



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	163/05
2. Advertiser	McDonalds Aust Ltd (Cheeseburger)
3. Product	Food
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1 Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Sunday, 12 June 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement consists of a number of cartoon images that appear like flash cards to the viewer. As the advertisement continues, the rate at which the flash cards change increases in pace. The speed of the “music box” like soundtrack increases with the speed at which the flash cards change. The first few flash cards are designed to represent a period in a young girl’s life. Those flash cards include images of dolls, doll houses and ballet dancers. As the speed of the flash cards increases, the images represent a later stage in a girl’s life by depicting: lipstick; earrings; mascara; push-up bras; different types of underwear (including G-strings) and different types of shoes. The final flash card image is of a female character with the word “*Botox*” written underneath. Text on the screen reads “*Life’s complicated enough.*” The final image shows a completed McDonald’s Cheeseburger. The word: “*Simple*” appears on the screen followed by the McDonald’s logo.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“... I felt outraged as they seem to be deliberately targeting a VERY VERY young female audience, reinforcing that it’s part of life that they should be worrying about whether to wear g-strings or get ‘botoxed’! Not only are they reinforcing a disturbing self-image distortion and dissatisfaction, they are offering as a remedy something that is not healthy and more likely to produce a self-image that one would be unhappy with.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“The advertisement is one part of a campaign produced to contrast the speed and complexity of life as one grows older with a simple food product, in this case, the Cheeseburger.”

“... the TVC is light-hearted and employs a storybook approach to achieve the light-hearted approach. It was never McDonald’s intention to cause offence to any group of people given the type of approach employed. In fact, to attract a certain demographic, the TVC was specifically placed to be viewed by adults.”

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board was of the view that the advertisement constituted a satirical comment on the number of

choices that are available to people as they grow older, stating that life had become “complicated enough”. The Board noted that the advertisement did not in any way endorse or promote the use of Botox nor did the Board consider that the advertisement suggested to young women that they should be concerned about which underwear to wear or what cosmetic work to undertake.

The Board was of the view that in the context of prevailing community standards the majority of people would not find this advertisement offensive.

The Board found that the advertisement did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to health and safety, nor did it contravene the provisions of the Code relating to the portrayal of people (sex).

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