



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	151/98
2. Advertiser	SMS Consulting Group Pty Ltd (Strategic Management Sciences)
3. Product	Employment
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 October 1998
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The print advertisement is a photograph of a little girl. Superimposed on the photograph is a box containing the words, 'I'm planning a career as a consultant with SMS (like my dad).' Alongside the photograph is a block of text, including the following words, 'Remember when little girls wanted to be nurses?... Nowadays smart parents should be encouraging their children to pursue a professional career in information technology consulting...'

THE COMPLAINT

Comments the complainants made about the advertisement included:

'There is nothing wrong with little girls, or boys taking up nursing as a profession which involves much study and continuing education... I am outraged that an ad like this discriminating against nurses was allowed to be published...'

'As nurses we are offended by the implications of the advertisement, namely,

- 1. That nursing appeals only to "little girls".*
- 2. That smart parents should not support their child's choice of career in nursing.*
- 3. That nursing is not a professional career choice.*
- 4. That nurses are not mature, intelligent hardworking and committed.*

Nursing is a highly specialised professional career choice with post graduate qualifications and continual education required for employment in all areas..... We do not appreciate our profession being undermined as we feel is the case by (this) advertisement...'

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board determined that the advertisement did not go so far as to constitute discrimination and/or vilification and accordingly did not breach the Code. The Board dismissed the complaint. Board members noted that while they could understand that the advertisement may reasonably be interpreted by some as discriminating against a sector of the community, it could also be interpreted as holding out and encouraging a broad range of opportunities to women.