



## **CASE REPORT**

1. Complaint reference number	524/06
2. Advertiser	Australian Institute of Music
3. Product	Education
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 16 January 2007
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

This print advertisement depicts a female office worker wearing a suit, and standing as if daydreaming beside an office water dispenser. At her feet in front of rows of filing cabinets is an image (supposedly of herself) looking emaciated and tortured in a foetal position with hands clawing at its head. Text reads "Don't torture yourself with the wrong career".

Two similar advertisements feature male office workers sitting at a desk in front of a computer and a man at a photocopier, both with images of themselves similar to the woman's, at their feet.

## **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*The image of the woman in the shadows is offensive, the ad actually made me draw breath when I turned to the page it appears - and I've seen a lot of horrid images in my time working as a news journalist. The woman who is naked and fallen in a heap on the floor has been drastically digitally altered to make the affect more shocking - quite obviously the purpose of the ad. However, I find it appalling that in this day and age advertising depicting women in this manner is able to be published at all. In trying to go for the quirky, 'clever' advertising image, the ad's producers have created a picture of an abused woman, used for no social good or purpose, purely the growth of the Australian Institute of Music. An image depicting a woman in that way would be a stretch even for an ad about the horror of domestic violence.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*The idea of this advertising is to dramatise the effect of choosing a career which is "destructive" to your soul. Music is a decision of the heart more than the head and a mistaken career in an office environment would indeed be "metaphorical torture" for the audience we are targeting within these publications.*

*The campaign uses both men and women to symbolise "office workers" with no discriminatory attitude towards any one particular group of people...The depiction of their "soul" is a miniature and distorted version of themselves, as a hypothetical visualisation of their "tortured soul".*

*The campaign in no manner condones violence to women, or indeed men, and no such violence is being shown.*

*The visual is not realistic and we believe that people will not therefore interpret this depiction*

*literally.*

## **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 advertisements and considered whether they breaches Section 2.2 of the Code dealing with violence.

The Board noted the complainant's comments that the images of the emaciated, tortured people ('souls') were offensive.

The Board agreed that some of the images were in poor taste. However the Board noted that in each advertisement, the person on the ground and the person working in the office were intended to be one and the same person. This indicated that the images were metaphorical and clearly intended to figuratively represent the subject's 'soul'. This artistic nature of the representation detracted from any notion of real violence. Hence the Board agreed that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

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