



Case Report

1	Case Number	0457/14
2	Advertiser	Dept Premier & Cabinet NSW
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Transport
5	Date of Determination	12/11/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Image on the back of taxis featuring a man sitting in a jail cell with the text, "Out for a piss-up? Stop before it gets ugly".

THE COMPLAINT

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

I felt offended by the gratuitous use of the word "piss". I was also reacting to my 15 year old son's astonishment that this word was used so openly and plainly. This sent the wrong message to young people; that it is OK to swear. What compounds the issue is that someone from the NSW Dept of Health signed off on this ad.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

NSW Government Response

Description: A young male sits in a jail cell. The advertisement depicts the potential social and legal consequences of excessive drinking. How a few drinks could lead to a period of time in jail.

Activity: The advertisement ran for a 3 week burst on taxi backs in Metro & Regional NSW from the end of September to mid-October. A further 3 week burst is planned in December.

Comment in relation to complaint:

We take the opinions of the New South Wales public extremely seriously and regret any discomfort that has been caused by the language used in our advertisement. However we believe that the creative approach that we have adopted is commensurate with the seriousness of this issue, and the steps that are needed to cause the behavioural change that we, and the New South Wales public, seek.

The 'Out for a Piss-Up' taxi back poster fits within a wider campaign entitled 'Stop Before it Gets Ugly' to address alcohol fuelled violence. Preventing and minimising alcohol fuelled violence is a key government priority. This serious issue has plagued the streets of New South Wales for some time, causing unnecessary injury and on occasion, death. A number of laws were introduced over the past year to act as a deterrent to this violent behaviour, and the NSW Government developed this campaign as a crucial part of this initiative – designed to tackle the extremely difficult task of persuading 18 to 30 year old men to rethink their behaviour when drinking.

It is a challenge to get young men to pay attention to behaviour change campaigns. How you deliver that messaging is also critical as there is a high risk of 'self-exclusion' from messaging if it is not executed in a way that the audience relate to. A proven means of achieving this is to utilise techniques (such as language) to connect into the world of our target audience.

To this end, this campaign which in its entirety focuses on the various consequences that excessive drinking can have, including social, emotional and physical consequences, is designed to connect to the young audience through imagery they recognize and language that they would actually use. The language in the advertisement in question was used on account of its colloquial context – 'piss-up' is a widely used term in Australia and familiar with our target audience. In order to make sure the message resonated with young males, we needed communications that spoke to them, on their terms, in everyday language.

In the last week, social listening tells us that there have been nearly 1500 mentions of the word 'piss'. Almost a thousand of these are found in Twitter, which proves that while this language isn't subtle or particularly refined, it's a term that Australians freely use on an everyday basis. As a government department, it was also crucial to avoid a patronising, authoritative or 'parent:child' tone if we wanted our communications to be taken seriously, especially by young males.

There are other examples of social change campaigns that use slang or swear words in order to speak to the public on relevant and everyday terms for the target audience. For example, the long running Victorian Transport Accident Commission drink driving 'bloody idiot' campaign (eg. 'If you drink then drive you're a bloody idiot', and "Only a little bit over? Bloody idiot. '), the recent outdoor anti-litter campaign, 'Don't be a tosser' and the

Drinkwise social media campaign Drink Properly that uses language such as 'shit faced' in their executions.

As a precautionary pre dispatch check, the 'Piss-Up' creative was supplied to the Outdoor Media Association prior to dispatch of artwork to ensure that the language was appropriate for the general public. The following response was received on Monday 8 September 2014: "They are ok to use as the language is colloquial and not aggressive or demeaning."

The placement of the taxi backs have been mapped to local council areas that are within or in proximity to point of problem behaviour. These areas have been identified through the number of reported incidents of alcohol fuelled violence or that are within near proximity to bars/ clubs, whereby it's imperative to communicate to those who are influenced by the factors that are found within the environment.

Media has taken a considered approach as to who would be exposed to the message through the locations to ensure creative is intended for those who would understand and be aware of the issue.

We regret any discomfort that has been caused by the language used in our advertisement, however we do maintain our belief that the creative approach that we have adopted is commensurate with the seriousness of this issue, and the steps that are needed to cause the behavioural change that we, and the New South Wales public, seek.

In relation to other parts of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics

2.1 – Discrimination of vilification

This advertisement in no way discriminates or vilifies a person or section of the community.

2.2 – Exploitative and degrading

This advertisement does not employ sexual appeal in any manner.

2.3 – Violence

This advertisement does not depict violence

2.4 – Sex, sexuality and nudity

This advertisement does not use sex, sexuality and nudity

2.6 – Health & Safety

This advertisement does not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

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 concerns that the advertisement features the word ‘piss’ which is gratuitous and inappropriate for children to see.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided”.

The Board noted the advertisement features a man in a cell with the text, “Out for a piss-up?”

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the use of the word ‘piss’ is gratuitous and inappropriate. The Board noted the advertiser’s response that the advertisement forms part of a responsible drinking campaign and considered that the phrase, “piss-up” is often used to describe the drinking of alcohol and is generally considered to be part of the common Australian vernacular. The Board considered that the use of the term, “piss-up” in the advertisement is consistent with its colloquial use and is not gratuitous.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the word, ‘piss’ is not appropriate for outdoor display where children can read it. The Board noted it had previously dismissed the use of the word in a television advertisement in 116/09 and considered that current community standards would still find that this word is not strong, obscene or offensive language in the context used in this advertisement.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.

