



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 452/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Queensland Transport |
| 3. Product | Community Awareness |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Other - Causes alarm and distress |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 16 January 2008 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on film of a young man's body lying dead on the road. Scenes follow of a coffin being lowered into a grave, a woman crying at an accident scene as a sheet is draped over a body lying on the ground, a rescue team putting a bloodied body into an ambulance, and a young man with his leg amputated being helped from his hospital bed. Throughout, a male voiceover is heard to warn "Too many people have died or been injured on our roads recently. That's why police are out in force these holidays. Please drive safely. Don't drink and drive. Wear your seatbelt. Don't drive tired. And please stick to the speed limit. Why? Because enough is enough."

THE COMPLAINT

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

I understand the message and the purpose of these advertisements to shock people with the reality of dangerous driving, speeding etc. My issue was that with no warning, these images came on. While it was screened late at night (obviously to reduce the number of children who could potentially view it), it was still quite graphic. My partner was recently involved in such an accident whereby someone committed suicide by stepping in front of a vehicle, and the ad was sufficient to make her quite upset and distressed.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In 2007 in Queensland, the road toll was 358. This is 23 above the road toll for 2006. We need to do all we can to stem this tragic waste of human life. Road safety campaigns are an essential part of reducing the road toll in Queensland. The advertisement has been on air for the past two years. It has been edited on a number of occasions to shorten the length, and to provide a more generic message to the audience.

The advertisement has been researched and evaluated with the target audience. Generally speaking, research shows that fear-based advertisements are more often recalled than other advertisements. In addition, highly emotional advertisements are effective in changing behaviour if the content is relevant to the target audience.

Research into the Because enough is enough campaign revealed a 70% awareness of the campaign, with 98% agreement that the road toll is a serious issue. Further, 97% said the advertisement reminded them that road safety is a community responsibility, and that we all have a part to play in road safety. These were key objectives for the campaign. Finally, 89% of respondents under the age of 30 years (a key target audience) support the use of more graphic

advertisements in order to gain cut-through.

Road crashes by their very nature lead to unfortunate and often violent consequences. It is difficult to portray a road crash scene without showing blood or other consequences of the crash. The Because enough is enough advertisement shows two to three crash scenes of a more graphic nature which are very short in length. Each of these scenes has been on air in Queensland previously, some since the 2000-01 financial year. The remainder of the advertisement depicts scenes of grief at the roadside, funerals or hospitals. All scenes showing any level of violence are within the context of the setting of the advertisement, and the key message for the campaign which encourages motorists to drive safely.

I note the complainant suggests that a warning is placed prior to the commencement of the advertisement. The warning would reduce the length of the advertisement by several seconds, potentially impacting on our ability to reach consumers with the key message.

We have previously undertaken research to determine the palatability of including a warning in front of graphic advertising in previous market research. The research showed that there was a small vocal minority who were very unsupportive of graphic road safety advertising (approximately 2%). Around half of these respondents said a warning may appease them somewhat; however the advertising would still anger them. Therefore it is unlikely a warning would make any real difference to viewers.

It is important to note that Queensland Transport has not received any complaints about the Because enough is enough advertisement from the 2007 Christmas holiday period to date, possibly because of the already high levels of awareness of the campaign from previous activity. The campaign commenced on 16 December 2007 and will continue until 12 January 2008. The advertisement is only played after 8.30pm, and the schedule is available online for those who may find the advertisement upsetting.

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 agreed that the advertisement was grotesque and suggestive of violence and injury. However the Board considered that the social message of this advertisement relating to the need for people to drive safely was a very high priority. Consistent with previous decisions, the Board determined that a higher level of violent imagery is permissible in advertisements where there is a strong public health or safety message.

The Board noted that this advertisement is shown after 8.30pm, and has a reduced child audience, but that it may still be upsetting to members of the adult audience. The Board accepted that some people, particularly those who have themselves or through their family been involved in such incidents, would find the advertisements upsetting.

However the Board determined that it was important that advertisements such as this can be conveyed in the right setting to the general and target population. The Board determined that the violent image in the advertisement was justified by the important public health and safety message of the advertisement and that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board noted the complainant's suggestion of including a warning in the advertisement and noted also the advertiser's response. The Board accepted the advertiser's view that inclusion of a warning may diminish the message of the advertisement and would be unlikely to have a significant effect on easing the distress caused to some members of the public.

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