

[REDACTED]

From: Caitlin Roper [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 21 March 2011 2:03 PM
To: Committee, SPLA (REPS)
Subject: Outdoor advertising submission

Dear Committee,

I am a 26 year old woman with three small children. I am becoming increasingly concerned about some of the overly sexual or inappropriate content on billboards and bus stops etc. I have felt this way for a number of years but only in the last year have I learned how to make complaints and who to make complaints to. I am certain there are many others like me who find particular advertising material offensive but do not know what to do about it.

About a year ago, I learned of the role of the Advertising Standards Bureau, and was able to make complaints where necessary. However, as the complaints process was one that typically takes a few months, I might make a complaint and wait for 2-3 months to hear of the Bureau's response, and all the while the billboard is still being openly displayed for all to see. One of these such billboards was in Kings Cross in Sydney, a Calvin Klein ad depicting a woman being either gang-raped, or engaging in group sex, depending on your interpretation- to sell jeans. I made my complaint, as did others, and over to months of deliberating, the board was still up, in town where everyone could see it- until the complaint was upheld, and the billboard finally removed.

However, that is a success story. Most of the time that does not happen. I made another complaint about a billboard for Aussie Boat loans. It featured a woman in a bikini (just her torso) and had the words "All loans should be this good", referring to her hot body. After a few months, the complaint was upheld. However, the Advertising Standards Bureau said that the billboard would be removed at the end of summer- meaning it would stay up for a few more weeks. This was probably what Aussie Boat loans intended anyway- an ad campaign for summer, and then to take it down and make a new campaign for the next season. This meant that while the ad was ruled inappropriate and offensive, it remained up, and there was no penalty for the company who used the offending billboard. They could just as easily do the same next time- chances are by the time the complaints process is complete, it has already achieved its purpose of attracting attention for the company.

Most of the time, complaints are not even upheld. It seems that based on a small amount of complaints, the ASB considers that most people aren't bothered. As I previously stated, for a long time I was personally offended by certain outdoor advertising and didn't know I could do anything about it. I am sure there are many others who still don't know how.

I have three small children, and I find I am having to be more and more selective about where I take them in order to avoid overly sexual billboards and other advertising material. I am trying to teach my son to have respect for women but it becomes more difficult as there are so many pictures of women in various states of undress- it is confusing for children to be taught one thing by their parents, but to have a culture that says the opposite.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards,

Caitlin Roper