



**ADVERTISING  
STANDARDS  
BUREAU**

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## CASE REPORT

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Complaint reference number | 261/09  |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Custom Security Services                        |
| 3. Product                    | House goods/services                            |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | Outdoor   |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination      | Wednesday, 24 June 2009                         |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Upheld – discontinued or modified               |

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

These Billboard images have a male and a female subject. The male subject shows the image of a shirtless man with only the left hand side of his torso visible, from below the neck to above the waist. He has his arms folded. The well defined shoulder, bicep and pectorial muscles are visible. The wording on the right hand side of the Billboard says "Safeguarding you and your assets Custom Security Services 133 277 [www.css.com.au](http://www.css.com.au)"

The female subject shows the image of a woman wearing a yellow bikini top with only the left hand side of her torso visible, from below the neck to above the waist. Her arms are bent with her hands appearing to be resting on each side of her face. The woman's cleavage is visible. The wording on the right hand side of the Billboard says "Safeguarding you and your assets Custom Security Services 133 277 [www.css.com.au](http://www.css.com.au)"

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*I feel it objectifies women. Though I unfortunately can't stop this problem overall, I feel that I shouldn't have to view explicit objectification of women without my choice, whilst sitting in my favourite cafe. I also think it's especially unfair to adolescent females for all kinds of body image reasons. I also find it sexist. It doesn't portray any 'male assests.' It ignores potential female clientelle. Why?*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

*In reference to the above complaint, CSS has two images screening on the billboard on a monthly rotated schedule. The second image is of a male. I have attached both images for your viewing. The ads are on a 30 seconds rotation with 7 other businesses so the ad is not permanently in vision.*

*The screens are maintained by an advertising company called Big Impact Advertising.*

## THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board considered the application of Sections 2.3 and 2.5 of the Code, relating to sex, sexuality

and nudity, and language.

In regard to the advertisement's portrayal of sex, sexuality and nudity under Section 2.3, the Board noted that the woman is wearing a bikini top and only her torso and one arm are shown - there is no image of her face or head. The focus of the advertisement is the woman's breasts and the accompanying text 'Safeguarding you and your assets'. The Board considered that the placement of the text alongside the image of the woman's breasts makes the text mildly sexually suggestive.

The Board noted that it had previously considered advertisements featuring scantily clad women and that the use of such images has at times been a divisive issue for the community. The Board noted that there is no relationship between a naked woman and the product or service being advertised. The Board noted that the advertisement is on a billboard and is therefore available for viewing by a broad audience. The Board considered that many reasonable people would find the portrayal to be unacceptable and without justification in the context of the products advertised and in the media utilised. On this basis the Board determined that the advertisement did not depict sexuality with sensitivity to the relevant audience and that it did breach section 2.3 of the Code.

The Board also considered whether the advertisement discriminated against or vilified women. The Board noted that there is a similar advertisement depicting a male - although that advertisement has not been complained about. The Board considered that the image of a woman in very brief swimwear, without a head, was objectification of women in the context of a mildly sexually suggestive advertisement for an insurance product. On this basis the Board determined that the advertisement breached section 2.1 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement breached the Code on other grounds, the Board upheld the complaint.

#### **ADVERTISER RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION**

The Advertiser did not respond to the Board's determination but the advertisement has been removed.