



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	65/06
2. Advertiser	Target Australia Pty Ltd (last century)
3. Product	Clothing
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 14 March 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is set in a suburban park where young boys and girls are playing. One girl runs to a park bench and is heard to say (to an as yet unseen child) “Kathy, I like you but, you’re just so last century”. We then see another girl sitting on the bench dressed in a 19th century colonial-style dress and mob cap, with wig and powdered makeup, doing needlepoint.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

How dare they assume that someone is not worthy because of their clothing.

This is how people become bullied through ignorance.

...we are in this ridiculous society where girls feel that they need to conform to the way media portray fashion and how they should look and that you are obviously not good enough if you are in last year’s (century’s) clothing.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

The 19th century costume was used to best demonstrate that Target has the latest, up-to-date fashion trends that are available for young children.

Target... is mindful of bullying in today’s society however the commercial was designed to be light-hearted, with tongue in cheek humour.

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 complaints made about this advertisement. The Board noted that in trying to advertise the new range of children’s clothing the advertiser had gone to the extreme of depicting another child in 19th century costume.

The Board considered that the fantasy and exaggeration elements in this advertisement made it unlikely that the message taken from the advertisement would amount to bullying or feelings of low worth by the target audience.

The Board therefore considered that there was no suggestion of bullying or discrimination against children on account of their social status in the advertisement.

The Board noted that were the advertisement to depict a child in ragged old clothing being criticised by its peers, then the Board would be likely to take a different view of the advertisement.

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