



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 54/99 |
| 2. Advertiser | Officeworks Superstores Pty Ltd |
| 3. Product | Retail |
| 4. Type of advertisement | Radio |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Other - Miscellaneous |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 9 March 1999 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The Board considered both a television and radio advertisement in the series.

Television advertisement

Two young children shown sitting together on a lounge. Their script includes:

Boy: 'Lisa and I are pretty disappointed you two.'

Girl: 'You've had a pretty good run over the holidays.'

Boy: 'And now you're spoiling it for yourselves.'

Girl: 'Heaven's above, you haven't even stocked up on binders yet.'

Boy: 'Much less...your fax machine.'

Girl: 'Or a new printer.'

Boy: 'Get down to Officeworks now and sort yourselves out before its too late'. The boy is shown holding up a sign/board saying, 'Back to work.' The advertisement then shows the two children walking out of the front door of the house followed by two reasonably sheepish looking adults in business suits. A male voiceover says, 'Kick start your business year at Officeworks...(followed by other advertiser details).

Radio advertisement

Script includes:

Adult male: 'Oh I don't want to go back to work.'

Adult female: 'Neither do I.'

Young (male) child: 'Moan moan moan that's all I ever hear from you two.'

Adult male: 'But son...'

Young male child: 'Don't "But son" me, have you been to Officeworks yet – For goodness sake you haven't even secured an ergonomic chair let alone Manila folders or a new printer.'

The adults can be heard groaning in the background

Young male child: 'Get down to Officeworks now and sort yourselves out.'

Adult male: 'It's not fair.'

Male voiceover: 'Hurry down to Officeworks now...for back to work savings...'

Young male child: 'Hopeless, the pair of you.'

THE COMPLAINT

Comments some of the complainants made regarding this advertisement included the following:

'I was deeply upset and outraged at the tone of the ad with the extreme rudeness and disrespect of the children towards their parents. I feel that, apart from being offensive to parents, it is a very poor example for our nation's children to copy.'

'In this day and age not all parents can afford to shop as shown in this advertisement. It is portraying to the children that this is the normal way they should be talking to their parents and parents responding by immediately going to the shop and purchasing the products.'

'It isn't humorous. It isn't lighthearted. It assaults the deepest more of all cultures and creeds on our planet – that of filial respect and honour from which emerges dignity. These principles separate us from animals.'

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ('the Board') considered whether these advertisements breach Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics ('the Code').

The Board determined that the advertisements would not offend prevailing community standards and values and did not breach the Code. The Board dismissed the complaint. Board members noted, in passing, the use of parody and the contextual humour of the advertisements.