



Case Report

1	Case Number	0317/14
2	Advertiser	Suncorp
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	27/08/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Sexual preference

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement shows the crowd supporting a NSW Blues game whilst the voiceover says, "To celebrate the NSW Blues win, GIO is helping you save big on home and car insurance." We then see some Blues players hugging and the voiceover continues with, "We're talking awkward man-hug happy".

THE COMPLAINT

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

The advertisement clearly reinforces/promotes the homophobia that still exists in some small parts of the community. This has a significant detrimental impact on male youth struggling with their sexuality and reinforces that any homosexual activity is not appropriate. The advertisers (client and agency) should be held to account here.

Dear Sir/Madam

I've been watching GIO's TV ad about Home insurance. In the ad they are using a scene from State of Origin where two men on the Blues team are hugging and the voice in the ad are referring to this as "an awkward moment of man-hugging". Australian sport leagues announced this year that they would fight homo phobia.

Why should GIO spread the message that when two men are hugging, it is awkward? It must be a breach of the law against vilification.

I did send a mail to GIO regarding this issue and they apologized if I felt offended. This is not

enough and the ad should be withdrawn.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The campaign in question is a retail 'sale' event for GIO leveraging our sponsorship of the NSW State of Origin rugby league side. Given they won the series against Queensland for the first time in 9 years, GIO developed a 'Celebrating the NSW Blues Win' Sale which featured footage of the players celebrating from the game that clinched the win.

In order to add some fun to the idea, we selected footage of 'over the top' team celebration moments and added fun commentary. The particular footage/voice over 'we're talking awkward man hug happy' is just one of these scenarios and there was certainly no intent to offend in any way.

We don't believe it contravenes any of the Advertising Standards Code of Ethics.

The TV commercial finishes airing on Wednesday 13th August as 'sale' concludes.

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 that the advertisement suggests that two men hugging is awkward and that this is homophobic.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that 'advertisements shall not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted the advertisement features clips of Blues players celebrating a win and that one scene shows a player hugging the coach which the voiceover describes as an 'awkward man hug'.

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement suggests that it is the fact that it is two men hugging that is awkward but considered that the most likely interpretation is that the hug itself is awkward given the size of the player and the fact he is being carried like a child by the coach. The Board noted that there is a scene prior to the player being carried by the coach which depicts two players hugging and considered that the lack of comment on this hug further enforces the idea that it is the style of hug and not the gender of the huggers that is being described as awkward.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way

which discriminates or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of their sexual preference.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.