

Gloria Jean's Tall Coffee Scheme Leaves Bitter Taste

MIKE IVES, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Tall cappuccinos are stirring controversy in Vietnam after an Australian coffee company offered free drinks to women who met a height requirement.

The promotion earlier this month by Gloria Jean's Coffees International offered a free second drink to women who measure at least 1.65 meters, or about 5 feet 6 inches, and was meant to echo a government campaign to increase the average national height, state media reported.

But critics said on the social networking site Facebook that the promotion was offensive to Vietnamese women, prompting the company to cancel it and apologize.

"It's really offensive because most of the population is less than that height," said Do Phuong Lien, a woman who runs a fashion and art business in the capital, Hanoi.

Gloria Jean's said in a brief statement Friday that the promotion was "unauthorized."

"This promotion did not reflect the values of our brand, as we welcome everyone into our coffee houses around the world," the statement said. Officials from the company could not immediately be reached for further comment.

The company's website says it launched in a small town near Chicago in 1979 and is now headquartered in Australia with more than 1,000 coffee houses in 39 countries.

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