



Case Report

1	Case Number	0048/17
2	Advertiser	iSelect Pty Ltd
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	App
5	Date of Determination	08/02/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This 6" ad is a cut down version of our 30" spot (ISE0096/30/SH). It shows our reptile handles holding the cobra snake, when it strikes him on both his arm and face. Despite this, Gill remains seemingly unaffected. We then hear our male voice over encouraging the audience to ensure they have the right health cover, before they may need to use it. He is obviously referencing the fact that unexpected things can happen such as the incident we have just witnessed of Gill with the Cobra.

THE COMPLAINT

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

As I occasionally play this game with the help of my young granddaughter, I find this advert frightening and disgusting and would give anyone nightmares as it just pops up following a word move.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

Please note, that this complaint relates to a 6” Bumper ad that has been viewed on mobile application ‘Words with Friends’. This 6” ad is a cut down of a 30” spot (ISE0996/30/SH) and 15” cut down (ISE0096/15/SH) which have previously been dismissed by the ASB (previous complaint reference 0442/16)

Note that following the dismissal of the complaints by the ASB, iSelect decided to put the advertisement back on television in January 2017.

To support this campaign, iSelect also decided to also run across the Google Display Network, which is where this complainant viewed the advertisement.

Advertisement Description

This 6” ad is a cut down version of our 30” spot (ISE0096/30/SH). It shows our reptile handles holding the cobra snake, when it strikes him on both his arm and face. Despite this, Gill remains seemingly unaffected. We then hear our male voice over encouraging the audience to ensure they have the right health cover, before they may need to use it. He is obviously referencing the fact that unexpected things can happen such as the incident we have just witnessed of Gill with the Cobra.

iSelect’s comments in relation to the complaint

While we sympathise with the personal experiences of the complainants, we are confident that there is nothing about the advertisements that contravenes anything in relation to Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics, in particular relation to section 2.3 regarding Violence to which the complaints received allude.

Purpose of the ad

The purpose of this ad is to promote the new iSelect ‘Health Cover Check-Up’ tool that can help people ensure that their health insurance policy covers them for everything they might need.

The “Snake Handler’ advertisements (ISE0096/30/SH, ISE0096/15/SH), from which the 6” cut down was created, build on iSelect’s “always get it right” brand platform which celebrates the sense of confidence anybody can feel when they make the right call with the assistance of iSelect.

The scenario that plays out in the advertisement, where a careless snake handler has a run in with one of his snakes, plays on the notion that having health insurance, and more specifically the right type of health insurance cover is important – particularly for those times in life when the unexpected happens.

The deadpan style of humour dials up the key message that you never quite know what is around the corner, and as such should always be prepared and have the right health insurance.

iSelect’s tradition of advertising

iSelect has a longstanding tradition of humorous and irreverent advertising – a trait that is

widely known and loved by many Australian consumers. In keeping with this tradition, this advertisement is designed to be intentionally exaggerated and in no way a depiction of a real-life scenario.

iSelect submits that iSelect does not breach any part of section 2.3 in relation to violence.

2.3 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

iSelect submits that the advertisement in question does not portray violence but shows the character sustaining an injury, a situation which is justifiable in the context of health insurance where unexpected circumstances happen. For this reason, it is vital that people ensure they regularly check their health insurance policy to make sure they have the right cover so they are protected in these unexpected events. iSelect's Health Cover Check-up tool can allow people to do this.

The action depicted in the advertisement was intentionally made to appear far-fetched, unrealistic and hyperbolised so as to make light of unexpected accidents.

The far-fetched and exaggerated nature of the advertisement is highlighted by the following elements:

- The snake handler does not appear to be in any form of pain when being bitten by the snake, i.e. he does not yell out in pain, nor does he indicate he is that least bit phased by the bite even as his face is comically swelling to a ridiculous size.*
- Showing a person sustaining an injury is relevant to the product and service advertised (private health insurance). In general terms, health insurance provides policyholders with cover for medical expenses incurred as a result of ill health and physical injury, including where an injury may be sustained as a result of an unforeseen incident.*
- Finally, the cobra snake depicted was not real, but instead completely computer generated. To further highlight the fabricated scenario, a cobra snake was intentionally chosen as it is a species of snake not native to Australia.*

iSelect submits the injury sustained in the advertisement is justifiable in the context of health insurance, where accidents happen. Moreover, iSelect submit that the actions depicted exist in a completely make-believe world, and therefore present a humorous and farfetched scenario which is in keeping with the brand's tone of voice.

Media Placement

Whilst the ad in question does not have a CAD classification (due to the nature of it running across online platforms only), it has been cut down from an ad that has previously been given a CAD rating of 'J'.

Moreover, the buy for this media placement through Google was bought with discretion exercised. The buying parameters were such as the only adults aged 25+ were targeted, within the SA, Vic, NSW, ACT and Tasmania regions.

iSelect intentionally requested the bumper ad be excluded from 'adult' content and content

not yet rated by Google for their network. These buying parameters align with the target audience for the campaign, which is directed towards adult Australians who already hold a private health insurance policy.

For this reason, we believe the 6" bumper ad was entirely appropriate for the 25+ audience, as further supported by the "J" ratings received from CAD for the longer form TVCs.

In summary, iSelect submits that the advertisement in question do not breach any part of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics. Specifically, iSelect submits that this advertisement does not breach the AANA's code in relation to section 2.3 around violence.

We thank the ASB Board for consideration of iSelect's response to these complaints, and trust the information provided satisfies the ASB's request in full.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement featured a man being bitten by a snake which is frightening and not appropriate for an advertisement that pops up when playing a game on a mobile phone.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised."

The Board noted this 6 second advertisement was viewed on a mobile device whilst playing a game and that it depicts a man being bitten twice by a cobra.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed complaints about the television version of this advertisement in case 0442/16 where:

"The Board acknowledged that some children, as well as adults, could find the advertisement's depiction of a man being attacked by a snake to be distressing but considered that the man's lack of reaction with regards to being concerned he has been bitten, and the fact he doesn't mention it to his colleague, makes the whole scenario appear unrealistic. The Board noted the man continues his conversation with his colleague, even as he falls to the floor, and considered that overall the humorous tone of the advertisement, as the victim's arm and face swell to grotesque levels, lessens the impact of the visuals of the snake.

Overall the Board considered that the level of violence depicted is not excessive and is justifiable in the context of promoting health insurance and determined that the advertisement

did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.”

The Board noted the current advertisement is shorter and considered that although the humorous nature of the advertisement is thus reduced as we don't see the snake handler's colleague's lack of awareness for his situation, in the Board's view the background music, calm reaction of the man who has been bitten, and the matter of fact tone of the voiceover amounts to an overall depiction of a scenario which is unrealistic. The Board noted that the man who is bitten does not appear to be in any pain during the advertisement and considered that although the images of the snake biting the man are graphic they are clearly computer generated.

The Board acknowledged that some members of the community would prefer not to see images of snakes, albeit computer generated ones, biting a person but considered that in this instance the level of violence depicted is not excessive and is justifiable in the context of promoting health insurance.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.