



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	244/05
2. Advertiser	Carpet Court
3. Product	Housegoods/service
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Language – use of language – section 2.5
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 September 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The opening scene in this television advertisement depicts the Carpet Court Jester character inside a Carpet Court showroom. The character states: “*You can save a shipload at Carpet Court this month. Yes this month we’ve got a shipload of new carpets going out at unbelievable prices. You will save shiploads...*”. The words “*Shipload Sale*” appear in large, capitalised and bold blue font at the bottom of the screen.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“... It was a thinly veiled reference to the common use of the slang “shitload”... At work and sport I have to tolerate hearing this disgusting phrase, but do I have to be bombarded with it in my own home?...”

“... the fact that they say it so fast makes it sound exactly like ‘shitload’ not ‘ship...load’...”

“... I think it is both inappropriate and very distasteful... This ad should be shown after 9.30pm only and be banned at all other times.”

“... The connotation of the ad is unacceptable and offensive. It is very obvious that they are playing off of the often used phraseology of “shitload” and I do not feel that we should have to listen to this type of vulgarity on free-to-air television at any time of the day.”

“The word ‘SHIPLOAD’ is shown on the screen in bold large letters, while the commercial is screaming out the same word...”

“It is not acceptable to me and I should have the right to watch a pleasant programme on television in my own home without swearing and other bad language coming into my living room.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“Whilst in a very small amount of cases there may be a small minority of the general public who take exception with specific elements of our approach... we contend that the great majority of the Australian public see the “tongue-in-cheek” style of our character for what he is, and take no offence whatsoever; in so doing endorsing the decision of CAD that the advertisement (in its entirety) is suitable for viewing by a general audience.”

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board was of the view that the language employed in this advertisement was clearly audible as “shipload” and that the use of this term was made clear to viewers by placing the words in large, bold capitalised text at the bottom of the screen. The Board acknowledged that the word “shipload” was a reference to the word “shitload”. However, the Board considered that the advertiser had not employed any obscene or offensive language.

The Board considered that in the context of prevailing community standards the majority of people would not find this advertisement offensive. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the provisions of the Code relating to language.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds the Board dismissed the complaint.