



Ms Nikki Lawson, Managing Director
KFC South Pacific
Kentucky Fried Chicken Pty Ltd
Locked Bag 522
Frenchs Forest NSW 2086

Email: customer.service.hotline@yum.com

February 27, 2020

Dear Ms Lawson

I am writing regarding your company's recent Zinger Box advertisement portraying a female festival-goer being ogled by young boys as she adjusts herself in the reflection of a parked car window. The ad ran on high rotation on free to air Australian television during the KFC 'Big Bash League' broadcast - a program considered suitable for general viewing and pitched at a family audience for a period of weeks until the end of January.

You are likely aware of the campaign our organisation Collective Shout ran against this ad and the large social media support and global media attention our campaign received. The global response was among the biggest we have attracted since our formation a decade ago.

Collective Shout (www.collectiveshout.org) is a grassroots campaigning movement challenging the objectification of women and sexualisation of girls in media, advertising and popular culture. We target corporations, advertisers, marketers and media which exploit the bodies of women and girls to sell products and services, and campaign to change their behaviour. More broadly we also engage in issues relating to other forms of sexploitation, including the interconnected industries of pornography, prostitution and human trafficking.

Our work is underpinned by a mounting body of evidence which documents the real harms of exposure to sexually objectifying imagery to women, girls and men and boys. For example, a global meta-analysis of two decades of research shows that sexually objectifying portrayals of women lead to the viewer's perception that women are less competent, less moral and less-than-human (see <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00224499.2016.1142496> and <https://whv.org.au/resources/whv-publications/advertising-inequality-impacts-sexist-advertising-women%E2%80%99s-health-and>).

Naturally, we objected to KFC's use of casual sexism and child grooming in its ad. We pointed out that reinforcing gender stereotypes - including in advertising - contributes to a lesser view of women resulting in their mistreatment.

We argued the ad “reinforced the false idea that we can't expect better from boys”, hampering our ability to challenge sexist ideas which contribute to harmful behaviour towards women and girls.

We also said that KFC was violating community expectations of Corporate Social Responsibility (https://www.collectiveshout.org/kfc_serves_up_buckets_of_sexism).

We later noted KFC's ‘apology’ for the ad, as reported in *The Guardian* on January 21. It was difficult to see this as a sincere apology when the ad continued to run in its original form.

Following our public objection, as if to underscore the connection between sexist attitudes and behaviour, our all-woman campaign team was inundated with abusive messages from men defending the ad. You can read some examples here (note that these were some of the milder comments we received - we couldn't publish the worst of them):

https://www.collectiveshout.org/men_defend_sexist_kfc_ad_onslaught_misogynistic_abuse.

We noted your recent partnership with icare for a program intended to redress the crisis of customer abuse of staff in the fast-food and retail industries. This caused us to be even more confused by KFC's choice to use harmful gender stereotypes in its marketing. Would you be able to tell us why, at the same time KFC invests in employee education and empowerment, your company capitalises on casual sexism to advertise its product? How can young women who are overrepresented as victims of workplace sexual harassment (see: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/everyones-business-fourth-national-survey-sexual>) feel respected by their employer when KFC is contributing to the very problems it claims it is trying to solve? Will young women be safe at work when abusive men like those who defended the ad walk through their workplace door?

It is our strong view (supported by, among others, Australia's leading media advertising group Mumbrella) that your decision to run this ad acts to encourage sexual harassment of your female staff and more broadly. (See creative director Chris Taylor's piece here: <https://mumbrella.com.au/ad-standards-hurts-women-and-boys-by-allowing-kfcs-ad-to-remain-on-air-616384>). It also normalises the idea that women should just roll with it. Normalising such attitudes is the antithesis of respect-based, anti-harassment training programs which instruct victims and onlookers to speak out against harassment. (See https://www.collectiveshout.org/recipe_for_respect_it_s_no_secret_kfc).

We are therefore asking your company to recognise global research on the harms of campaigns like yours on the wellbeing of women and girls and to centre respect for women and girls in all future marketing.

We hope KFC will commit to advertising its products without endorsing sexual harassment and perpetuating antiquated sexist narratives that contribute to a culture of disrespect for women.

Our thousands of supporters - many of whom have informed us they have boycotted KFC since this ad campaign - await your response.

Yours sincerely



Melinda Tankard Reist
Movement Director, Collective Shout

CC: Mr Mike Forster, Marketing Director, KFC South Pacific;
Ms Ruth Taylor, Marketing Manager, KFC Australia