



Case Report

1	Case Number	0460/15
2	Advertiser	IMB Bank
3	Product	Finance/Investment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	25/11/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Cruelty to animals

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement uses a range of cartoon characters in the shape of 'i' (representing the i in imb). The voice over talks about low rates and service with justification of the 5-star rating from Canstar. The ad then moves to a fun and light-hearted scene in a home with a father and son having family time playing ping pong and utilising the family dog (who is also an i character) as part of the ball. The ad then moves to a range of other scenes with our i people out and about visiting branches and meeting with mobile lenders. The final scenes involve i characters enjoying life in a range of scenes including in a pool with silly waiters in clothing serving the female character and a couple in a restaurant enjoying a meal. The scenes are designed to be light-hearted and comic in a way to communicate that an IMB home loans means you can concentrate on enjoying other positive things in life such as family time, holidays and dining.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Parent and child playing table tennis with a dog's head and dog running around without a head. I find this very offensive and so do others, particularly children.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

This ad was developed in line with IMB's current creative direction and the use of i cartoon characters to represent the i in IMB brand. All i characters (People) and the family dog don't have a neck to depict the letter i - so this supports that it is not a true to life depiction rather a cartoon scenario.

In no way does the ad promote or support animal cruelty. Whilst the dogs head is used as the ball when the family are playing table tennis, the dog is not distressed and is yelping in a fun manner like playing fetch or a game.

The family are not hurting the dog or inflicting pain to the animal, and are having a good time together. There intentionally is no malice in any of the family members' expressions to support this.

It's not a serious ad and is meant to show a family all having fun together in their dream home.

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 depicts a family playing table tennis using their dog's head as the ball which is offensive.

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 that this television advertisement features cartoon characters including a family who play table tennis using their pet dog's head as the ball.

The Board noted the advertiser's response that all the characters in the advertisement – people and animals – have no necks as they are intended to represent the letter 'I' from IMB, and that when the dad and son play tennis with the dog's head, the dog does not appear to be in distress.

The Board noted that the dog in the advertisement is a cartoon character and considered that the noises the dog makes and the fact its body can be seen running between the dad and son as they hit the 'head' ball across the table is not suggestive of animal cruelty given the fanciful theme of the overall advertisement. The Board acknowledged that cruelty to animals is a serious issue but considered that in the context of a cartoon depiction the content of the advertisement does not present or portray violence and does not encourage members of the community to try and play table tennis with their pet's head.

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.