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| COMPLAINT NUMBER | 18/053 |
| COMPLAINANT | S McLeod |
| ADVERTISER | IAG New Zealand Limited |
| ADVERTISEMENT | State Insurance, Television |
| DATE OF MEETING | 13 March 2018 |
| OUTCOME | Not Upheld |

SUMMARY

The IAG television advertisement for State Roadside Rescue shows a teenage girl staring into the open bonnet of a car with makeup running down her face. The voiceover says “State’s Roadside Rescue covers your car for any driver – even your teenage daughter. That way one breakdown doesn’t have to lead to another.”

The Complainant said the advertisement for State roadside assistance portrayed female drivers in a sexist and degrading way.

The Advertiser said the key message of the advertisement was that anyone who drives your car is covered by the roadside rescue cover rather than only one named driver. The advertisement was trying to link the stress and frustration of a mechanical breakdown regardless of age or gender.

The Complaints Board acknowledged the use of a stereotype and accepted the Advertiser had intended a level of humour in the staged scene. It said the advertisement did not reach the threshold to be said to cause serious or widespread offence to most women on account of their gender and the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility. Therefore, the Complaints Board ruled there was no apparent breach of the Code of Ethics or the Code for People in Advertising.

The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Not Upheld.

[No further action required]

Please note this headnote does not form part of the Decision.

COMPLAINTS BOARD DECISION

The Chair directed the Complaints Board to consider the advertisement with reference to Basic Principle 4 of the Code of Ethics, which required the Complaints Board to consider whether the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility. Basic Principle 3 and 4 of the Code for People in Advertising required the Complaints Board to consider whether taking in to account generally prevailing community standards, the advertisement is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence on the grounds of their gender; race; colour; ethnic or national origin; age; cultural, religious, political or ethical

belief; sexual orientation; marital status; family status; education; disability; occupational or employment status. Stereotypes may be used to simplify the process of communication in relation to both the product offered and the intended consumer. However, advertisements should not use stereotypes in the portrayal of the role, character and behaviour of groups of people in society which, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence, hostility, contempt, abuse or ridicule.

The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Not Upheld.

The Complaint

The Complainant said the advertisement for State roadside assistance portrayed female drivers in a sexist and degrading way. The Complainant said the advertisement portrayed an out-of-date stereotype of women being helpless and over-emotional and in need of men's protection.

The Advertiser's Response

The Advertiser said the key message of the advertisement was that anyone who drives your car is covered by the roadside rescue cover rather than only one named driver. The advertisement was trying to link the stress and frustration of a mechanical breakdown regardless of age or gender. The Advertiser said it had tried to portray this serious moment in a light-hearted way "using a play on words to link a sudden mechanical incident with a sudden emotional reaction."

It noted the daughter in the advertisement was dressed for a night out and upset about being stuck in the rain and not making it to the party.

The Complaints Board Discussion

The Complaints Board began by considering the likely consumer takeout of the advertisement. The Complaints Board agreed it was likely to be that State Insurance offered everyone roadside cover including young drivers, who were less likely to have independent insurance cover. It noted the Advertiser confirmed this was a key policy benefit which provided a point of difference to some competitors' policies.

The Complaints Board agreed with the Complainant that the advertisement did nothing to dispel stereotypes about female drivers being less competent or being likely to react to mechanical problems in an emotional way. However, it said the attempt at the light-hearted play on words meant the advertisement was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence to most viewers.

The Complaints Board acknowledged the offence the advertisement caused the Complainant but agreed the advertisement did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence on account of gender and said the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility.

Therefore, the Complaints Board ruled there was no apparent breach of the Code of Ethics or the Code for People in Advertising.

Accordingly, the Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Not Upheld.

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

The IAG television advertisement for State roadside rescue shows a young woman staring into the open bonnet of a car with makeup running down her face. The voiceover says

“State’s roadside rescue covers your car for any driver – even your teenage daughter. That way one breakdown doesn’t have to lead to another.”

COMPLAINT FROM S MCLEOD

This State road side assistance add is a sexist and degrading portrayal of female teenage drivers. It shows a teenage girl breaking down on the side of the road in the rain with her make up running down her face she is described as having a 'melt down'. The add tells parents (dads) to insure with state with road side assistance so you are covered for every situation 'even teenager daughters' and the 'mental breakdown' they have when their car breaks down in the rain.

The add portrays women as weak, helpless and overly emotional and in need of mens protection. An outdated stereotypical portrayal that feeds into ongoing gender-based stereotypes that goes against the central obligations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

CODE OF ETHICS

Basic Principle 4: All advertisements should be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

CODE FOR PEOPLE IN ADVERTISING

Basic Principle 3: Advertisements should not portray people in a manner which, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence on the grounds of their gender; race; colour; ethnic or national origin; age; cultural, religious, political or ethical belief; sexual orientation; marital status; family status; education; disability; occupational or employment status.

Basic Principle 4: Stereotypes may be used to simplify the process of communication in relation to both the product offered and the intended consumer. However, advertisements should not use stereotypes in the portrayal of the role, character and behaviour of groups of people in society which, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence, hostility, contempt, abuse or ridicule

RESPONSE FROM ADVERTISER, IAG NEW ZEALAND LIMITED

We refer to your letter dated 20 February 2018, notifying us of the complaint made by S McLeod concerning our State Roadside Rescue TV advertisement.

We note the relevant sections on the Advertising Code of Practice:

- Code of Ethics – Basic Principle 4;
- Code for People in Advertising – Basic Principle 3; and
- Code for People in Advertising – Basic Principle 4.

We believe our advertisement does not breach any of the above Codes.

The key message of our advertisement is ‘anyone who drives your car is covered if you have our State Roadside Rescue cover’. This is a key benefit of our policies as some competitors’ services only cover one named driver. It’s not uncommon for parents to lend their car to their teenage children so we want parents to feel safe in the knowledge that their children will be OK if a breakdown occurred while they were driving. State makes it simple and easy

for anyone to call for help in these situations and have someone come as quickly as possible to rescue them.

The daughter in the advertisement is dressed for a party and travelling at night. When the vehicle mechanical breakdown occurs, she is obviously upset about being stuck in the rain and not making it to her destination on time. Moments like this can unexpectedly happen to anyone and can make someone of any age or gender feel stressed, frustrated and vulnerable. We have tried to portray this serious moment in a light-hearted way (that most parents can relate to, not only dads) by using a play on words to link a sudden mechanical incident with a sudden emotional reaction. Our intention is to show that we understand and sympathise with our audience and can assist them, rather than offend them.

In addition to the above, please see attached **Advertising complaint response form**.

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| Contact person for advertising complaints | Alex Geale/Michelle Cavander |
| Name and contact at creative agency | Will Harvey, Business Director |
| Name and contact at media agency | Amanda Palenski, Business Director, |
| A basic, neutral description of the advertisement | The key message of the TV advertisement is 'anyone who drives your car is covered if you have our State Roadside Rescue cover'. State makes it simple and easy for anyone to call for help in these situations and have someone come as quickly as possible to rescue them. |
| Date advertisement began | November 2016 |
| Where the advertisement appeared (all locations e.g. TV, Billboard, Newspaper Website) | TV |
| Is the advertisement still accessible – where and until when? | On via TV |
| A copy of digital media file(s) of the advertisement – if the complaint relates to on-screen graphic, please send a broadcast quality version. | N/A |
| Who is the product / brand target audience? | General Public, 18-49 |
| Clear substantiation on claims that are challenged by the complainant. | We believe our advertisement does not breach any of the applicable Codes. Please see our substantiation in letter above. |
| The response from the advertiser is included in the published decision. The ASA is not | |

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| able to accept confidential or proprietary information. Please contact the Complaints Manager if this is an issue. | |
| For Broadcast advertisements: | |
| A copy of the script | "State's Roadside Rescue covers your car for any driver, even your teenage daughter. That way, one breakdown doesn't have to lead to another." |
| A copy of the media schedule and spot list (Please remove all financial information) | Attached |
| CAB key number and rating | IAG/015/00843HD |

Accordingly, we invite the Complaints Board to dismiss this complaint.

RESPONSE FROM MEDIA, CAB

STATE INSURANCE TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT

COMPLAINT: 18/053

KEY: IAG 015 00843

RATING:

G

We have been asked to respond to this complaint under the following codes:

Code of Ethics – Basic Principle 4;

Code for People in Advertising – Basic Principle 3, Basic Principle 4;

CAB approved this State commercial on 03/11/16 with a G classification. Under CAB internal policies, this commercial is classified as a financial advertisement.

This ad opens on a plain blue background with a damaged car, rain then falls on the scene and a young woman's makeup is shown running.

It's a simple ad about a car breaking down and needing roadside assistance, a service offered by State. That service is a full-cover product, and applies to each insured vehicle regardless of driver. It is very unlikely that a teenaged person will have their own separate auto insurance – so the ad shows a young person covered by their parent's plan.

The presentation and characterization in the commercial has a defined purpose (breadth of cover in an unfortunate circumstance) and has no other ulterior message, nor does it overlay representational stereotype for effect. In CAB's view, this advertisement sits comfortably within the bounds of the Code of Ethics and the Code for People in Advertising.

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.