



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 479/06 |
| 2. Advertiser | Zodiac Group Australia |
| 3. Product | Housegoods/services |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Violence Other – section 2.2 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 12 December 2006 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a young brother and sister, Jack and Lilly, playing Marco Polo. Jack says “Marco!” and when Lilly doesn’t answer he repeats “Marco?” as she continues to look deadpan at him. Jack looks deflated and gives up. We then see that the children are actually in a bath with their swimming costumes on, looking very bored. Shots are shown of a pool cleaner chugging along in a beautiful blue pool as a male voiceover advises “Get your pool back into shape for summer with Zodiac pool equipment and you and your family can SWIM NOW...PAY LATER”. The scene cuts back to the two children, now astride a huge blow-up dolphin pool float which looks ridiculous in the bath.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I don't like the way the little girl looks at the younger boy. She looks quite meancingly at him and he is clearly intimidated. Then his smile fades and he looks away, almost upset...I didn't like what it represented. Bullying in schools is a huge problem.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

In this case, I think you will find that the complaint is misguided, as the individual has totally misinterpreted the context of the ad.

Our TV advertisement takes a light hearted approach to reminding pool owners to get their pool back in shape for summer. The main actors in the ad are a brother and sister who have resorted to playing “marco polo” (popular kids pool game) because their parents haven’t got their pool ready to swim in.

The younger boy is keen to make the best out of a bad situation. His sister is not impressed and is unwilling to engage with him in this ridiculous game.

I find it very difficult to see how the ad could be interpreted as condoning bullying. In fact, as a father of two small children myself, I would be more concerned about allowing preschool children to be watching shows like Harry Potter than having them view this advertisement.

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 noted the expression on the girl's face. The Board considered that the girl's expression was one of boredom - not of hostility. The Board rejected the notion that the advertisement depicted a menacing expression or depicted bullying, and agreed that the complaint was trivial.

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