



**ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BUREAU**

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Case Report

1	Case Number	0496/10
2	Advertiser	Rivers (Aust) Pty Ltd
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Print
5	Date of Determination	08/12/2010
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Sex/sexuality/nudity Treat with sensitivity to relevant audience

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Image of a person pulling on a pair of jeans. We can only see from the upper thigh to the middle of the back. The person is not wearing a top, and we can see the top of their bottom. The words "GET EXCITED" are written in black along the line of their back. In the top left of the advertisement is the Rivers logo, and in the bottom left it reads, "www.rivers.com.au. Catalogue #23-2010.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I do not appreciate ads with sexually suggestive material. I have 4 children aged 4-12 and do not expect to have advertising which is provocative in general reading material. It is completely un-necessary. My 12 year old loves to look at the Rivers catalogue and this type of ad is inappropriate.

I object to this advertisement because the front cover of this catalogue features the strap line 'get excited' in such a format that the readers eye is drawn directly to look at a suggestively revealed section of a woman's bottom. The woman appears to be in the process of removing her jeans or putting her jeans back on. In the context of the strap line either action appears suggestive.

This front cover photograph displays jeans and no jeans are for sale in the catalogue, nor is any price listed for the jeans on the front cover.

This ad is offensive to me because it objectifies women in what appears to be a cynical attention-grabbing exercise. The photograph does not have any reasonable connection to the product being advertised within the brochure.

The picture on the front cover has a woman in the process of removing her jeans with the words ""get excited"". It has a blatantly sexual message which I think borders on soft-porn. I think this is inappropriate on a catalogue that is freely available to children. As a primary school teacher who has had to deal with sexualised behaviour in children, I am concerned at the message this sends to boys and girls particularly in the 8-12 age range.

The cover image was of a (presumably) female's bottom. She was wearing a pair of jeans however they were being slid down and so there was quite a lot of visible 'bum crack' showing. The tag line of the image was "Get excited". I do not see the relevance of the image to the slogan or to the products being advertised. Possibly if jeans were the sale item it may have a vague relevance. However with nothing else to link it to I feel offended that the only correlation was that this female was getting excited about taking her jeans off and presenting her naked bottom to the readers.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In no way did Rivers intend for any-one to be offended by this cover.

We do not believe that we are in any way objectifying women or that this is encouraging sexual behaviour.

We have no control over how people choose to perceive an advertisement.

For the record, this was a single print catalogue that is no longer in circulation (save any copies that are still in the possession of customers).

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 contains sexually suggestive material, objectifies women and has no relevance to the product being advertised.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant programme time zone".

The Board noted the advertisement features a woman pulling up a pair of jeans. She is only visible from the upper thigh to the middle of her back, and the top of her bottom is visible.

The Board noted that whilst some members of the community, including the complainant, may find this image to be inappropriate, most members of the community would consider this image to be mild and inoffensive.

The Board considered that the advertisement was not sexually suggestive or overtly sexualised and did not bring the issue of sex before children. The Board considered that the image was relevant to the advertiser's products.

The Board determined that the advertisement did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and that it did not breach section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.