

Decision of the ADVERTISING REGULATORY BOARD

Advertiser	Bundu Brands
Consumer/Competitor	Consumer
File reference	4579 – Wildebeest Brandewyn
Outcome	Dismissed
Date	11 May 2026

The Directorate of the Advertising Regulatory Board has been called upon to consider a complaint lodged against Wildebeest Brandewyn.

Description of the advertising

The Commercial opens on two men – one younger and one older – sitting together on the front “stoep” of what appears to be a South African farmhouse. The older man is playing the harmonica.

Oupa says: “Kleinjan…”

Kleinjan: “Hmm?”

Oupa: “Do I look like a camel to you?” (Lyk ek vir jou soos ‘n kameel?)

Kleinjan: “No Oupa… Aah, get you a fresh one.” (Nee Oupa… Aah, kry vir Oupa ‘n varsetjie.)

Kleinjan (after he gets up and goes to the fridge, and searches on top): “There’s nothing on top of the fridge, Oupa.” (Daar’s niks bo-op die yskas nie, Oupa.)

Oupa: “It’s not on top, it’s inside.”

Kleinjan: “Not on top, it’s inside…” He opens the fridge to discover an array of cans of brandy and soda, and brandy and cola. He examines these in wonder before selecting one.

Oupa (with the can in his hand): “You know, Kleinjan, brandy is like love – the more you get, the happier you are.” (Jy weet, Kleinjan, brandewyn is soos de liefde – hoe meer jy kry, hoe gelukkiger is jy.)

They drink together, and the Commercial closes on a close-up of the brandy cooler can.

Throughout the Commercial, a strip runs along the bottom of the screen stating, “18+ Enjoy responsibly. Not for persons under the age of 18.”

Complaint

The first complainant, as a registered addiction counsellor, submitted that the Commercial, in stating, “Brandy is like love; the more you get, the happier you are,” is sending an “extremely dangerous and false message”. She states that in her line of work, she’s only witnessed the misery alcohol causes in people’s lives. Her concern with the Commercial is that it promotes the idea that alcohol adds value to your life, “exactly the same misconception we work to counter when treating patients with alcohol problems.”

She adds that brandy, and alcohol in general, leads to crime, gender violence and the destruction of lives.

An additional Complainant stated that she felt that the Advertisement encourages binge drinking or excessive drinking, with the wording encouraging consumers to consumer more brandy, implying that they will be happier. This, she says “is not done in the spirit of responsible liquor consumption and encourages excessive liquor consumption.”

Response

The Advertiser responded, *inter alia*, that the Advertisement is plainly intended light-hearted, fictional, character-based humour, and that the line referring to brandy being “like love, the more you get, the happier you are” is an “obvious humorous exaggeration delivered in the context of playful banter between characters.” The Advertiser stated that it is not presented as a factual, scientific, medicinal, therapeutic, or objectively verifiable claim.”

The Advertiser further stated that the Advertisement does not depict or encourage irresponsible drinking in that it does not show intoxication, binge drinking, loss of control, unsafe conduct, driving, sporting activity, or any excessive consumption. “It depicts adult characters only, in a domestic setting, and all actors appearing in the advertisement are adults.”

The Advertiser pointed out that the Advertisement does not suggest that alcohol has curative qualities, nor does it present alcohol as a performance enhancer, stimulant, sedative, or tranquiliser. Equally, he says, it does not depict alcohol as solving personal problems, overcoming inhibitions, or enabling social acceptance. “At most, it uses a humorous metaphor as part of a fictional exchange.”

The Advertiser asserted that, viewed in context, a reasonable viewer would understand the statement as playful banter and exaggerated humour, rather than the literal promise that consuming more alcohol will make a person happier or improve their circumstances. The Advertiser further noted that the Advertisement carried the requisite “responsible drinking/under 18” disclaimer in the prescribed on-screen format throughout.

Finally, the Advertiser stated that the Advertisement was flighted on VIA, kykNET, and kykNET & Kie, and complied with applicable broadcaster requirements.

Application of the Code of Advertising Practice

The following clauses were considered in this matter:

- Clause 4.2.1 of Section II – Misleading claims

- Clause 1.4.1 of Appendix A – Alcohol Industry Code of Conduct
- Clause 1.6.4 of Appendix A – Alcohol Industry Code of Conduct

Decision

Having considered all the material before it, the Directorate of the ARB issues the following finding.

Clause 4.2.1 of the Code, which deals with “Misleading claims”, states: *“Advertisements should not contain any statement or visual presentation which, directly or by implication, omission, ambiguity, inaccuracy, exaggerated claim or otherwise, is likely to mislead the consumer.”*

Clause 1.4.1 of Appendix A of the Code, which is the Alcohol Industry Code of Conduct states: *“Commercial Communications should not imply that drinking resulted in business, social, professional, academic, athletic, financial, or other personal success, nor that drinking can solve personal problems, overcome inhibitions, shyness or social barriers, or enable social acceptance.”*

And Clause 1.6.4 of the same Appendix states: *“Commercial Communications may not claim that alcohol has curative qualities, or offer alcohol as a performance enhancer, stimulant, sedative, or tranquiliser.”* It is noted upfront that this clause does not appear to be relevant to the complaint at hand.

The Directorate must therefore determine whether the statement made in the Commercial, “brandy is like love – the more you get, the happier you are,” contravenes any of these clauses of the Code.

The Directorate accepts that the Advertisement makes use of a humorous narrative, and that the statement under scrutiny is an element of that narrative. Further, the Directorate notes that the set up of the entire commercial is humorous, including the use of a known South

African actor (Ian Roberts), in the stereotypical role of a loveable “oupa”, and the reference to earlier comedic moments in South Africa’s advertising history (“It’s not inside, it’s on top”).

Taken together, the Directorate believes that these elements create a nostalgic, amusing reference to South African culture that the audience is unlikely to take seriously.

The Directorate does experience significant discomfort at the final message of the Commercial – that “the more [brandy] you get, the happier you are” – and accepts the concerns of the two Complainants in the South African context where binge drinking is a serious problem. There is no doubt that the line could have been more carefully scripted to avoid any implication of condonation of over-indulgence.

However, upon weighing up the narrative of the commercial and the general behaviour of the two characters (neither are obviously drunk, both are enjoying pleasant banter, neither is driving), against the single problematic statement, the Directorate concludes that it is highly unlikely that the audience would take any part of the message to heart or perceive it as an instruction to drink in an irresponsible manner.

The Directorate further notes that legal Advertising for alcohol will make use of positive associations and outcomes to sell the product – as is the case with any marketed product. While the Code articulates certain guardrails to prevent empty associations around alcohol delivering success, or helping drinkers to overcome personal problems such as shyness, the Directorate believes that this commercial falls short of making overt promises of this nature. Simply, the statement is made as a characterisation by a specific individual, rather than being an endorsement of problematic behaviour in general.

The Directorate therefore finds the Commercial is not in contravention of Clause 4.2.1 of Section II, in that the statement “the more you get, the happier you are” is unlikely to mislead the consumer into believing that this is a universal truth, and that it is not in contravention of Clause 1.4.1 of Appendix A of the Code, in that it has not promised success, a mechanism to overcome personal problems, or any curative attributes.

This said, the Directorate reiterates that this commercial could have been more thoughtfully scripted in this regard, and calls on the Advertiser to proceed cautiously with future commercials.