



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	356/05
2. Advertiser	Virgin Blue Airlines Pty Ltd (Velocity)
3. Product	Finance/Investment
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Other - Causes alarm and distress Other - Social values
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 December 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts a man walking into his kitchen, reading a letter and saying to his wife that finally they have: "... *enough frequent flier points for two tickets to...*". Before the man finishes his sentence, he clutches at his chest and falls forward onto the floor as though he were having a heart attack. His wife looks surprised, then takes the letter and muses: "*Or, one ticket to...*" Then she too falls backwards as though she has had a heart attack. The voiceover says: "*Isn't it time loyalty programs had a bit more velocity – so you could actually get around to enjoying your rewards? Velocity. Rewards you faster.*"

THE COMPLAINT

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

"I was appalled by heart attacks shown to be a comical event."

"The whole advert is appalling, I don't see the funny side of it at all... it's trying to make having a heart attack funny."

"I find this ad both puerile and insensitive. Death is not funny."

"I find this more distasteful than offensive..."

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

"The advertisement is not intended to make fun of heart attacks; it is simply intended to convey a message about the length of time some loyalty programs take to actually reward their members... it is quite common for advertisements (particularly those advertising insurance) and actors and comedians to make comical references to health issues."

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 understood that some viewers may take personal offence to the depiction of people suffering from heart attacks, especially when such events are treated in a comical fashion. The Board took into consideration that some viewers will have personal experience dealing with such traumatic events and sympathised with those viewers.

The Board also took into consideration that the advertiser had used obvious humour to deliver the message to viewers that some loyalty programs take a long time to reward their members. The Board

was of the view that the majority of people would understand this message and would not be offended by the scenes in this advertisement.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the provisions of the Code on any grounds and, accordingly, it dismissed the complaint.