



Case Report

1	Case Number	0009/17
2	Advertiser	Save the Children Australia
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	18/01/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television campaign consists of two separate advertisements.

The first television advertisement depicts a hospital in Africa and a young boy Pierre who is battling to survive due to malnourishment. Save the Children staff work with Pierre helping to bring him back to health. A voice over requests donations in order for these sorts of Save the Children programs to continue.

The second television advertisement depicts a very young child (Bishara) malnourished, footage 3 months on shows Bishara looking very well and recovered and then more footage of Bishara 5 years on with her grandmother looking very healthy. A voice over talks about Save the Children programs and how viewers can help children like Bishara win their fight to survive with support from Save the Children programs.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Very graphic images during meal times and while people are trying to enjoy their Christmas. This is on in every add break and is very hounding for people to donate. We don't even see this much advertising to help cancer sufferers.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU CAN VIEW ADS THROUGH BELOW URL LINKS:

The following two Save the Children Australia (SCA) advertisements were on air during the period referred to by the complainant:

- (i) Pierre <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=505TlCKM8Ik>*
- (ii) Bishara <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNFXSjJby7w>
(together the SCA Advertisements).*

It is not clear which of the SCA Advertisements the complainant refers to. Nor is it clear how either of the SCA Advertisements may be in contravention of Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics:

ADVERTSER CODE OF ETHICS: SECTION 2 CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

2.1 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

SCA Response: The SCA Advertisements do not contain any content which discriminates against or vilifies any person.

2.2 Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.

SCA Response: The SCA Advertisements do not contain any sexual content.

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.

SCA Response: While the SCA Advertisements include imagery that is confronting, they do not present or portray any violence.

2.4 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

SCA Response: The SCA Advertisements do not contain any sexual content.

2.5 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided.

SCA Response: The SCA Advertisements do not contain any strong or obscene language. Without further particulars, SCA fails to see how the language used in the advertisements could be deemed to be "inappropriate".

2.6 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

SCA Response: The SCA Advertisements do not contain any content relating to health and safety.

The content of the SCA Advertisements was originally prepared by Save the Children United Kingdom and similar versions have run extensively on free to air television in the United Kingdom.

Context for image use and communications

SCA acknowledges that images of a critically ill and malnourished children are distressing and challenging.

SCA's work addresses head-on the indignity of poverty and social injustice, which denies children worth and the most basic entitlements for a decent existence, leaving them beyond the boundaries within which every human being has a right to live.

The content and portrayal of the children within the SCA Advertisements are not constructed scenarios and SCA works with children (like the children in the SCA Advertisements) whose lives are challenging and often at risk. The intent behind the SCA Advertisements is to highlight the reality faced by children in these circumstances and to allow the urgency or gravity of their circumstances to come across in order to evoke a direct response from the audience.

For direct response television advertising (DRTV) to be effective it must prompt audiences to respond. The plight of children is intrinsically emotive. Portraying a child's need in the face of life-threatening sickness creates a highly charged response, and in this context SCA defends its capacity to prompt an emotive response from Australian audiences.

Telling authentic stories means SCA is prepared to show the reality for children even when it's shocking. We never stage or exaggerate stories and we are unapologetic about exposing difficult truths. We back up what we say with real examples. We respect the children whose stories we tell. We talk about them not as victims but as people, each with their own dreams and determination. We're careful not to give detail that could put children, our colleagues or our vital work at risk.

Images of children are fundamentally important to SCA. Their use in communications is crucial to engagement of supporters. Images bring to life the stories of the children that SCA works with, allowing SCA to portray the need for its work, the positive impact that it can have in the short term and progress made more widely. SCA is acutely aware that the use of imagery in this context is complex and subjective and can lead to impassioned debate about the appropriate way to portray the countries in which SCA works and the needs of the people there – particularly in order to drive donations.

Everything SCA communicates has the organisation's broader mission as its foundation, although methods vary depending upon objectives. For example, SCA's direct-response communications, such as DRTV, seek to elicit maximum financial return by telling our stories in an emotive but also simple and easily understandable way, while supporter communications are designed to provide greater understanding of SCA and its work with

more focus on impact and progress, often telling stories of greater depth and complexity. Images and stories help explain how development programs and humanitarian interventions are effective. Balance is achieved across the breadth of SCA's communications and public advocacy and in the relationships that it creates with stakeholders.

About SCA

Save the Children is a leading independent humanitarian and development organisation, working to create positive and lasting change for children. Established in 1919, Save the Children works in 120 countries around the world with global revenue of approximately \$2billion USD annually. Save the Children's Founder, Eglantyne Jebb, established Save the Children in the United Kingdom to assist children impacted by the allied blockade of supplies to Europe. Save the Children's first Australian branch was opened later the same year in Melbourne. Eglantyne Jebb lobbied for an end to the blockade and drafted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1923, which formed the basis of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

These original humanitarian and human rights values continue to underpin the work of SCA today, which strives to promote and ensure lasting equality, fairness and enjoyment of rights for all children and young people in Australia and abroad. SCA's vision is of a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. SCA's purpose is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. This philosophy supports the work of SCA and guides the direction of our programs, which aim to help and assist vulnerable children most in need, wherever they may be.

SCA has offices in every Australian state and the Northern Territory and provides education, youth engagement and child protection programs for disadvantaged children at more than 100 sites around the country. Each year, our Australian programs reach more than 29,000 children, young people and families from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

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 depicts graphic images.

The Board noted the complainant's concern over the frequency of the advertisement. The Board noted that the amount of advertising on television is not a matter that is covered by the Codes and considered that this aspect of the complaint is best forwarded to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

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 there are two versions of this television advertisement, each featuring a young African child who needs or needed help.

The Board noted the first version of the advertisement which features a young boy called Pierre who is battling to survive due to malnourishment. The Board noted that Pierre's situation is not resolved during the advertisement and considered that while the content would be distressing to many viewers, especially as Pierre's situation is current and not yet resolved, in the Board's view the images and voiceover are relevant to the important community awareness message being advertised.

The Board noted the second version of the advertisement which features the story of Bishara, a young girl who was severely malnourished but who is now thriving thanks to the assistance she received through Save the Children. The Board noted the images of Bishara when she was malnourished and considered that although many members of the community could find these images to be distressing, the Board noted that they are important in the context of the advertised service and the advertisement does make it clear that Bishara survived and is now healthy.

The Board noted that both versions of the advertisement had been rated PG by CAD and considered that consistent with a previous determination for a similar advertisement for World Vision (0439/15), in the Board's view while the images in the advertisements could be distressing to some viewers, in the context of fundraising for a child welfare organisation the content is not inappropriate for a broad audience which would include children.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

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