



Case Report

1	Case Number	0211/10
2	Advertiser	Energy Australia
3	Product	House goods/services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	26/05/2010
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.2 - Violence Other

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement opens with a Coach standing in front of a whiteboard talking passionately about the tactics of the game of soccer and encouraging and revving up the team so they can win. There are the sounds of a cheering crowd in the background. As the camera pulls back, it is revealed that the Coach is surrounded by a group of disinterested children, who do not seem to be paying much attention to the Coach's words of encouragement. The following words then appear: "Coach Allen wastes energy explaining the finer points of the game."

THE COMPLAINT

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

I find the adverts. very offensive as the coach is depicted as yelling/ harassing little kids who are shown to be totally uninterested/ not able to understand/ in what he is going on about. This epitomises all that junior sport is trying to get rig of eg. coaches relatives families friends spectators yelling at little kids at sporting events. As you would be aware there have been a number of serious offences committed as a result of the yelling confrontations between adults through to brawls at junion sport. I believe it depicts the coach as seriously harassing the little kids which is totally unacceptable in my view.

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 correspondence relating to a complaint that you have received in relation to one of our television commercials. The commercial in question features a passionate soccer coach providing direction and encouragement to a children's soccer team on how to win their match ("Coach Allen")

The nature of the complaint relates to the fact that the Coach's manner and raised voice in encouraging the children's soccer team could constitute harassment of children.

The commercial is one of the components of our current "Wastes Energy, Saves Energy" brand campaign. The intention behind the campaign is to depict the different ways that consumers waste physical energy and juxtapose this with the ways in which EnergyAustralia can help consumers save electrical energy (i.e. be energy efficient). In the case of the commercial in question, the Coach is depicted as wasting his energy in explaining the game of soccer to his young team, as the team is completely disinterested.

EnergyAustralia recognises that harassment of children at junior sport is an important issue. However, we are strongly of the view that the commercial does not convey this message, nor does it contravene Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.

The Coach is depicted as passionate and enthusiastic about the game of soccer and his team. In no way is the Coach malicious, harmful or derogatory to the children in the soccer team; in fact he is celebratory and encouraging. The expressions on the faces of the children when the Coach is explaining how to play are not of fear, but rather of boredom and nonchalance. Furthermore, it should be noted that when the children run off to participate in the game, it is clearly evident from their expressions that they are happy and smiling. In addition, at the end of the commercial, the Coach clearly congratulates the team on how they performed – this underlines the warmth and passion of the Coach.

It should be noted that there is a second television commercial where the Coach directs the kids during play on the soccer field – again, this is done in a passionate, enthusiastic manner, with no harmful intention. At the end of this second commercial, the children run up to the Coach and are congratulated warmly on their efforts.

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 depicted bullying and harassment in the junior sporting arena. The Board takes these issues very seriously and reviewed the advertisement under Section 2.2 of the Code which deals with the portrayal of violence.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser response.

The Board noted the advertisement is part of the 'Wastes Energy, Saves Energy' campaign and noted the wasting energy juxtaposition used to convey the different ways consumers and

as depicted in the advertisement, the coach, waste energy. The Board also noted the advertisement was attempting to be humorous in its depiction of the coach's desire to win the game, accompanied by the recording of a cheering crowd at a major event and the children seemingly uninterested and oblivious to what the coach was shouting about.

The Board considered that the children were not physically harmed in any way, that the coach congratulated the players at the end of the match and that, in this instance, the advertisement was not representative of bullying or harassment on the sports field. The Board determined that the advertisement did not portray violence and that it did not therefore breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

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