



## **CASE REPORT**

1. Complaint reference number	165/98
2. Advertiser	Telegroup Network Services Pty Ltd
3. Product	Telecommunications
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 October 1998
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

The advertisement employs the Mickey Spillane/Secret agent genre. The central character, ‘Agent Hunter’ having introduced himself and flashed his badge proceeds to talk about the ‘telecommunications jungle out there...’ While he is talking he is discarding a number of sheets of paper (that he has been holding in his hands) ‘There is a phone company that does away with all that rubbish...’ he says, and at this point the advertisement shows him lighting a match and tossing the match into the wastepaper bin where the papers (he previously discarded) are shown catching fire. catch alight. The advertisement ends with a close up of Agent Hunter saying, ‘Telegroup, one low rate...all day every day, think about it...’

## **THE COMPLAINT**

Comments the complainants made about the advertisement included:

*‘I feel very strong in my views about this having spent a lot of time in my job teaching young children not to play with matches. Having attended my first fatality where three young children died in a house fire where a six year old playing with matches set fire to the bedroom...As adults we need to more wary of what young children view...’*

*‘Having viewed the advertisement myself I am moved to write to you on behalf of the SA Metropolitan Fire Service to protest about the message that this advertisement is sending to the impressionable minds of young children...Australian fire services fight a constant battle to decrease the incidence of juvenile fire setting which has a high cost in terms of property damage and lives lost each year. The message, “It is fun to set fire to papers in a waste paper basket” is, to say the least, counter-productive to our efforts.’*

## **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 depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety, did not breach the Code and dismissed the complaint. Members of the Board noted in passing that the advertisement’s message could not realistically be construed as suggesting that ‘it is fun to set fire to papers in a waste paper basket.’