



Case Report

1	Case Number	0438/12
2	Advertiser	ACP Publishing Pty Ltd
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Print
5	Date of Determination	14/11/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Full page advertisement in Zoo weekly Magazine. Text reads "Zoo Two Reasons to Like our Facebook page." The ad includes a large photograph of a pair of breasts in a bikini top with arrows pointing to each breast. Text below reads "check out heaps more at www.facebook.com/zooweeklyoz"

THE COMPLAINT

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

The advertisement objectifies women. The woman has no identity; her face is removed from the picture, only a close up photo of her breasts are shown. The ad depicts women as desirable body parts, rather than as equal human beings. The ad further objectifies women by inviting the viewer to 'check out heaps more' (more women's body parts) at the Facebook page. The magazine is unclassified and read by minors. Facebook - where the viewer is directed to check out 'heaps more' - is a platform available for minors 13 and above (although we know many younger children are on Facebook too).

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We would like to acknowledge receipt of your letter sent earlier this month, reference number 0438/12.

I strongly dispute all issues raised within your letter questioning ZOO magazines adherence to the AANA Code of Ethics.

The complaint you have received in relation to reference No 0438/12 is not reflective of the target audience demographics' opinions (for your reference since 2006, ZOO Weekly has transformed the men's magazine marketplace and now reach over 1.2 million readers in print and 300,000 unique users online). The page in question speaks to a group of fans who are already familiar with the content they have chosen to follow ZOO for. The page is located deep within the magazine, where readers have a good understanding of the content of the magazine by the time they get to the page referring them to where they can continue similar engagement with the brand.

The readership of the magazine is clear on why they buy the magazine, log onto our website and follow us on social media – it is to find regular, accessible content (not dissimilar to that which they obtain each week in the editorial pages of our magazine) and to be able to engage with that material in a 'tongue in cheek' manner. The referral to the social media community for ZOO is portrayed in a similar manner as other content in the magazine. All subject matter in ZOO is treated in the same manner - there is no intention to market the brand in a way that objectifies women or degrades them in any way. ZOO readers would in fact argue that women are held in high regard and all readers of ZOO are clearly fans of the female body (as is seen in the vast majority of content that fills the pages of the magazine). ZOO readers have never claimed to be "deep" in their communications with the brand nor do they expect the content posted to be in any way thought provoking. All images are there to look at (whether they be of people (women or men), injuries (minor and serious), sport stars (good and bad), celebrities (male and female) etc. There is no intention to objectify anyone - everything/body/ topic is presented in a similar fashion. All our editorial content is (in magazine, online or through social media) intended to be funny, topical and easy to respond to without judgement – this is the perfect way ZOO finds to connect with our core target market of Men aged 18 – 34 (as reflected in our media kit).

The reference on the page to "check out heaps more" is a reference to the social media community where more similar content is available for the readers until the next issue comes out next week. This is clear by the placement of the comment right above the Facebook address.

I would argue that the complaints reference to sex/sexuality/nudity is unwarranted as the representation of the female body on the page is actually clothed in common beachwear.

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 objectifies women in its depiction of a close up of a woman's breasts.

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

The Board noted that this advertisement for the Zoo magazine Facebook page was seen inside a copy of Zoo magazine and that even though the advertisement is for the advertiser's own Facebook page it is still an advertisement within the definition of advertising and marketing communication and therefore covered by 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 that the advertisement features a close up image of a pair of breasts and considered that whilst the image is exploitative of a woman's body it is in keeping with the content of Zoo magazine.

The Board noted that the advertisement features the invitation to check out more at the Facebook page and noted the complainant's concerns that this is an invitation to look at more women's body parts. The Board considered that the most likely interpretation of the phrase "check out more" is to check out the Facebook page for more Zoo magazine editorial content and that the advertisement does not explicitly suggest that the Facebook page will consist of just images of body parts.

The Board noted that the provisions of the Code provide that to be in breach of Section 2.2 an image must be considered exploitative and degrading and considered that in this instance the advertisement features an image which is exploitative but not degrading.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading to men and that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board 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 complainant's concerns that the image is of a woman's breasts and noted that the woman is wearing a bikini top and that her nipples are covered. The Board noted the context of the advertisement and considered that the image is in keeping with the target readership of Zoo magazine and that as the advertisement was featured within the magazine it does treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

Based on the above the Board determined that the advertisement did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any grounds, the Board

dismissed the complaint.