



## CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 405/07  |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Recruitment Queensland                              |
| 3. Product                    | Employment  |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | Print   |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1 |
| 6. Date of determination      | Tuesday, 11 December 2007                           |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Dismissed   |

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This internet advertisement depicts a woman in a suit and a man wearing pants, shirt and tie, and looking dishevelled. Both are wearing boxercise gear - gloves and helmets - and the man has his hands on his hips in a defeated manner, as the woman raises her hands in victory and smiles. Text reads "Give your team the competitive edge with assistance from a local registered training organisation who can really train your staff" and details of the services offered.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*For goodness sake, the ad could be shown without the need to show men as a failure. My question is, would the company run the same ad with the roles reversed? I think not. If they wouldn't, then the ad is discriminatory. There are enough boys/men in society committing suicide as it is without the need for companies to deliberately portray men as failures. Boys are failing enmasse as it is in schools hence the need to be more proactive in their survival.*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*The advertisement has no mention to genders.*

*The advertisement personifies the culture of health and fitness of our business for both males and females.*

*Boxercise training as depicted is very much in vogue for fitness routines.*

*The advertisement does not, contrary to the complaint, "deliberately portray men as failures." If any issue concerning any inequality between the sexes is to be inferred (which it ought not be) it would be that the advertisement simply portrays that with good recruitment and training, all members of a workforce may achieve excellence, including those members of the community who have at times, had to overcome adversity to achieve success. That group includes females also.*

*The message portrayed is one of positivity. There is nothing in the text nor the content of the advertisement to suggest discrimination against men.*

*In closing please note that I will choose not to run this advertisement again in the newspaper. Although I would have preferred to offer the voluntary removal of the offending advertisement from all advertising it had already gone to print, prior to this complaint, in a "coffee table*

*presentation" which is to be distributed to local businesses.*

## **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 that the advertisement discriminates against men by showing the woman as the victor.

The Board noted that the advertisement's text is gender neutral and encourages people to use the services of the organiser to 'give your team a competitive edge'. The Board considered that although the man is depicted as the loser in the boxing bout, the advertisement does not mention gender nor does it encourage or suggest that men as a whole are unable to win. The Board considered that the advertisement's depiction of the woman as the victor in a physical bout in which men would usually be considered to be stronger, is consistent with the message of the advertisement about improving performance but is not vilifying of men generally. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach section 2.1 of the Code.

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