



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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**AdStandards.com.au**

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
ACN 084 452 666

## Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0146/19</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>iSelect Pty Ltd</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Insurance</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV - Free to air</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>12/06/2019</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

- 2.6 - Health and Safety Unsafe behaviour
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens with a couple in their family home. The woman is looking at a piece of paper (her health insurance bill). There is an explosion of orange smoke and The Billusionist appears. The Billusionist brandishes a sword and skewers the bill from the woman's hand. He dramatically swallows the sword with the single bill, before pulling it back out again now with hundreds of other bills, like a bill kebab. The couple look on in amazement. The Billusionist breathes fire onto the bill kebab, charring all of the bills to ash except for one. The man plucks the bill, careful not to burn his fingers and declares that this bill is smaller. The Billusionist pulls a circular curtain over himself and then reveals himself to now be wearing flamboyant orange matador costume. A voiceover comes on, supported by an end frame featuring iSelect's phone and website details and iSelect's range of product icons. The ad ends with the woman excitedly wanting to sort out their other needs (Electricity and Internet or Car and Life Insurance).

### THE COMPLAINT





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

*Show a bloke, putting sword down throat and blowing out fire  
Channel 7 when children are up*

*My view is that a small child might try putting a knife down its throat to copy the sword swallowing or try blowing fire out of its mouth These ads are shown regularly and during prime time NOT a GOOD example and personally would NOT convince me to use ISELECT*

*i dont think this particular trick should be shown between prime time tv hours as my 5 year old grandson asked me what does he put in his mouth to make fire nanna, i think its inappropriate for young children to be subjected to this type of ad , save it for after 8.30pm when children are in bed.*

*I have seen this advert a few times, I may also have seen it on various channels. The advert predicts a man dressed in orange suit swallowing a sword depicting pulling a pile of bills out of his mouth. Also in the same advert he does a flame throwing trick with a cigarette lighter. I do not think this advert should be shown at such an early hour when children would be viewing. They may try the trick themselves!*

*I have a 6y old who was asking why the man was putting a knife down his throat and why the man was shooting fire from his mouth at the people?*

*Small children will see this add.*

*Kids copy what they see, they think it's a game.*

*Someone shoving a sword down their throat and then shooting fire at another person, is NOT something I want mine or anyone else's child to copy.*

*It's dangerous.*

#### **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*iSelect's brand re-positioning in September 2018 saw the introduction of a new hero character, the Billusionist- an illusionist but with bills whose primary mission is to help shrink customers' bills. This character was deliberately designed to be flamboyant, irreverent and funny to enable our advertising to stand out from the pack.*

*The Billusionist solves bill-related dilemmas in imaginative and theatrical ways, captivating the viewers with magic and tricks. This campaign execution is one such example of engaging viewers to solve a genuine widespread feeling of frustration around health insurance.*



*It is also worth noting that iSelect has a longstanding tradition of humorous and irreverent advertising – a trait that is widely known and loved by many Australian consumers. In keeping with the tradition, this advertisement continues with what’s expected and accepted of iSelect advertising and is in no way designed to be irresponsible, inappropriate or malicious.*

*We are confident that there is nothing about the advertisements that contravenes anything of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics, particularly in relation to section 2.6 relating to Health & Safety.*

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

*The campaign in its entirety is predicated on magic and illusions- we’ve previously had a talking dove which transforms in a puff of smoke into the Billusionist, to bills transforming into origami paper star bills, to a man bizarrely strapped to a spinning board in his own home. We’ve had cannon firing tricks and levitation magic.*

*In this scenario, we have a sword-swallowing illusion where the Billusionist swallows one bill and then appears to retrieve a ‘bill kebab’ from his stomach. It is an over-exaggerated scenario, highly unrealistic of reality and unlikely to influence any copy-cat action.*

*Not only is this behaviour now understood and expected from ‘The Billusionist, what has been alleged as ‘unsafe behaviour’ is simply common tricks and themes that magicians have been doing for years in front of adults and children alike.*

#### *CAD Rating*

*We also believe the spots are entirely appropriate for their intended audience, as indicated by the G ratings.*

*In summary, iSelect submits that the advertisements in question do not breach any part of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics. Specifically, iSelect submits that these advertisements do not breach the AANA’s code in relation to 2.6.*

*We thank the Ad Standards Community Panel for consideration of iSelect’s response to these complaints, and trust the information provided satisfies the Ad Standards’ request in full.*

#### **THE DETERMINATION**



The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainants' concern that the advertisement demonstrates unsafe behaviour.

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

The Panel noted that this television advertisement has two versions, and 15 second and a 30 second. Both advertisements feature a 'billusionist' character swallowing a sword which has a couple's bills on it. He then breathes fire and burns all the bills except one.

The Panel considered 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 Panel noted the complainants' concern that the advertisement depicts a dangerous behaviour which would be unsafe for children to copy.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the over-exaggerated scenario is highly unrealistic, clearly fantasy and unlikely to influence copy-cat behaviour.

The Panel considered that the advertisement included a number of fantastical elements, such as the billusionist appearing and disappearing and suddenly changing his clothes, and considered that such scenes added to the fantasy nature of the advertisement.

The Panel noted that it had previously considered the issue of exaggerated behaviour in case 0239/17 which featured a woman dancing with a trolley, in which:

"The majority of the Board however, considered that the exaggerated nature of the advertisement and the overall look and tone was clearly one of fantasy and was not considered to be realistic in any way. The Board noted that the woman was not shown to be thrilled or excited by her own actions but rather in a trance like state which lessened the impact of the stunts she was performing.

The Board acknowledged the safety concerns about riding on trolleys but considered in this instance, the advertisement was highly stylised and was not encouraging or condoning this behaviour and did not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety and did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code."

In the current case, the Panel noted that the fantasy nature of the advertisement and the unrealistic scenario. The Panel considered that the 'tricks' performed by the



billusionist are not unlike what one would see at a circus or magic show, and considered that this advertisement was unlikely to lead to copy-cat behaviour by children.

In the Panel's view the depiction of the billusionist character swallowing a sword and breathing fire was an unrealistic depiction and was not a depiction that would be contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety. The Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaints.

