



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	525/06
2. Advertiser	Officeworks Superstores Pty Ltd (Christmas Decorations)
3. Product	Office supplies
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Religion – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 16 January 2007
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is set in a magical animated world where a group of Christmas decorations, including a choir boyangel, Santa and a gnome, sit around a computer monitor and keyboard. The choir boy starts to sing to the tune of "Joy To The World", the Officeworks specials. Then we see a Christmas decorated tree in a home with a gnome who continues the song "From hi-tech cameras, to funky stationery, and lots of MP3s and lots of diaries." The final scene is an animated snowman in an Officeworks warehouse concluding "They do, they do have all your gift needs". A male voiceover closes with "Officeworks is bringing Christmas to you with gifts for a song. So hurry in now."

THE COMPLAINT

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

Changing the lyrics of a religious song that's over 250 years old...this is dim-witted, cheap, commercial, offensive and most importantly lazy creative.

This sacred prayer, taken I believe from the Psalms of David...is well known as a song of praise to God and is sung particularly at Christmas time. To use this music as part of crass commercialism is offensive, shows a lack of sensitivity to the religious beliefs of some and is rooted in ignorance.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We always seek to be sensitive to people's beliefs but at the same time we feel we are perfectly within our rights to tap into the Christmas spirit to promote our stores as a place to go for gift giving.

While we have changed the lyrics of a well-known carol to promote our products, we believe we have done so in a way that is in keeping with the theme and is tasteful. The commercial is focussed around animated Christmas decorations and has a gentle feel that does not vilify or denigrate Christianity or promote discrimination against Christian beliefs.

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 whether it breaches Section 2.1 of the Code

dealing with discrimination and vilification of religious groups.

The Board noted the complainants' various comments about the advertisement. The Board did not agree that a Christmas carol could be based on sacred prayers from Old Testament psalms.

The Board concluded that modification of a Christmas carol of itself did not amount to the vilification of, or discrimination against, religious groups and therefore did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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