



Case Report

1	Case Number	0307/17
2	Advertiser	Honey Birdette
3	Product	Lingerie
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Poster
5	Date of Determination	26/07/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This poster image for Honey Birdette features an image of women in white lingerie. One woman is facing the viewer, the other has her back to the viewer and is looking over her shoulder. The lingerie is white and lacy with see-through mesh areas. The women are standing through the sunroof of a yellow vehicle.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Both shopping centres are family oriented and frequented by those with young children. This image is of a woman practically topless and is inappropriate for the audience who walk past. Often the advertising in the windows of this shop is sexually suggestive and this has taken it even further with a photo advertisement for all to see of a woman whose breasts are practically bare. The same poster may have been in the windows that face the mall - I am not sure, but it is possible and the poster I saw was enlarged larger than a person - so it is not something that one has to struggle to see. I do not take my children to certain parts of Hindly Street, which is where one would expect to see such things, but now this is in the mall and a suburban shopping centre.

The advertising in these shop windows could be considered soft pornography. I feel uncomfortable having to see it, and it is alarming that children are being exposed to this kind of sexualisation in a general shopping centre. These type of advertisements should be kept behind closed doors, in 18+ shops. Not in family shopping centres.

I find it extremely inappropriate that family shopping centres are displaying such LARGE and intrusive sexual images on shop front windows. These posters add to the increasing sexualisation occurring in our society of young people. I always have to divert children's attention when we walk past.

It is an offense and disgrace because our young children should not be exposed to such nudity that is almost unavoidable.

The over sexualisation of the posters and campaigns that are constantly being advertised from this shop need to be dealt with. The shop is situated in a high traffic area where families are constantly walking passed. Please deal with this issue and the content of the nudity. There is no need for this kind of nudity and advertising on the store front. If people want to purchase these things then the pictures should be withheld inside the store and not on the front.

The billboard was large, situated right next to food court and employed sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading to women and in full view of children of any age. The poster presents women merely as sex objects. The AANA code of ethics 2.4 states that Advertising communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience. This poster, and many other similar posters, are constantly displayed in an area where people of all ages are able to freely view it (regardless of their desire to view or not view such images!).

It is shop front display, areola is visible. Too sexual shows private part of body. Children view it. Pornographic.

*I find it offensive and degrading to woman, it objectifies women and teaches young girls that they are nothing but sexual objects. it is nudity.
A woman is not just a sexual object!*

Unbelievably inappropriate for a public place. I felt embarrassed to look that way, both because I avoid looking at naked women and because I did not want to be seen to stare at such an image. I wondered what I would have said to my young children if they had been present and worried about this. I felt bewildered at the plight of teenagers if such images are so mainstream that they can be put on a large poster (1.5 metres high I think) in a setting that could not be more public.

I was shopping with my 13 year old son and as we walked past the store, I actually didn't know where to look and wanted to get my son away from it as quickly as possible. The fact that the models nipples were clearly seen was what offended me and the poster was so big it was hard to ignore.

It is hard raising great kids with excellent values regarding women and how they are viewed and treated, without having advertising like that in our faces while we are out shopping together. I would like to see this Form of advertising which objectifies women as sexual

objects, taken out if all of their stores immediately. Thankyou.

This type of phonographic image should not be in a public space with no warning where children and not only walk past all day..

They should keep such posters only in store where people enter to see such images.

Mothers should not have to cover curious children's eyes when walking through a public space

The poster is in the stores front display window where children pass by all day long while going through Westfield Garden City Qld shopping centre. And i was told it is displayed nationally at all the Honey Birdette stores front windows including in the Queen st Mall. This means so many young people view this daily without any warning.

It's not hard to miss as the store is in a high traffic area, it is right in front of you when you exit the lift. Both models are the size of the window, so they aren't small either. The underwear they are wearing show most of there bodies, i'm not against women showing there bodies, but I just think this advertisement is inappropriate for a shopping mall, especially in the school holidays.

This is in breach of section 2.2 and 2.4 of the Advertising Code of Ethics. This ad is overtly sexual and explicit and is not suitable for display in a public location where underage people and people who prefer not to look at sexualised or degrading images of women are exposed to it.

The advertising is an affront to the dignity of women and is a threat to a feeling of safety and worth when shopping in the centre. It is inappropriate for children who should be protected from sexual adult concepts in public places. I am also offended because this particular retailer flaunts their immunity from any community rules. The community is absolutely powerless to do anything. And they know it.

Inappropriate image been displayed and viewable from outside store, where minors have no choice to be exposed to the image.

Bare buttocks and revealed nipples are used to sell lingerie, despite this being against community standards and in spite of the full knowledge that children will be exposed to this sexual exploitation, as well as women being degraded. These types of ads are consistently used by Honey Birdette. They ignore community standards and refuse to comply with decisions by the ABS unless their campaign is close to ending anyway. The community at large is absolutely sick of this and so tired of the inadequacy of the ABS to offer children any real protection from adult concepts and sexual exploitation.

I understand that a lingerie shop has the right to advertise their products in the shop window. However, in this particular poster the lace detail does not completely cover the women's breast. As a result her nipple is clearly visible. This is not something that children or unsuspecting adults should be exposed to when at their local shopping center. I found it offensive, as did my husband, who has encouraged me to make a formal complaint.

The women are being pictured in lingerie outside, leaning on a car, and on a rooftop. This is not what you normally wear or in public. I don't want to have to explain to my kids why these ladies are wearing skimpy underwear out in public.

I feel very strongly that these sorts of images degrade, sexually objectify and ultimately harm girls and women and send the wrong message to our next generation. These images are directly outside the junior clothing section of Myer and are virtually impossible to ignore due to their size and location.

I believe the explicit nature of the advertising, and given its public prominence, breaches the sections 2.1, 2.2 (b) and 2.4 of the Australian Association of National Advertisers Code of Ethics.

I also feel that by displaying these images, Honey Birdette are impacting on my right and my children's rights to a safe and healthy environment. Consumers can choose to visit this shop, but for those of us who choose not to, then we have a right to not view the degrading and harmful nature of the content. There is significant evidence to show that these sorts of images harm our children.

Honey Birdette should remove all sexually explicit advertising which sexually objectifies women from the exterior of their store.

Lingerie is an important product and as a woman I embrace the empowerment a good lingerie set can offer. My objection is not that the shop should not advertise, it is that this advertisement is placed in the front window and my choice to expose my children to naked provocative images, has been removed from me. The advertisement exposes a woman's full breasts, nipples and public hair.

This should not be in the front window. I have no problem if the advertisement was inside the shop and then I have the choice to expose my family or not to this provocative image.

There is clear nudity, nipples are visible through the lingerie, and the women are suggestively posed with other women. The location of the store is opposite the food court and in the middle of the shopping centre, I'm a parent of two boys aged 6 & 4 and find most of their advertising to the general public inappropriate but this one in particular is offensive especially where children are concerned.

These photos were at kids eye level two doors away from a Smiggle kids shop. They looked like they belong in a men's x-rated magazine, not on a store front in a family shopping centre, it was shocking and disgusting. My two young girls of 7 and 9 years were shocked and disturbed. It is also placed in a central part of the shopping centre where it is unavoidable to walk past.

These hyper-sexualised advertising posters more appropriate in the store front of an R rated sex shop are in plain view of children within a family shopping centre. My 4 year old girl and 6 year old boy were very confused when they saw these seductively dressed ladies and wondered why they were almost naked and showing off their private parts in public! The images are so large and prominently displayed that one cannot avoid seeing it while walking past. They are designed to be sexually stimulating no doubt to great effect on their business, but my kids and I did not go to the shops to get sexually stimulated! It is not an appropriate location where families are shopping.

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Children walk by the sexualised, repressed female images and studies show children as young as six years are learning to model this type on content proving it remains the responsibility of adults, parents and advertising/marketing professionals to protect them from sexualised content via all mediums and channels

The nipple and areola of the female in the foreground are clearly visible through the see through lingerie. I believe that this level of nudity is inappropriate to be displayed within the shop window. The shop window is clearly visible to all public passing by. This particular poster should be removed from the window and displayed within the store. Other posters in the shop window, display models wearing lingerie that covers the nipple and areola which I believe to be an appropriate advertisement for this store.

We frequent the Myer centre a lot with our children who are 10, 8, 7 & 5 and it is inappropriate because the girl is practically naked. I understand they sell lingerie but for that to be advertised outside their shop is not suitable for kids to see.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We are very sensitive to the views of our customers and greatly appreciate this feedback.

Our stores are all about making women feel safe and sophisticated and are not overtly sexualised. I believe in increasing women's power in society. We are a chain store for women by women. 95% of our 140,000plus customers are women.

Please be assured that we put a lot of time and effort into ensuring that it is not offensive whilst also representative of our brand. We focus test it with a wide range of people to ensure it is sophisticated.

I hope this helps you understand that to market and advertise lingerie, a certain level of skin needs to be exposed, however we do this in a way that empowers women rather than demean them.

However, we have taken all feedback on board and new artwork currently being printed, therefore the signage will be changed next week.

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 complainants’ concerns that the advertisement is overtly sexualised and contains nudity and is inappropriate for viewing by a broad audience that would include children.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s 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 that this poster advertisement features two women dressed in white lingerie. The women are leaning on a yellow taxi and the words “Belle – Soho Honeybirdette.com” are written on the bottom of the poster.

The Board noted that the pose of the models in the advertisement is in keeping with typical lingerie advertising and considered that it is not inappropriate for an advertiser to depict women wearing the advertised product. The Board also considered that in the context of a lingerie advertisement, a depiction of women wearing this lingerie is not of itself a depiction which discriminates against or vilifies women.

The Board acknowledged that some members of the community would find a depiction of a woman in lingerie to be disrespectful but considered that the overall impression of the advertisement does not present women in an inferior position or in a manner that is ridiculing or humiliating.

Consistent with previous determinations for similar complaints against the same advertiser in cases 0381/16 and 0544/16, the Board considered that the advertisements did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of the terms exploitative and degrading:

Exploitative - purposefully debase or abuse a person for the enjoyment of others, lacking in

moral, artistic or other values

Degrading – lowering in character or quality a person or group of people.

The Board noted that in order to breach this Section of the Code the images would need to be using sexual appeal in a manner that is considered both exploitative and degrading.

The Board noted that in the current advertisement the women are facing the camera and their full faces and torsos are shown. The Board acknowledged that some members of the community may find the use of women in lingerie to be exploitative but the Board considered that in the context depicted, the women are not shown in a manner that is debasing or lowering in character, rather the women are shown posing in a confident manner. In the Board's view the manner in which the women are depicted is not degrading to these women or to women in general.

The Board considered that the advertisement was not degrading or exploitative to women, and did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience".

The Board noted the advertisement features the front of one of the women wearing a nude bra with white detailing and flowers. The Board noted that the lingerie in this image is sheer and the whole of the woman's breasts, as well as her nipples, are clearly outlined.

The Board noted the Practice Note to Section 2.4 of the Code which provides: "Full frontal nudity...is not permitted...Images of nipples may be acceptable in advertisements for plastic surgery or art exhibits..." The Board noted that while nipples may be acceptable in some circumstances, depending on the overall impact and relevant audience, the Board considered that in the context of a lingerie advertisement in a store window a depiction of nipples is not appropriate and does not meet the provisions of the Code.

The Board noted that the woman's briefs are also sheer and very low cut. The Board considered that the position of the woman's hand and her slightly reclined position gives draws the attention of the viewer to the high level of flesh on display and her bare pubic region also. The Board considered that in this instance the eye is drawn to the woman's breasts and the style of lingerie is more risqué than the usual style of lingerie advertised in store windows. The Board considered that this image of a woman in lingerie with her nipples visible through the bra and the full outline of the breasts highlighted by the detailing on the bra and level of pubic detail is not an appropriate image for a broad audience of a shopping mall which would include children. The Board considered that this version of the advertisement did not treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant broad audience.

The Board noted that it had upheld a similar image for the same advertiser where the model was wearing similar lingerie in black (0544/16).

Overall, in the Board's view the advertisement did not treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and determined that it did breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did breach Section 2.4 of the Code, the Board upheld the complaints.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

The advertisement has been removed and replaced with new images.