

Mrs Claire Boyd

House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in regard to the 'Inquiry into the regulation of billboard and outdoor advertising'.

In my submission I would like to address two terms of reference

2. whether the current arrangements, including the Industry Codes administered by the Advertising Standards Bureau, meet community concerns about billboard advertising

I do not agree that the current arrangements including the Industry Codes administered by the ASB meet community concerns about billboard advertising.

I have seen billboards that I personally object to being displayed for long periods of time. Examples include billboard advertisements by Kayser, Ansell and Calvin Klein. The Kayser advertisement that I objected to featured two women wearing only underwear on their bottom half. This image portrayed women as sexual objects to be looked at and fantasised about. Ansell advertised their condom 'Thinnest condom Ever' on a billboard on a prominent road. This is inappropriate for children to see and imposes sex education on children too early on in their life. It prevents parents having the freedom to educate their children about sex at an appropriate time and in an appropriate way. And Calvin Klein depicted an image on a billboard that implied gang rape. This is grotesque behaviour and should not be depicted nor approved of in the way it is depicted.

These are not appropriate ideas for the public domain. Women as sexual objects, sex products and images that imply approval of grotesque behaviour such as gang rape are not appropriate for billboards in the public domain. Nor is it appropriate in any domain public or private to portray women purely as sexual objects or approve of or depict gang rape.

Current standards mean that these billboards are allowed to be displayed and are not removed until a long process has been gone through. While the complaints are being considered the billboards remain in place. Surely this is putting the advertiser first above the community. They are still able to advertise in an inappropriate way until the complaint is processed thereby achieving their goal. This current procedure provides no disincentive for displaying inappropriate advertising.

There are also no fines and therefore incentive imposed on the advertising industry change their advertising practices. This is analogous to speed limits without speeding fines. Without enforcement the standards are broken again and again.

6. any improvements that may be made to current arrangements

Improvements that can be made to current arrangements would include; removing advertising when complaints have been received rather than waiting for a long process to happen and imposing fines on offending parties that would deter future offences.

The overall benefit would be; that through standards being better enforced the nature of billboard advertising would be more appropriate for public consumption. This would lead to helping shape community attitudes in a positive way by; reducing the number of negative portrayals of women as sexual objects available for all, keeping inappropriate material for children out of the public domain and not allowing concepts of sexual exploitation such as gang rape to be promoted.

I hope you will consider these suggestions in your inquiry.

Sincerely Yours,

Claire Boyd