



## **CASE REPORT**

1. Complaint reference number	119/05
2. Advertiser	Unilever Australasia (Omo)
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 10 May 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

This television advertisement features children playing on a beach. The children are shown to be playing around a tree that has fallen and has been swept up onto the beach. The children are shown to grab various leaves and branches from the tree that has fallen. The children are shown to use the leaves and branches to create the shape of a whale in the sand on the beach. The voiceover states “children think differently about getting their clothes dirty, from today Omo invites you to do the same, because what you see here isn’t kids creating dirty clothes, it’s simply kids creating. That’s why at Omo we believe ‘dirt is good’”.

## **THE COMPLAINT**

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

*“... the advertisement contains two references which are environmentally inappropriate as well as dangerous. The advertisement commences with children climbing onto the face of a sand dune to collect sticks; one child is pulling native grasses out of the dune face. Sand dunes are highly unstable. They are often heavily eroded and the (remaining) vegetation can slip without warning creating the potential for children to be trapped under heavy sand. Secondly, the removal of vegetation is highly undesirable.”*

## **THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE**

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

*“In fact, although this television commercial is set on a beach, there are actually no sand dunes featured in this advertisement. What may have appeared to the consumer as sand dunes, are rocks that the children climb on during the commercial.”*

*“Concern with environmental effects: the child is actually pulling dead branches from a fallen-over tree, which has previously died and has been left lying on the beach.”*

*“Unilever agrees with the importance of child safety and environmental concerns when producing advertising material, and wishes to reassure the consumer that there are no sand dunes, nor native grasses, featured in this advertisement.”*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board acknowledged the comments of the complainant and sympathized with the complainant who had experienced the death of a young relative who was playing on a sand dune when it collapsed.

The Board also noted the advertiser's comments and took into consideration that the advertisement did not depict children removing branches or leaves from a sand dune as suggested by the complainant.

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to health and safety.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.