



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 500/06 |
| 2. Advertiser | Mattel Pty Ltd (Sensei Shield Blaster) |
| 3. Product | Toys & Games |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Other - Environmental issues |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 12 December 2006 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement shows a sensei standing on a pagoda surrounded by pupils shooting at targets with the Shield Blaster. A male voiceover announces "Behold, the world's most elite water fighting force...highly-trained warriors armed with Shield Blaster...the water blaster that blasts and blocks." The sensei is shown with racks of Shield Blasters and a boy is tries to defend himself with sponge nunchucks, but getting soaked by a Shield Blaster. The voiceover continues "Drench opponents with powerful, non-stop streams. Observe, the shield. Arm yourself against attack. Then blast at will. For in battle there is no honour in wetness." Pupils continue demonstrating shooting, blocking and hand-cranking. A boy sneaks up behind his sensei, who senses his presence and protects himself with a Shield Blaster.

THE COMPLAINT

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

We live in the Riverland of South Australia and at the moment we are in the most severe drought in history. This ad promotes water wastage and I find this rather disturbing when our farmers can't even get enough water to water the fruit which you are going to want to buy shortly. Our farmers are now only allowed to use 60% of their water allocation which is making things very hard. Please stop promoting water wastage in your ad's.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The Shieldblaster is a range of three products which have been on sale in Australia since 2005. In January we committed to TV advertising of four weeks duration (spread over five weeks) to support our retailers and sell through remaining stock in store. As the TV launch date of November 12th got closer we realised that the ongoing water issues experienced in Australia were unlikely to end, and advertising the Shieldblaster range may not have been appropriate in some regions. Despite retailer commitments we decided to cancel all TV advertising for the product. Unfortunately we were already past the deadline for the cancellation of the first two weeks of the campaign, so were only allowed to remove the final two weeks. Once the complaint was received we also asked all TV stations not to use our commercial as "filler", to ensure that the commercial will not be seen again.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board considered the complaint and determined that the complaint was concerned with the nature of the product, ie: a toy that uses water, rather than the advertisement itself. The complainant's real

concern was that it was inappropriate to advertise a product that uses water, in Australia's current drought situation. The Board noted that it is not illegal to sell or use such products and that there is therefore no obstacle to the appropriate advertising of such products. The Board considered that the advertisement did not of itself breach any provisions of the Code.

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