



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	301/05
2. Advertiser	Unilever Australasia (Omo)
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 11 October 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The opening scene in this television advertisement depicts a kindergarten. Young children are shown to be painting pictures. One child who is wearing white clothing (covered in paint) is shown to place dirty paintbrushes in her back pocket. As she does so the words: “*Art Bag*” appear in large, white text across the screen. The following scene in the advertisement shows a young girl applying makeup. As she finishes, she places an uncovered lipstick in her shirt pocket. The words: “*Makeup Bag*” appear in large, bold text on the screen. The final scene in the advertisement depicts a young child removing a small green frog from his back pocket. The words: “*Nature Reserve*” appear on the screen. As the camera pans back, we see that he is standing with a friend in a forest. The following scenes in the advertisement depict a close up of the product and an animated sequence showing the cleaning powder cleaning the clothes. A voiceover states: “*New OMO with blue powder - because dirt is good*”.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“Frog populations are declining worldwide. One reason for this is a fungal disease which spreads easily – if frogs are moved they can spread this disease to new areas and infect new populations. Frogs use their skin for respiration – handling a frog can damage the skin and potentially result in the death of the frog. In addition, it is illegal to collect frogs in NSW and this behaviour should not be encouraged, particularly in children...”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“We believe that the content of our ad is in no way contrary to prevailing community health and safety standards or in breach of any other area of the AANA code...”

“... It would never be our intention to promote children playing with frogs or to treat them in a manner that would be detrimental to their health. Our creative approach was to acknowledge to their parents, that as children grow and develop they become curious about the world around them and will inevitably get dirty.”

“We believe the advertisement does nothing to encourage children to put paintbrushes, makeup or frogs in their pockets but instead portrays common stains that children bring home to their mothers...”

“As this advertisement is aimed at female grocery buyers with children, it was shown in timeslots that will be most likely to reach this target (during the day when children are at playgroup/school and at night after children have gone to bed)... We also note that OMO itself is not a product that

is of interest to children...”

“... We regret that this has caused offence, however, we strongly believe that the campaign in no way encourages children to endanger the frog population.”

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 the frog depicted in the advertisement was being handled in its natural environment. It further noted that the manner in which the child handled the frog was not particularly aggressive and was not likely to cause significant damage to the frog. The Board also considered that the advertisement did not depict the child removing the frog from its natural environment so as to take it home.

The Board was of the opinion that the advertisement did not contravene the provisions of the Code. Accordingly the Board dismissed the complaint