



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 260/05 |
| 2. Advertiser | McDonald's Australia Ltd (Release your inner child) |
| 3. Product | Restaurants |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Violence Other – section 2.2
Other - Causes alarm and distress to children |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 11 October 2005 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement opens in an office setting. A young woman is shown to place some folders on a shelf when she stops mid-action. Her abdomen opens like a trapdoor. A small child-size version of the woman climbs out from her abdomen. Similar events occur with a fellow office worker, a man and woman in a car park, a person at the beach and a window cleaner. The small children that have climbed out of their respective characters converge on a McDonald's restaurant. The voiceover states: *"Remember when everything felt new at McDonald's? Well, it does again. Come and see what's changed and feed your inner child."*

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

"... I found the concept of school age children climbing out of doors in the bodies of frozen adults offensive and upsetting... The fact that this is advertising the purchase of fast food (or any food) is particularly horrible and off-key. In a world full of violence and mutilation, both real and in the movies where many people already do not believe in the true value of human life I do not feel that companies need to stoop to this level to advertise products..."

"It is like watching a horror movie..."

"I found this advertisement to be most disturbing and inappropriate, having children coming out of peoples insides..."

"I consider the advertisement to be blatantly directed to children, encouraging them to go to McDonald's. In this time of increasing concern regarding obesity I consider it cynical to directly employ "pester power" in this way. A tag line in the advert runs along the lines of "indulge your inner child" – this may just as well read indulge your child. I do not consider this to be appropriate."

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

"... The concept was to remind the customer of the new feeling about McDonald's they felt as a child and to invoke a feeling of playfulness by feeding the "inner child"."

"... McDonald's was careful to ensure that the treatment of this situation was non-violent and not in any way distressing in the manner of the "child" coming out of the body. The trapdoor effect was used so that it highlighted this was not a real life depiction. All the "children" look happy and

the music is upbeat and happy.”

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 that although the abdomens of the characters in the advertisement were shown to open, the images used in the advertisement were not overly violent or graphic. The Board took into consideration that the images were not gory in that no blood was shown, nor were the characters shown to experience any pain. The Board also noted that the music used in the advertisement was of a light-hearted nature and did not convey any sense of fear or violence.

The Board considered that the depictions did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to violence and were not likely to cause alarm and distress to children.

The Board also considered whether or not the AANA Code of Advertising to Children applied to this advertisement. The Board noted that the AANA Code of Advertising to Children applies only to “*Advertisements to Children*”. The AANA Code of Advertising to Children defines “*Advertisements to Children*” as advertisements which, having regard to the theme, visuals and language used, are directed primarily to “Children” and are for “Product”. “Children” are defined in that code as “children 14 years old or younger”. The Board determined, having regard to the theme, visuals and language used in this advertisement, that the advertisement was not directed primarily to children and that as a result, the AANA Code of Advertising to Children did not apply.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.