



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 380/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Australian Discount Retail Trading Pty Ltd (The Warehouse) |
| 3. Product | Retail |
| 4. Type of advertisement | Print |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Violence Other – section 2.2
Other - Causes alarm and distress |
| 6. Date of determination | Monday, 19 November 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This print catalogue for The Warehouse features Halloween-style products, including "Hanging Decorations" and "Head Hunters" for the garden, comprising shrunken heads with bulging eyes and screaming expression, and simulated blood and flesh hanging from the neck.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

Any three year old child with a band aid fixation understands that if there is blood, you have been cut. My five year old son is learning about bones - here we have a severed spinal cord hanging out of a head. And even more horrific - a stake spiked right through a human head with blood trickling out both wounds. It looks like the person was in a lot of pain...I have (children) who have been instructed by teachers to look in letterbox catalogues and cut and paste products beginning with different letters of the alphabet. I would ask that you put a stop to these violent advertisements so that children don't come across them. Here we have T for torture, S for severed head, D for dead, B for brutality, M for mutilation. This ad is surely a depiction of some "R" rated movie out there - but there is no warning on the front of the catalogue...Could we set some limits and keep dismembered bodies away from the toy sections in shops and out of my letterbox.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We are of the view that the images of the products that were advertised do not breach Section 2.2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics. The images were advertised together with a large range of Halloween products, including masks, costumes and other hanging decorations. Halloween is a widely recognised annual event, where skeletons and zombies, along with pumpkins and witches are common motifs.

ADRT did nothing else but advertise common Halloween products by simply showing images of the products. The advertisement did not in any way present or portray violence. The images depict a highly unrealistic and dramatised skull and zombie, which cannot be associated with real human violence in any way. Even if the advertisement of the products were a presentation or portrayal of violence, the advertisement would have been justified in the context of the product.

Without admission of any liability or wrongdoing we confirm that ADRT will refrain from advertising the products in the future.

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 the complainant's concern about the depiction of 'horror' images in a catalogue. The Board viewed the advertisement and considered that the images were images of products sold as part of the Halloween collection of products. The Board considered that, while the products are meant to convey scary and horror characters, the products are clearly indicated as being halloween and horror themed products and are mostly unrealistic images. The Board noted that this is a catalogue that would be attractive to children but considered that the products were advertised in a manner that was appropriate to the halloween theme and were clearly not realistic or images of people. The Board considered that the advertisement did not breach section 2.2 of the Code.

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