Board noted that in instances where religious buildings such as mosques or synagogues have been defaced or burnt, the reported community feedback has been of strong abhorrence regardless of their personal religious beliefs. The Board considered that most reasonable members of the community, regardless of faith, would agree that the vandalism of a religious building is not acceptable under any circumstances.

A minority of the Board considered that the community would not take this quote on a Wicked Campers vehicle to be condoning or encouraging burning a church. The majority of the Board however considered that whilst the quote and the accompanying image are clearly attributed to a specific person this does not detract from the message and that for those members of the community who believe that their church accurately reflects their God’s message, this advertisement is offensive and inappropriate.

The Board considered that the advertisement did depict material in a way which discriminated against a section of the community based on their religious beliefs.

The Board determined that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board considered Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety”.

The Board noted that the advertisement included the words, “burn a Church”.

A minority of the Board considered that the encouragement to burn a church is not appropriate and does breach prevailing community standards.

The majority of the Board however noted that most members of the community are familiar with Wicked Campers and the type of slogans they use and considered that it was extremely unlikely that anyone would view this advertisement as an encouragement to burn a religious building. The Board noted that the advertisement is clearly presented as a quote by a specific person and considered that the advertisement did not condone or encourage behaviour contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety regarding fires.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 of the Code, the Board upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

The advertiser failed to respond.