

CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	333/06
2. Advertiser	Acreis Australia Pty Ltd (paddles)
3. Product	Finance/Investment
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 12 September 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is set in a deserted hospital corridor where a young male cleaner washing the floor suddenly spies a heart defibrillator machine. He approaches the machine, takes the “paddles” in each hand, and switches the machine on. Obviously curious as to how the machine works, he hovers the paddles towards each other, hearing the hum of power emitted, then surreptitiously checking no one is around, holds the paddles as if preparing to place them on his chest. As the image fades, text appears on screen “There are some things you only do once. Paying bills is another.”

THE COMPLAINT

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

The advertisement showed a man with heart shock monitors and attempting to put them onto his heart – TO KILL HIMSELF.

Suicide is the biggest killer in Australia and indeed the world. Any TV station who plays this advert is encouraging people to suicide.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

These advertisements are intended to be a humorous play on words and images and if anything, discourage certain ideas or behaviours by overtly saying that these things are things “you should only do once”.

Matters of taste and humour are subjective; these advertisements are intended to be humorous and our extensive testing revealed that most people found them to be so, or at least recognised that intention.

We do regret that (the complainant) did not see the humour and has taken offence...particularly as it has raised, in her mind, the spectre of suicide. This was in no way our intention. We do not encourage suicide or recommend it and we are surprised and disappointed that someone would interpret our advertisement as “encouraging people to suicide.”

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 that the advertisement suggests that the person is about to place the defibrillator on his own chest. However the Board noted that the advertisement does not actually depict any unsafe behaviour and that the text which follows the images suggests that the behaviour should not be tried. The Board also noted that defibrillators are medical equipment that untrained members of the public are unlikely to have access to – restricted to use by medical professionals in specific environments and situations.

The Board considered that the advertisement does not depict or encourage any violence nor does it depict any material that is contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety.

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