



Case Report

1	Case Number	0219/15
2	Advertiser	Department of Health and Ageing
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	10/06/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress
- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children
- 2.3 - Violence Violence
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is introduced and narrated by Dr Stephen Priestley, Director of Emergency Medicine, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, who identifies the serious and highly negative outcomes of using 'ice' across a range of scenarios. These are depicted in four scenes:

- a) Loss of sleep: A young man in an office is struggling to concentrate and loses his temper with a colleague.
- b) Aggression: A mother and son are arguing in the kitchen after he takes money from her wallet. He knocks his mother to the ground as a young girl, who could be his daughter, looks on.
- c) Formication: A girl is sitting in her room picking at her arm.
- d) Psychosis: A young man is escorted into the emergency department of a regional hospital. He snaps and attacks the orderly and police. Security run to help and the man is wrestled to the floor.

THE COMPLAINT

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

By gouging at her skin deeply it depicted self harm, which can be incredibly triggering for those recovering from self harm issues. Formication, the feeling of bugs under your skin, is also a very serious medical condition, frequently experienced by recovering addicts, hypochondriacs, and numerous other medical situations. And while it can be managed, having it presented both audibly and visually can worsen the symptoms. It is a horrific ad to watch for those struggling with mental illness.

I do not object to the content of the advertisement, I object to the time that it was played. I object to the fact that it was shown during a children's movie that I allowed my 8 year old to stay up and watch as a treat. I understand that it was a night time program but it was SHREK! I did not expect to have to explain what Ice was to my son, nor deal with his anxiety worrying about encountering an ice addict in our lives.

*It's too violent for children to watch every time the TV channels go to a break
Please stop playing it!!!!!!!!!!!!*

A social media campaign addressing the dangers of ice during the Eurovision Song Contest. The contents were dreadful. Every program on free to air has to inform an audience beforehand, if it contains drug use and violence. This ad manages domestic violence, drug use, assault in a matter of seconds with little warning. Whoever commissioned this ad was a bloody idiot. moreover, what were the advertisers expecting the audience to do? Shocking for the sake of shocking. Pointless, arrogant, ignorant. Has me siding with the crack dealers, that's how pissed off I am.

I don't want to be subjected to such a violent and distressing ad while watching TV. If this type of violence was on a TV show there would be series of warnings prior to program. Children viewing this ad would be shocked and frightened. The target audience for this ad would surely be less than 1% of the entire population of Australia so why should all of us have to view a graphic representation of a Son smashing his Mum in the face, or a Man violently head-butting a doctor. Yes, the drug ICE is bad but so is murder or rape and we don't have graphic representations of these acts being broadcasted on advertisements to unsuspecting viewers. This ad should be taken off TV or at the very least have a graphic warning.

Some of the imagery used in the advertisement is disgusting and disturbing and should not be shown on tv, especially not without some sort of warning prior to being aired.

During the ad, while going through the affects ice has, they explained that some people tend to scratch at their skin, they then proceeded to show a segment of someone currently doing that to themselves.

I found the rest of the ad fine, but after seeing that part I had to leave the room.

*Very graphic and violent I think that it would be scary for children who could be still up and I always handle watching it either makes my skin crawl.
I understand it is a serious issue but I don't think it should be on TV.*

It's not a deferent for an ex user it's a trigger. I'm finding it difficult to keep to sobriety when triggers are on the tv.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

I refer to your letter regarding complaints received in relation to the 'ice destroys lives' television advertisement aired as part of the National Drugs Campaign launched on Sunday 10 May 2015.

Description of the advertisement

The 45 second television advertisement aims to raise awareness of the harms of 'ice' amongst high risk young people, encourage parents to talk with their children and increase the likelihood of young people avoiding the drug. The harms have been verified by experts.

Since 2010 usage of crystal methamphetamine or 'ice' has increased to become the main form of methamphetamine used in Australia. The 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that among meth/amphetamine users, the use of ice more than doubled, from 22% in 2010 to 50% in 2013.

With the rapid growth of the methamphetamine problem across cities, regional and remote communities and the harms methamphetamine poses to the individual and the community, the Australian Crime Commission assesses that methamphetamine, and in particular crystal methamphetamine ('ice'), poses the highest risk to the Australian community of all illicit drugs.

'Ice' usage is associated with severe addiction and specific harms including cardiac conditions and stroke, seizures, depression and self-harm, insomnia, aggression and psychotic episodes which can manifest in various ways including paranoia and tactile hallucinations such as 'formication' where the individual imagines small insects crawling on or under the skin. Users are also at greater risk of physical harms due to misadventure such as motor vehicle accidents.

Concept testing research among 'ice' users found that the possible health and social harms depicted in the advertisement were highly credible, gave an honest portrayal of the impact of ice, and reflected their own experiences. In many cases, users believed advertising about the harms of ice is a positive step for the Government to take to target the population at large.

The advertisement is introduced and narrated by Dr Stephen Priestley, Director of Emergency Medicine, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, who identifies the serious and highly negative outcomes of using 'ice' across a range of scenarios. These are depicted in four scenes:

- a) *Loss of sleep: A young man in an office is struggling to concentrate and loses his*

temper with a colleague.

b) *Aggression: A mother and son are arguing in the kitchen after he takes money from her wallet. He knocks his mother to the ground as a young girl, who could be his daughter, looks on.*

c) *Formication: A girl is sitting in her room picking at her arm.*

d) *Psychosis: A young man is escorted into the emergency department of a regional hospital. He snaps and attacks the orderly and police. Security run to help and the man is wrestled to the floor.*

Comments in relation to the complaint

The Australian Government believes that the National Drugs Campaign advertising material is consistent with the AANA Code of Ethics, particularly in relation to Section 2.

In developing this campaign, due care has been taken to present the facts in a responsible and appropriate manner, having regard to the target audiences nationally for whom the advertising is directed. As well as young people aged 14-17 who are beginning to be exposed to illicit drugs and parents of 14-25 year olds, the target audience includes 18-25 year olds who are at greater risk of using 'ice'.

In selecting media placements for the television advertisement, the Australian Government's master media buying agency, Mitchell and Partners, considered its 'M' classification and intended audience and the appropriate channels. Television targets parents, with online/social and cinema channels used for the younger audiences, given their current media consumption habits.

Given the graphic nature of the advertisement, the Department has ensured that they are being placed after 8.30pm in accordance with their classification requirement. Following receipt of these complaints, the Department has reviewed the television spot schedules and confirmed this is the case.

The development of the campaign was based on current evidence and best practice in relation to reaching parents and young people with an awareness raising message. The depiction of the consequences of using methamphetamine ('ice') in the television advertisement is a realistic portrayal, intended to increase awareness and understanding of the harmful effects of 'ice' use.

The Department's principal medical adviser for Population Health Division, Dr Bernie Towler (a working Emergency Department doctor) and Dr Stephen Priestley provided advice throughout the development of the creative material. The content was also verified by the Department's Drug Strategy Branch.

Accuracy and credibility of specific scenes was also achieved with input from two medical experts involved in the shoot who have extensive experience both as medical professionals and also, importantly, in filming re-enactments of emergency department scenarios.

The on-set adviser was Dr Paul Scott who has broad experience in working in Emergency

Departments and as an Emergency Senior Medical Officer in rural areas. He has extensive experience in creating high fidelity simulations. These simulations have covered almost every field of medicine (including creating scenarios for emergency medicine, anaesthetics, intensive care, GP consultations, hospital out patients, hospital ward, natural disasters, car accidents). This experience has meant that he has developed a keen awareness of the essential components to ensure the appearance of “reality”.

As an Anaesthetic Specialist at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Australia, Dr Scott has been using Simulation Based Education for training a wide variety of medical professionals for the past six years with a special interest in Crisis Resource Management and Error Management.

The on-set nurse was Cleo Bell, a registered nurse in Queensland for 19 years. She is an agency/contract nurse for all the major hospitals in Brisbane and the Gold Coast and has firsthand experience in the realities of what happens when ‘ice’ users come into the Emergency Department. In addition, she has worked extensively in Emergency Trauma Surgery, Vascular Surgery, Cardio Surgery, ENT Surgery, Gynaecology Surgery, Ortho Surgery.

As with all advertising the Department undertakes, this approach was focus-tested prior to development and reviewed by the Independent Communications Committee (ICC) against the Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities (the Guidelines). These Guidelines set out the principles applying to information and advertising campaigns undertaken in Australia, which include that Campaigns should be:

- relevant to government responsibilities;*
- presented in an objective, fair and accessible manner and be designed to meet the objectives of the campaign;*
- objective and not directed at promoting party political interests;*
- justified and undertaken in an efficient, effective and relevant manner.*

The ICC found that the National Drugs Campaign – ‘Ice’ was capable of complying with Principles 1-4.

The Department’s Legal Section reviewed the Campaign and found that the materials complied with Principle 5 of the Guidelines, including all relevant laws, such as broadcasting and media.

The Secretary of the Department, Martin Bowles, certified that the National Drugs Campaign - ‘Ice’ complies with the Australian Government’s Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities.

The media activity for this phase of the National Drugs Campaign will conclude on 30 June 2015.

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 complainants’ concerns that the advertisement features graphic and violent scenes that are distressing to viewers, especially children.

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 this television advertisement features Dr Stephen Priestley, Director of Emergency Medicine, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, explaining the serious and highly negative outcomes of using ‘ice’ across a range of scenarios. There are four main scenes depicted:

- a) Loss of sleep: A young man in an office is struggling to concentrate and loses his temper with a colleague.
- b) Aggression: A mother and son are arguing in the kitchen after he takes money from her wallet. He knocks his mother to the ground as a young girl, who could be his daughter, looks on.
- c) Formication: A girl is sitting in her room picking at her arm.
- d) Psychosis: A young man is escorted into the emergency department of a regional hospital. He snaps and attacks the orderly and police. Security run to help and the man is wrestled to the floor.

The final screen shot states “ice destroys lives – don’t let it destroy yours.”

The Board noted that there are shorter versions of the advertisement being aired that may show one or several of the scenes depicted above. In this matter, the Board considered the full version of the advertisement which includes all of the scenes detailed above.

The Board noted the advertiser’s response that concept testing research among ‘ice’ users found that the possible health and social harms depicted in the advertisement were highly credible, gave an honest portrayal of the impact of ice, and reflected their own experiences.

The Board likened this advertisement to previously considered community awareness campaigns regarding cancer awareness 0137/14 and 0247/14 and 0066/15.

Consistently throughout those cases, the Board considered, that the occasionally disturbing images are relevant to the important public health and safety message that the advertisements are attempting to convey.

Similarly in the current case, and considering the ‘M’ classification given by CAD, the Board considered that although there were graphic images in the advertisement, the inclusion of such confronting scenes was justified in the context of the very important public health message the advertisement is promoting.

The Board acknowledged that some members of the community who have been affected by drug use could find the advertisement to be upsetting but considered that the actual content of the advertisement was disturbing but not overly graphic and was relevant to the important community awareness message being communicated regarding the effects of ice use on the body and mind.

Consistent with its previous determinations the Board considered that the advertisement depicted graphic imagery which was justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

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

The Board then 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 Board noted a complainant's concern that viewing the advertisement could be a trigger for rehabilitated drug users.

In the Board's view, the intent of the advertisement was to raise awareness of the negative social and physical aspects of drug use and that this message was intended to reach the broader community in an attempt to deter those who may be considering use and those who may be users alerting them to associated dangers.

The Board noted that the advertisement includes a call to action at the end providing a web address of where to go to get help.

The Board determined that the advertisement promoted an important community awareness message and 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 complaints.