



## Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0031/11</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Cancer Institute of NSW</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Community Awareness</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>09/02/2011</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

2.6 - Health and Safety within prevailing Community Standards

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A group of women are at a restaurant. Two of the women leave the table to go outside for a cigarette and ask a third woman if she is going to join them. This woman says no, but she looks as though she would have preferred to say yes.

A male voice over then says, "Willpower's like a muscle - the more you use your willpower the stronger it gets" and we see a silhouette of a muscled arm lifting a dumb bell, followed by a shot of the woman joining her smoking friends and looking comfortable at the fact she is not smoking.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*My son who is nearly 4 tells me and also other family members that he is going to get a cigarette and start smoking as he will get stronger.*

*My mother asked him why and he said that he can see the muscles getting bigger and he wants to be as strong as grandpa (who does not smoke).*

*When the ad came on again tonight he called me and my husband and said look mummy smoking does make you strong.*

*I talked about the ad at work to others who have commented that their children have had similar comments.*

*I understand the content of the ad however it is really concerning considering all efforts that are made via not only us but other advertising that has a positive effect on our children regarding the no smoking and the harmful effects of smoking.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*Thank you for your letter dated 25 January 2010, regarding the Cancer Institute NSW I Can Quit (Willpower) Campaign. I Can Quit launched on 26 December 2010 on free-to-air Television across NSW and subscription television and will run until 5 February 2011. As the Bureau may already be aware, tobacco is the largest cause of preventable death and disease in our community. Smoking increases the risk of many cancers and 20% of all cancer deaths in NSW are caused by smoking. The cost to the NSW community as a result of tobacco smoking in 2006/07 was \$8.4 billion. However, total economic returns of tobacco control programs are estimated to exceed expenditure by at least 50 to one.*

*The I Can Quit Campaign is targeted toward adult smokers, namely the two-thirds of NSW smokers who intend to quit smoking in the next six months(1). It's objectives are to: a) increase smokers confidence in their ability to quit, b) increase understanding of the value and importance of willpower in the decision to quit smoking and stay quit, c) increase the belief that willpower can be influenced and strengthened, d) encourage the use of willpower to quit and stay quit.*

*The advertisement referred to in the complaint is a 30-second television commercial that has a W rating (CAD reference CANSW52030). The commercial shows a recently-quit adult smoker being offered cigarettes in different social situations. Although initially tempted, the woman successfully resists cigarettes. A voice over likens willpower to a muscle. It shows an animated arm lifting a dumbbell while the voice over explains willpower can be strengthened over time and that it becomes easier to resist cigarettes. The tag line reads "Every cigarette you don't smoke makes your willpower stronger."*

*The campaign was informed through both qualitative formative research and the published literature. The formative research concluded that while 'quitting smoking' is common, 'staying stopped' is not. There was a strong belief that "you have to want to" is the fundamental precursor to quitting. There was also a strong belief in the role of willpower as the key ingredient in the process of quitting. Discussions with smokers found it was important that any future communication messages around "how to quit" acknowledged and supported the necessary role of willpower in the quitting process. Other aids, supports and services would need to be promoted as being additional or complementary to, rather than a substitute for, willpower.*

*Further qualitative research was conducted with low socio-economic smokers in NSW to test specific concepts about willpower. The I Can Quit campaign concept was based on a published article by Muraven & Baumeister (2000), which likens willpower to a muscle(2). The article suggests that this concept can be applied to any situation such as losing weight, giving up smoking or doing physical activity. This campaign concept challenged participants*

*to re-think their understanding of willpower and how they could use willpower if they were planning to quit. It provided a clear message that willpower was something that they could influence, which for some was a new way of thinking about willpower.*

*As such, smokers reported that this was a thought-provoking and motivating idea. The concept also effectively communicated that stopping smoking gets easier over time as the smoker gets stronger in their ability to resist cigarettes. This was encouraging, particularly to smokers who had made previous quit attempts. They felt reassured that the hard work of resisting cigarettes in the early stages of their quit attempt was worthwhile and that it would get easier over time. Overall, understanding of "every cigarette you don't smoke is making your willpower stronger", aided smokers to think "I can" stop smoking.*

*Trying to change behaviours where addiction is involved is an enormous challenge. We know from research that it is important to demonstrate that smoking has immediate health consequences, that there is an immediate need to quit rather than sometime in the future and that support is available. In this, we have followed a similar approach in other smoking cessation campaigns.*

*The research carried out for the National Tobacco Campaign, for example, shows that advertising that is credible, personally relevant and provides new information, encourages smokers to put quitting on 'today's agenda'. It also helps ex-smokers stay quit and importantly, discourages non-smokers from starting.*

*Since 2003 NSW has experienced an approximate 5% decline in smoking prevalence(1). This decline in smoking can in part be attributed to increased funding toward tobacco control, including smoking cessation campaigns. To sustain this level of decline, it is necessary to continue to prompt and support smokers to quit.*

*I hope that the Advertising Standards Bureau will appreciate that this campaign has been thoroughly researched and clearly communicates a quit smoking support message. The end frame of the commercial further promotes support services available to assist with quitting, including the iCanQuit website and the Quitline. While this is an adult-targeted campaign it is unfortunate that a child has misinterpreted the commercial. Please note that no similar complaints have been received by the Institute.*

*1. Health NDo. New South Wales Population Health Survey 2009 (HOIST): Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health 2010.*

*2. Muraven M, Baumeister RF. Self-regulation and depletion of limited resources: does self-control resemble a muscle?*

*Psychol Bull. 2000 Mar;126(2):247-59.*

## **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 concern that the advertisement promotes the message that smoking makes you stronger.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety”.

The Board noted that the advertisement features a voiceover stating “Willpower's like a muscle - the more you use your willpower the stronger it gets" whilst showing a silhouette of a muscled arm lifting a dumb bell.

The Board noted the advertiser’s response that the advertisement has been rated W by CAD, and noted that the complainant’s four year old child had interpreted the advertisement as meaning smoking makes you stronger.

The Board considered that most reasonable adult members of the community, to whom this advertisement is aimed, would understand that the message of the advertisement is that it is willpower which can be made stronger and that the more you say no to smoking the easier it becomes to say no. The Board considered that the W rating would mean that the advertisement would be unlikely to be seen by children without their parents/carers who would be able to explain the meaning of the advertisement.

The Board considered that the message of the advertisement was very clear that willpower can get stronger, and not that that smoking makes you stronger, and determined that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety and 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.