



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 372/99 |
| 2. Advertiser | Uncle Ben's of Australia (Whiskas) |
| 3. Product | Other |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
Other - Miscellaneous |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 7 December 1999 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement consists of various scenes of a young girl playing with a cat as voiceover says 'Ruby's very special because we didn't think she'd make it. Being born four months early, they gave her less than 30% chance of survival. Ruby doesn't talk – she has dyspraxia – and Tom just jumped up when we walked into this pet shop and she put her nose up to the cage and I just thought instantly, yeah, this is the kitten for Ruby. He's just a pal who's here all the time. She's always content when she's with Tom'. The advertisement concludes with an image of a child's painting of a girl with a cat, headed with the words 'Cats are good for you' and the superimposed words 'Proudly brought to you by Whiskas'.

THE COMPLAINT

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

"To promote that giving your dyspraxic child's only real friend and supporter – a cat – Whiskas as thanks, abuses the children, their families friends and their health care providers."

"I feel this particular advert is in very poor taste as they attempt to arouse the sympathy of the audience by focussing on the unfortunate situation of the child rather than the product they are trying to sell."

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board determined that the portrayal of the girl within the advertisement did not constitute discrimination or vilification. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the Code on this or any other ground and, accordingly, dismissed the complaint. The Board noted correspondence from the National President of the Australian Dyspraxia Support Group supporting the advertisement as a means of increasing public awareness of this condition.