



Case Report

1	Case Number	0424/12
2	Advertiser	Hasbro Australia Ltd
3	Product	Toys and Games
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	14/11/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

Advertising to Children Code 2.01 Community Standards
2.3 - Violence Violence

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement is a 15 second TV spot focusing on the Transformers: Weaponizers toy ranges. Weaponizers are Transformers robotic action figures that feature pop out weapons that are activated by pulling or moving levers and the advertisement features animated versions of the toys doing battle and firing their weapons whilst the voiceover talks about "maximum destruction".

THE COMPLAINT

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

This advertisement was shown in a timeslot that is traditionally watched by children. The fact that the advertisement was marketing toys confirms this. The advertisement was offensive in its violence with robot-like figures shooting at animated humans with the words, "More destruction." voiced over as apparently these animated people are killed.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

a) In reference to the section of the complaint regarding timeslots:

The TV spot was rated by CAD as suitable for “W” time, which means that it can be broadcast at any time except “P” and “C” programs or adjacent to P or C periods. The complaint in question related to the advertising showing on Network Seven on 29th Sept. A spot list was generated by Seven for all spots that have ran for the Transformers Weaponiser campaign. Network Seven have confirmed that they have run these spots as per its “W” CAD requirements.

Hasbro endeavour on every level to comply with all relevant Australian broadcasting standards.

b) In reference to the section of the complaint regarding the robots shooting at animated humans:

It is very clear that there are no humans represented in this TV spot. All characters are robots and not meant to represent humans in any way. Transformers by nature are robots and this is the way they are represented in the TV spot. Further in reference to the weaponry, the representation of the Transformers Weaponizer and their built-in weaponry is a core part of both the transformation and general robotic play pattern associated with the Transformers story that has been evidenced in our product line and advertisements since its inception in 1984.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children (Kids Code) or Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement presents violence to children in a manner which is offensive and not appropriate.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.1 of the Kids Code. Section 2.1 states, “Advertising or Marketing Communications to Children must not contravene Prevailing Community Standards”.

The Board noted that the advertisement is for Transformers toys and features animated versions of the toys doing battle and firing their weapons whilst the voiceover talks about “maximum destruction”.

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that it is not appropriate to market toys in this manner to children but considered that the toys are based on the popular Transformers cartoon series and that the content of the advertisement is in keeping with the tone of the cartoons.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not present material to children which contravened prevailing community standards and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Kids Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 of the Code 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 the complainant’s concerns about the level of violence used in the advertisement and considered that children are able to distinguish between animated toys based on cartoon characters and real-life violence.

The Board noted the voiceover’s emphasis on weapons and destruction and considered that most members of the community including children would interpret this in the context of a children’s toy.

The Board considered that whilst the advertisement does present or portray violence it does so in a manner which is justifiable in the context of a children’s toy based on a children’s cartoon and that it is not inappropriate for viewing by a broad audience including children.

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

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