



## **CASE REPORT**

1. Complaint reference number	200/07
2. Advertiser	The Blind Factory
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	Radio
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Disability – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 10 July 2007
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

This radio advertisement is set in a psychiatrist's office where the doctor tells his patient "Now I'm going to try some shock therapy. Whenever you say The Blind Factory, I'm going to give you an electric shock.... I hope I've got this thing wired up properly. Now what do you think of when I say window?" The patient replies "The Blind Factory" to which the doctor replies "Wrong answer" followed by the sound of an electrical zap and the doctor crying "Aaarrgg..... it's backfired on me. For goodness sake, get me an ambulance." As the patient replies "Call 97 20 80 40" the doctor shouts "No, an ambulance, that's The Blind Factory" to the sound of another electrical zap. As the patient repeats "The Blind Factory" the doctor is zapped again, followed by the sound of a thud on the floor.

## **THE COMPLAINT**

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

*The ad is making fun of mental illness and perpetuating a stigma given to ECT. It goes against the government's campaign to improve public perception of mental illness and could deter some people from seeking treatment. Mental illness is not a subject for jokes.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*It has never been our intention to make fun of any profession or institution, only to get across the message that in any situation you can rely on The Blind Factory, and that by ringing 9720-8040 you will get the best professional assistance to select your blinds.*

*We have discussed this issue in particular with the representatives of the five radio stations we advertise with, and all consider that a Code of Ethics breach was not committed.*

*Please find attached the advertisement (audio and script) together with agency opinion and support from Southern Cross Broadcasting. I trust that we have clarified our direction and that the attached supporting evidence shows our intentions to be ingenuous.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

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

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement stigmatises or makes fun of mental

illness and may deter sufferers from seeking treatment. The Board listened to the advertisement. The Board considered that the advertisement was intended to be humorous but in doing so made no reference (express or implied) to people suffering from mental illness. The Board considered that no reasonable members of the community would associate the advertisement with treatment for mental illness. The Board considered that sufferers of mental illness would be unlikely to be offended by the advertisement and that the advertisement did not vilify or discriminate against a group of people on account of illness.

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