



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 233/09 |
| 2. Advertiser | AFL |
| 3. Product | Leisure & Sport |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Violence Cruelty to animals – section 2.2 |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 8 July 2009 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement for the AFL shows AFL players competing very strongly and successfully against a range of other world sporting activities including Ice Hockey, Bull Fighting, Endurance Car Racing and Soccer. The last frame of the advertisement has a graphic reading “In a league of its own – AFL” on a red background.

THE COMPLAINT

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

At one point, the players join a bullfight. Bullfighting is a despicably cruel form of animal torture and abuse in the name of entertainment. I accept that the bull in the advert is not showing any signs of injury (although it will be tortured to death once the fight starts), but bull fighting should not be glamorised by being shown with popular and high profile footie players. Bull fighting is not even shown on television in Spain - why is Australia showing it? I am appalled at this connection between animal cruelty and the glamorous world of sport.

Advertisements with footage of bullfighting are offensive and promote a practise that is illegal in this country. This portion of the advertisement should be amended and removed.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The world's greatest sporting and physical pursuits was our starting point for the 2009 AFL season campaign "In a League of its Own". We wanted to challenge the world of sport and show that AFL footballers were stronger, harder, and could go higher and faster than any other athlete, animal or vehicle in the sporting world.

This brought us to the world stages of South American Soccer, Super Bowl Grid Iron, Happy Valley Hong Kong Horse Racing, Eastern Block Europe Hockey, Las Vegas Boxing, Dakar Endurance Car Racing and Pamplona Running of the Bulls. Running of the Bulls was selected as one of our sporting pursuits to showcase the contest between man and beast. A foot/hoof race concluding in the grand arena -showing that both AFL Player and bull had made it home but that the final test was still to be played out, who was more agile with spring of step and the speed to accelerate away from the confrontation. As you can appreciate the AFL player was always going to win this battle in this particular ad!!

No animal was harmed during the filming of this TVC in fact we had professional animal wranglers and a fulltime animal welfare officer for the duration of filming. At no stage during the

TVC is the animal harmed to the contrary he is paraded as a proud and strong beast that owns the arena and demands respect from our footballer. It's unfair that these two complaints should taint what is a powerful piece of communication for a brand which has no history of breaching the advertising code.

Anecdotally and from written reviews online we have received great feedback on this ad and its message about our brand. Journalists have written numerous stories with no mention of the barbarity that our complainants refer to.

We apologise to the complainants if their take out was AFL glorifying bull fighting, this was never our intention and we hope that with this new frame of reference they can once again enjoy our TVC as the rest of the viewing public does.

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 complainants concerns that the advertisement depicts and glorifies bullfighting.

The Board noted that bullfighting is not undertaken in Australia but that it is an activity undertaken in some other parts of the world. The Board noted that the advertisement depicts a number of international activities with footballer interaction. The Board noted that one part of the advertisement shows three footballers and a bull in an arena. The Board noted that there is no depiction of any harm being done to the Bull and in fact only depicts one footballer running away from the bull. The Board agreed that this is a suggestion of bull fighting but that there is no harm shown to the animal. The Board considered that the advertisement glorifies football not any of the other activities shown in the advertisement and that the advertisement does not glorify bullfighting. The Board considered that the advertisement did not depict any violence and did not breach section 2.2 of the Code.

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