



Case Report

1	Case Number	0122/11
2	Advertiser	Narconon Australia
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Mail
5	Date of Determination	27/04/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.6 - Health and Safety within prevailing Community Standards
- 2.2 - Violence Community service advertising

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A D1 size Letter Box Drop which has a close up image of a young adult female lying on the ground looking drugged. There is a small bottle and syringe on the ground in front of her. There is text on the back of the pamphlet.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The image on the flyer is graphic and disturbing. A girl lies on the ground with a syringe and drug canister clearly in view. I object to this image being used on a letterbox flyer which could be viewed by children at any time of the day. Unlike television graphic advertisements which have time of airing restrictions in place to protect younger viewers, letterbox flyers are there to be collected at any time of day by any member of the household. I would not like very young children to be confronted with that image.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Narconon is a drug and alcohol residential centre based on an education model and does not use drugs to withdraw people off drugs. Our residents are not patients but are students who are learning about themselves and life skills in order to become active and contributing members of our community again. The purpose of Narconon is to save lives which is what we are doing on a daily basis. The reason for using an image like this is that we wanted to "wake people up" to the terrible effect caused by drug addiction. To show that there is false information or "half truths" told to young people about how drugs make you feel good. This image communicates the consequences, which is unfortunately not thought about by young people enough. On side 2 we offer a solution which is the Narconon program. I believe that this image although it infers "shooting up" because of the syringe and vile lying in front of the girl, it does not show the girl actually doing this. Those who already have some understanding of drugs and drug addiction would be able to relate to the message. I don't believe that someone who had no knowledge or understanding of the subject such as a child would become adversely affected by this image. If they by some chance did wonder about it or their parent noticed they were looking at it, then the drug education could start there and then by being told that this is what happens when someone takes drugs.

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 over the graphic nature of the advertisement and that it is on a pamphlet that can easily be viewed by children.

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

The Board noted that the advertisement features an image of young female lying down seemingly to have taken some type of drugs.

The Board considered that the advertisement is showing a realistic image that is not portraying an act of violence or showing a person under duress but can be considered to depict an image that is confronting and concerns drug abuse.

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 concern that the image of drug taking may be inappropriate to be depicted in an advertisement and that it is not appropriate for children to see. The Board considered that the image of the syringe is not a focus of the advertisement and is not particularly clear or likely to be attractive to children. The Board noted that the material was distributed as a letterbox flyer and available to any member of the household but also noted that parents/carers are available to monitor the material that comes through the mailbox. The Board considered that the value of the drug message contained in the advertisement

outweighed any distress it may cause to some viewers and the depiction was therefore justified in the context of that message.

Based on the above, the Board 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.