



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	193/00
2. Advertiser	Cairns International Hotel
3. Product	Travel
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 11 July 2000
7. DETERMINATION	Upheld – discontinued or modified

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The print advertisement depicts a sign containing the words, ‘Convention for Schizophrenia. This Way (an arrow points right). (An arrow points left) And this Way’. Underneath is the caption, ‘Our functions cater for your every need’, followed by the advertiser’s logo and contact details.

THE COMPLAINT

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

‘I am the manager of a commonwealth funded employment service which specialise (sic) in assisting people with mental health conditions find and maintain employment. Many of our clients have schizophrenia and have found this advertising extremely insensitive and offensive as it infers to the myth of “Split personality” which is so untrue (sic).’

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 determined that the advertisement constituted vilification of a section of the community on account of its disability and, accordingly, breached Section 2.1 of the Code. The Board upheld the complaint on this basis.

Section 2.1 of the Code provides that:

‘Advertisements shall not portray people in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief.’

In making this determination, the Board considered that the advertisement portrayed a negative and inaccurate stereotype of schizophrenia, unleavened by a broader humorous context, and that mental illness should not in any way be denigrated within the community. The Board commended the advertiser for withdrawing the advertisement and apologising to complainants.

ADVERTISER’S STATEMENT

‘It was an oversight on the Hotel’s part that the advertisement in question was approved and allowed to go to print. It was published only once. Upon learning of the reaction to it, we immediately withdrew it from publication. We have apologised to those complainants who contacted us directly.

Please be assured that there will be no further publication of this type of advertisement. The Cairns International Hotel would not, knowingly, advertise any material which could cause offence to any

section of the community.'