



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

Ad Standards Limited  
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## Case Report

<b>1. Case Number :</b>	<b>0243-20</b>
<b>2. Advertiser :</b>	<b>iSelect</b>
<b>3. Product :</b>	<b>Insurance</b>
<b>4. Type of Advertisement/Media :</b>	<b>TV - Free to Air</b>
<b>5. Date of Determination</b>	<b>26-Aug-2020</b>
<b>6. DETERMINATION :</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.6 Health and Safety

### DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features an animated woman in the dark attempting to light a match. She finally gets it lit, and her hair catches on fire. She screams, drops the match and runs around. She falls to her knees and grabs an open can of tuna, pouring liquid over her head to extinguish the flames. The lights then come on to reveal her on the ground in a dishevelled room with a large pile of tuna cans on the floor.

A man with a baby stands to the side looking at her in surprise. The baby's dummy falls out as it too looks surprised and the man drops the bag of groceries he was holding.

The voice over to the advertisement states, "Household bills keep going up. You could save money by living in the dark, growing out your hair, wearing seven layers, and surviving on a diet of canned tuna. Or just call iSelect and we could help you save money on health, car, home and contents insurance, internet and energy bills. Now's the time to compare, select and save with iSelect on 13 19 20."

At the end of the advertisement details of the business are shown on an orange background. An animated magician character makes the words 'Compare.' 'Select.' and 'Save'. appear on screen, the magician appearing to use his mind to make the words magically appear, before floating into the air.



## **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*The example of animation is inappropriate with someone portrayed as setting fire to their hair. Lighting matches. Children watch this program and it's unacceptable*

*Please find below why I, my family and friends and fellow front line workers are offended by this dangerous advertisement.*

*This is my copy of my complaint to I Select Insurance. The advertisement is still running at prime time at 7.00 p.m. week days on Channel 7.*

*My husband has been a full time Firefighter in the Qld Fire & Rescue Service for 33 years and is a qualified FFF Practitioner (Fight Fire Fascination). This is a Programme run by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service which is a Government endorsed programme to educate and train children who are fire lighters. i.e. Matches and lighters etc.*

*Your advertisement has raised alarm bells on many levels.*

- 1. It is a colourful cartoon character playing with matches which unfortunately children love.*
- 2. It is on television as if (to a child this is an endorsement to play with matches that your hair will be burnt but, the hair just stays slightly burnt and it is OK it is on TV). It does not display any fire no body burnt no big deal no harm.*
- 3. The worst message is that it is OK to play with matches. Because they do on TV. Children think they will be more careful and wouldn't let their hair catch on fire.*
- 4. The FFF Program is Counselling and to remove all matches, lighters, candles and similar lighting tools from the house. Remove all triggers that give Fire Lighters the urge to re offend.*

*Your add is a perfect trigger for Adults, children and juveniles. It is colourful as I said before, it is inviting and an irresistible temptation when presented in such a fun luring way to a Fire Lighter.*

*Please take this email seriously. You are welcome to send my email further if you feel it will be useful in immediate stoppage of this advertisement. I love your other commercials. Keep it up.*

*I am asking you with earnest to have this dangerous advertisement withdrawn. Yours sincerely*

*The advertisement shows a figure striking a match and setting fire to red curly hair of a child like figure. Then the figure throwing a cup of water over the head to put out the hair on fire. I consider this may entice children to copy the add and play with matches and light hair. In light of COVID 19 with more children at home increased the chances of copying the add.*



## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

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

*This is the third in a series of tongue-in-cheek animated advertisements for iSelect. It should be noted that these commercials are set in an animated world and characterised by exaggeration, as animation so often is. Adults and children alike both understand that animation is more often than not intentionally unrealistic.*

*In terms of the specific complaints, we do not agree with the assertion the advertisement encourages playing with matches or any other unsafe use of fire. No one in the commercial is 'playing with matches' nor is there any inference at any point that anyone is playing with matches.*

*The imagery is of a woman lighting a match in the dark, with the dialogue clearly stating that she is 'living in the dark'. She is therefore lighting a match so that she can see, not for a joke or for fun or for 'play'. The dialogue also mentions that she's 'growing out her hair' to save money, which is why it briefly and unexpectedly catches fire. We believe that the complainant's assertion that the advertisement promotes 'playing with matches' or unsafe use of fire is in no way supported by either the visuals or dialogue of the commercial.*

*Furthermore, while the advertisement does depict an individual 'living in the dark' and lighting a match instead of turning the lights on, the entire premise of the advertisement is advising people to NOT do exactly that, and to instead save on their energy bills.*

*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.*

### *CAD Rating*

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

*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.*



## 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 complainant's concern that the advertisement:

- Is attractive to children
- Suggests that it is okay to play with matches
- Demonstrates unsafe behaviour and may encourage copycat behaviour
- Does not depict negative consequences of unsafe behaviour.

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

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 considered that the intent of the advertisement is to promote calling iSelect in order to save money on household bills, and to highlight what not to do.

The Panel noted that the advertisement is animated and may attract the attention of children.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the woman depicted was not playing with matches and that there was no suggestion that she was playing with matches, rather she was lighting a match because she was in the dark.

While the complainant considers that the advertisement shows no negative consequences of the behaviour depicted, the Panel considered that the depiction of the woman catching her hair on fire, falling over, and causing destruction and mayhem in her house was showing a negative outcome.

The Panel considered that the animated advertisement showcased a highly exaggerated storyline which began with a woman who has a duck in her hair, and ended with the woman using canned tuna to put out a fire on her head.

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 this case, the Panel considered that the animated nature of the advertisement, the unrealistic storyline and the consequences of the woman’s actions meant that this advertisement was unlikely to lead to copy-cat behaviour, including by children.

In the Panel’s view the advertisement’s humorous and exaggerated animated depiction of a woman using a match to see in the dark, including the negative consequences which follow, 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.