



## CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 224/05   |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Ford Motor Company Australia Ltd (Rugby Union Sponsorship) |
| 3. Product                    | Other  |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | TV   |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1        |
| 6. Date of determination      | Tuesday, 9 August 2005                                     |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Dismissed  |

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement is set inside a train carriage. A young man wearing a Wallabies rugby jersey sits down and is soon joined by two young girls who sit on either side of him. One is wearing a Wallabies jersey, the other a Wallabies scarf. It is clear they are going to watch a rugby game. As the girls sit down, the man wraps his arm around the girl sitting on his right. The words: “*The Try*” appear in black bold font on the screen. The girl is surprised and turns around to slap the man in the face. At this point the words: “*The Penalty*” appear above the man’s head. Not phased by his unsuccessful attempt, the man puts his arm around the girl on his left. As he does so, the words: “*The Conversion*” appear above his head.

The final scene in the advertisement depicts a man holding a rugby ball that has the words: “*Destination Rugby*” (together with the Ford logo) imprinted on it.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*“I found the idea of “conversion” inappropriate and offensive when obviously meant to refer to a change of preferences between a stereotypically attractive girl and a less attractive girl. I am a female rugby fan, and this kind of treatment of women, even in a jokey, blokey kind of way, is sexist and offensive to women.”*

## THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

*“... We do not believe that the “Destination Rugby” television commercial portrays any of the characters in a way which discriminates against or vilifies them on account of their appearance or gender.”*

*“As you will see from both the script and footage, the television commercial uses rugby union terms to portray a situation amongst friends who are travelling on a train to an Australian rugby match. The use of the word “conversion” simply refers to the change from one female friend to the other. It was not intended to imply that one was less attractive than the other and it is our view that both females featured in the television commercial are similarly attractive...”*

## 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 female characters in the advertisement were equally attractive and that the male character was not “converting” from a more attractive to a less attractive woman.

The Board further considered that the actions depicted in the advertisement were not aggressive and, given the obvious rugby references, considered that the majority of people would find this advertisement humorous rather than offensive.

The Board found that the depiction did not 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.