



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 444/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Rugby WA |
| 3. Product | Leisure & Sport |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
Discrimination or vilification Age - Section 2.1 |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 16 January 2008 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Upheld – discontinued or modified |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a man in an office surrounded by Rugby memorabilia, and a view of the Sydney skyline seen through the window behind him. He challenges "Hey Emirates Western Force fans. I reckon there's more support in my 12 year old daughter's training bra than in your crowds." In response, Western Force player Scott Fava bursts into the office, swipes the Sydney-siders desk clear, silences him with a look and growls "Save it!" He turns towards the camera and adds "Game!" Footage is shown of a Western Force game with the crowd of fans cheering wildly in excitement and a voiceover encourages "We need you at Subiaco to show the Eastern States how we do it!"

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad refers to something or someone having "less support" than the gent's "12-year-old daughter's training bra." My husband and I felt this was completely inappropriate. We have a 12-year-old daughter and we know that she would have been embarrassed by the ad if she had've heard it - we were cringing on her behalf. I was once a 12-year-old girl dealing with the onset of puberty and referring to a training bra is offensive and insulting. This subject matter is not funny and men referring to it as though it is does nothing for the bad reputation rugby and football players in general have towards women, and now its seems, towards girls. Who writes this stuff? And who deigns to approve it. We all enjoy a funny ad, but only if it doesn't offend any vulnerable section of society, especially children. Woman and girls experience myriad body changes throughout their entire lives and it is not fodder for mainstream ridicule - we deserve more sensitive, respectable treatment.

I find it paedophillic like for a 'father' to be ridiculing his daughter's sexual development to all of Western Australia, particularly as the ad was aimed at men. I do not know if this was an actor with lines or if the person concerned was really talking about his daughter (the latter was certianly the impression of the advert). Either way it is very offensive. Young women are adjusting to enormous changes in their lives at this young age and I would imagine they would be in the viewing audience at this time of the evening. I am appauled that they have made fun of such a sensitive issue and in the process they have sexually exploited a very vulnerable group in our community. I see this in the realm of sexual and child abuse.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

This advertising campaign was developed in 2006 as a result of market research. The campaign asks fans/supporters to 'Save It For The Game', i.e. bring all your emotion and energy and get behind your team. Our research shows that there are a lot of rugby supporters in WA however these people were not always converting to ticket or membership sales. The 2007/2008 campaign was designed to encourage those people to "get off the couch" and show their support for their team.

It was never intended to offend anybody or to discriminate against anybody. RugbyWA sincerely apologises if any offence has been caused.

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 complainants' concern about the inappropriate mention of a '12 year old girl's training bra' in the context of an advertisement for football.

The Board noted that references to puberty per se are not a breach of the Code but that any such references must be made sensitively. The Board considered that the reference 'I reckon there's more support in my 12 year old daughter's training bra than in your crowds.' was in very poor taste in the context of a very macho football advertisement.

The Board considered that this reference was a not untypical use of demeaning comparisons to women (in this case young women) in a sporting context. The Board considered that the reference would be likely to be felt as demeaning to this particular group of young women and would be harmful to their self-esteem.

The Board considered that the use of a reference to a 12 year old girl, her bra and its lack of support or weakness juxtaposed with the macho strength of the football-supporting men did amount to discrimination against young women.

The Board determined that the advertisement breached section 2.1 of the Code in that it discriminated against young women. On this basis the Board upheld the complaints.

ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the determination regarding this advertisement included the following:

RugbyWA has been informed that the Save It For The Game (Sydney) TVC has been seen to be discriminatory against gender and age.

We will be looking to modify our TVC or in the case that this can not be achieved the TVC will be taken off the air. The TVC is not scheduled to be on air again until the end of February.

I will advise whether we modify or pull the ad once a decision has been made.