



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	134/05
2. Advertiser	Coca-Cola South Pacific Pty Ltd
3. Product	Food
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Violence Other – section 2.2 Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 14 June 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The main focus in this television advertisement is the role that music plays in the younger generation. It depicts several short scenes of rock concerts, house parties, young people learning to playing guitar and behaving like rock stars (throwing televisions from high rises into swimming pools). A voiceover states the following: *“Music should make you want to drop out of school and play guitar, and a live show should last a life-time... televisions should take their rightful place at the bottom of hotel swimming pools and, damn right, your parents should disapprove... piercings should not be allowed in the mosh pit... and your favourite song should be played so loud that neighbours you didn’t even know you had ask you to turn it down... that’s music, as it should be”*.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“It’s pressing the false concept that people with any kind of body modification are different, and they should be treated accordingly. Thoughtless discrimination based on a person’s choice of clothing/personal appearance isn’t something we should be instilling in young kids. It paints the picture that people who love rock music are mindless hooligans. It puts forward the idea that kids aren’t sensible members of society. It portrays musicians as mindless rebels. The advertisement paints a picture of musicians being unproductive members of society.”

“The advertisement encourages young people to take their musical instruments to a house and to make as much noise as they can. Coca Cola is encouraging what is, as far as I am aware, illegal behavior.”

“The reason for my complaint is that it encourages inconsiderate behaviour. I believe this sends out an inappropriate message to young, impressionable persons. It ridicules civility, good neighbourliness and consideration for others.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“The current Coca-Cola ‘Music. As it should be’ TVC has been designed to appeal to a teen audience, who are at a stage where they are having their first music experiences. To this end, it plays on some well known ‘music’ clichés in a light hearted way, to bring to life the quintessential music experience in Australia.”

“With regard to the portrayal of musicians in the TVC, this is intended to be respectful of this group and the contribution they make to the music industry in Australia .”

“The advertisement is not intended to cause offence to any person or groups of people. Furthermore, we are not encouraging or condoning discrimination against musicians, young people or in fact any group.”

“We certainly don’t condone behaviour which disturbs other people. The manner in which these events have been designed to operate will demonstrate that music can be enjoyed with passion and yet in a manner that is sensitive and considerate to those in the neighbourhood. The TVC is executed with sensitivity to the audience and the relevant program time zone, and accordingly is not a breach of the Code of Ethics.”

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board considered that the depictions in the advertisement represented a fantasy scenario. The Board noted that the focus of the advertisement was the young peoples’ exuberant enjoyment of music and not mindless destruction of property or the ill-treatment of neighbours.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not discriminate against those people who wear body piercings, rather that it was addressed as a safety issue in the advertisement. The Board further considered that the advertisement did not discriminate against young people or musicians.

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to health and safety, violence, or the portrayal of people (age).

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