



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	345/04
2. Advertiser	Women's Policy Office WA (Men's Domestic Violence Helpline)
3. Product	Community Awareness
4. Type of advertisement	Radio
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Domestic violence – section 2.2 Language – use of language – section 2.5 Other - Causes alarm and distress to children
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 7 December 2004
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement is one of a series of radio advertisements which depict various scenes of domestic violence between a male and female and uses language such as “bullshit” and “slutty”. The tagline is “You can put an end to domestic violence any time you want. It’s totally your call – we can help you change”. The advertisement then provides details for the Men’s Domestic Violence helpline.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“... The words slutty and bullshit are used. The ad was in prime time children’s listening time when they may be travelling in a car listening to music with parents. I found the language, tone and violence disturbing and do not wish children to hear this.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“The communication challenge was to create immediate subject awareness and set the context (domestic violence) with credibility and believability (ie. not exaggerating scenes of violence beyond the realistic but at the same time not sanitizing the violence and minimizing the experience of victims).”

“Children are NOT a target group for the campaign. Nonetheless, considerable effort was taken to ensure that:

· the take-out messages for the advertisements were clearly directed towards and understood by the primary target group (men) and not by children;

· the ads did not exacerbate the trauma for children already traumatized by domestic violence who may accidentally hear the ads;

· the ads did not make children think that they should call the Helpline themselves, or that they should get their fathers to call the Helpline.”

“This language is used to ensure the advertisements are realistic and credible. This language was decided upon following discussion with practitioners who work with perpetrators of domestic violence.”

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 used was appropriate in the circumstances and the context of the advertisement and its important message.

The Board was of the view that in the context of prevailing community standards, the majority of people would not find this advertisement offensive.

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to language, violence and alarm and distress to children.

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