



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	148/00
2. Advertiser	McDonald's Aust Ltd (Big Mac)
3. Product	Restaurants
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 9 May 2000
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement portrays, split-screen, two young men, two young women and another two young men arranging by phone to meet at the Rocky Beach house on Saturday. The caption, 'rocky beach.com.au', appears on-screen following each of the three conversations. The scene changes to a house at Rocky Beach on a stormy, rainy night, where the group is playing with a Ouija board. One of the group, a young man, sits alone eating a burger. The letters 'camgid' are picked from the board. When the group sees that these letters represent a reverse image of 'big mac', lightning strikes, lights are extinguished and a window opens and shuts in the wind. The caption, 'to be continued. rocky beach.com.au', appears on-screen.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainants made regarding this advertisement included the following:

'For many years, it has been known that experimentation with ouija boards and other areas of the occult has resulted in psychiatric problems for those who participate, as well as enormous stress in the families of those involved.'

'This is not a fun pastime as you have portrayed, but a very real link with the spirit world, with often very evil and dire consequences.'

'Strong documentation exists that shows the detrimental effect that this has had on emotional, psychological and spiritual sides of people. This is only compounded when it comes to our impressionable youth.'

'As Christians we find it most offensive, and disturbing that this be allowed.'

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ('the Board') considered whether this advertisement breached Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics ('the Code').

The Board, while appreciating the complainants' personal points of view, felt that the material depicted within the advertisement did not constitute discrimination or vilification; neither did it contravene prevailing community standards on health and safety. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the Code on these or any other grounds and, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.