



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	278/01
2. Advertiser	Telstra Corporation Ltd (HomeLine Plus)
3. Product	Telecommunications
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 November 2001
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a scene where a young man is reading in a domestic living room. A flash of fire is shown to come from an adjacent kitchen, followed by another young man whose skin is blackened and whose clothes are smoldering. With his cries of pain and patting of burning areas of his body reminiscent of a Maori haka, an announcer's voice says: "Something remind you to phone New Zealand?" The announcement continues to explain a Telstra HomeLine Plus rate of \$1 per 10 minute telephone call to New Zealand.

THE COMPLAINT

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

'(The advertisement) shows a blatant lack of cultural empathy... A lampooning of the haka by a male in 'blackface' is culturally insensitive. This is a spiritually significant 'dance' to Maori... The poking of the tongue is supposedly meant to portray the 'pukana' which is also spiritually and culturally significant to Maori.'

'The portrayal is almost animalistic, with nonsensical grunting and slapping...The haka is a warriors' ritual, and a hallmark of the Maori culture and tradition...Telstra have demeaned it by their portrayal of a grunting, slapping idiot.'

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board considered that most people, including Maori, would see the intended humour in the advertisement. It determined that, within prevailing community standards, the material did not constitute discrimination and/or discrimination as represented in the Code.

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