



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	187/06
2. Advertiser	Unilever Australasia (Continental Cup-A-Soup - cat)
3. Product	Food & Beverages
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Violence Cruelty to animals – section 2.2 Health and safety – section 2.6 Other - Causes alarm and distress to children
6. Date of determination	Thursday, 13 July 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts a tired woman in her kitchen distractedly putting her groceries away as a ginger cat watches her. The woman unpacks a ham but instead of putting it in the fridge, she strokes it and places it in the cat's basket. She then picks up the cat and starts to put it into the freezer – we do not see the woman close the freezer door. We then see the woman stirring a cup of soup with the ham sitting on her lap and the cat lying on the floor next to the chair. She seems to suddenly recall doing something with the cat, she looks down to her feet and is relieved to see the cat sitting happily at her feet.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I feel this ad is advertising CRUELTY TO ANIMALS which is totally unacceptable. (complainant's capitalisation)

There is enough animal cruelty about without having ads like this pushed in your face.

Insulting to women and anyone with mental illness.

Although an attempt at humour this act constitutes a health & safety risk with possible copycat persons thinking it may be funny to place a cat in a freezer. What's even more concerning is if this is taken a step further and a small child were to be placed in a freezer.

It causes alarm or distress to children. It causes alarm and distress to adults that care about animals. It depicts violence...it breaches health and safety (welfare) of the cat

...putting ideas in children's minds and also people who are cruel to animals

I was outraged and felt ill

...impressionable little children don't need to see adults doing stupid things like that.

There is no excuse for giving some teenager or idiot the idea.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The tone and intonation of the voiceover and dream-like quality of the background music all contribute towards the experience of an unreal moment around 3.30pm . The Cat TVC is intended to be light-hearted and tongue-in-cheek. It is just one humorous and exaggerated example of what could happen during a lapse in concentration.

At no stage during the Cat TVC is any cruelty inflicted on the cat.

The G classification provides that the TVCs may not be aired while children's programs are being shown.

We do not consider that the Cat TVC portrays irresponsible behaviour towards cats, is offensive towards women or creates the wrong impression in the minds of children.

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 depiction of a woman making simple mistakes while at a 'tired' point in the afternoon was not discriminatory against women or people with a mental illness. The Board considered that the advertisement was a humorous portrayal of a person needing some nourishment in the afternoon.

The Board noted the complainants' concern about the depiction of the woman putting the cat into the open freezer. The Board noted the advertiser's response that the cat was not harmed in the advertisement and that there was thus no actual cruelty to the animal depicted. The Board noted that the advertisement does not show the cat being shut into the freezer. The Board did not consider that this depiction was one encouraging or condoning cruelty to animals.

The Board noted that the advertisement is not shown during programming for young children.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.