



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	448/06
2. Advertiser	IAG Insurance (NRMA – feral kids)
3. Product	Insurance
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 14 November 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

There are two television advertisements featuring an NRMA Insurance customer, Dianne, relating her experiences with NRMA.

Dianne mentions that with three small children (acting mischievously and pulling faces in the rear of the car) “we like to make sure that our money goes as far as possible, so I did my research and found that NRMA Insurance gave me the best price and the best coverage.” At the end she holds the youngest child in her arms as the other two boys run around the camera....”Well I have three little feral boys and they keep me on my toes.”

Dianne also relates that as a chartered accountant and a Mum, she researched her options for best value and swapped to NRMA Insurance. “We saved enough for a couple of decent bottles of red which is good stress relief with lots of little kids”. At the end she holds the youngest child in her arms as the other two boys run around the camera.... “Well I have three little feral boys, all under five, and they keep me on my toes.”

THE COMPLAINT

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

I would never refer to my child in such a manner. I am concerned about the message this may send to children who are extremely vulnerable (sic) and precious and do not deserved to be downgraded like this. This gives the impression that it is acceptable to treat children poorly

the advertisement highlights the woman using the saving made on an insurance premium to buy herself wine (with her comment immediately following her discussion of how many children she has, it infers that she really needs a drink and perhaps couldn't afford one otherwise). Secondly, I am appalled that ANY woman would be portrayed referring to her own children as "feral". What do this mother's parenting issues have to do with car insurance? The woman's comment is a put-down of her children, and is at odds with the values I am teaching my children and the standards that many parents are striving to uphold.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In these advertisements we were very conscious of not scripting the stories told by our customers and we simply used their words to convey the message in the ads with a minimal voiceover. We also wanted to show the different personalities of the customers which is why we included comments not directly related to their insurance experience.

The reference the customer makes to her children as feral is in these advertisements delivered in a

light hearted fashion and is in no way intended to be derogatory or to downgrade the children. It is delivered affectionately and is used as an exaggerated way of saying her children are fun and full of life. It is clear in these advertisements that the mother cares for and loves the children.

In one of the executions the customer refers to her savings being enough for 'a couple of decent bottles of red'. As mentioned previously, we did not want to script or influence the words used by the customer and this is the example chosen by the customer to demonstrate the extent of the savings she made with NRMA Insurance. It is an example which a lot of viewers of the ad will be able to associate with.

The reference the customer makes to this wine being good stress relief is once again intended to be humorous and in no way imply improper consumption of alcohol. There is no implication that the customer needs a drink to help her cope with her role as a mother. NRMA Insurance in no way condones the inappropriate consumption of alcohol.

NRMA Insurance places a very high value on its relationships with customers and the community, and is very conscious of the image it portrays in its advertising. We are very conscious of not promoting inappropriate behavior in any way. We will however, take the complainant's concerns into consideration in relation to future advertising projects.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board viewed the advertisement and considered the complainant's comments that the advertisement was offensive on the basis that it vilified children.

The Board considered whether the advertisement breaches section 2.1 of the Code dealing with vilification of sections of the community, in this case, children.

The Board noted the use of the words 'feral kids' and felt that the words were employed in a light-hearted, unscripted fashion to describe the woman's own children, not children in general. While the language is not complementary to the children, the language was used in an affectionate way and was unlikely to cause offence across the broader community

The Board hence determined that the advertisement did not vilify or discriminate against children and therefore did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board also considered whether the reference to the wine was in breach of the Code and determined that a reference to drinking wine was not of itself in breach of any provisions of the Code.

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