



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	394/03
2. Advertiser	Electronic Arts Inc (Rugby 2004)
3. Product	Toys & Games
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 11 November 2003
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement depicts a man holding a dog on a leash whilst waiting for his wife. He begins fantasizing about rugby and while not shown visually, there is a strong inference that he kicks his dog, imagining it to be a rugby ball.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“Considering the amount of cruelty to animals that occurs in our society and that this product is aimed at predominantly young people I feel that the content of this advertisement is inappropriate and thoughtless.”

“The offensive nature of this ad inferred that dogs could be used as footballs, when abuse of animals is an offence.”

“.... cannot condone an advertising strategy that makes fun of what would most probably be a fatal act on an innocent animal.”

“..... ad trivialises and makes light of cruelty.”

“Children who are easily influenced could become copycats.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“..... the depiction in the commercial is clearly ‘hyper real’, and depicts our characters zoning into their virtual (fantasy) rugby world.”

“..... the ad in question is simply not intended to be a real scene.”

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 majority of the community would see the fantasy element of the advertisement as humorous and not take it literally.

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to violence.

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