



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 76/08 |
| 2. Advertiser | BlueScope Steel (Colorbond - Ghost) |
| 3. Product | Housegoods/Services |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Sexual preference – section 2.1
Health and safety – section 2.6 |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 12 March 2008 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a man wearing pyjamas, lying prone on his back in his driveway, a rolled newspaper nearby. A male neighbour runs to him, concerned, and as he leans over the prone man, the man's ghost rises from the body and starts floating upwards, pausing mid-air to admire his new Colorbond roof. A male voiceover advises "Colorbond. You've made the right choice". The "ghost" smiles up to the sky, then down at his roof, and decides to remain alive for a while longer. Just as the ghost rejoins the man's body, the neighbour begins mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, causing the man to jump up, pushing the neighbour away from him. Both men then stare at each other, wipe their mouths in disgust and exclaim "Ugh!"

THE COMPLAINT

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

The two men pull apart in apparent shock and distaste of a potential homosexual 'kiss'. Viewed at a time that children watch. Children are more susceptible to following suggested media and in this case the suggestion is that two men kissing is either funny (or more implicitly) so shocking that you need to avoid it by throwing yourself away from the encounter in the violent way portrayed in the ad.

The man (who has been resuscitated) and the man performing CPR then begin to make gestures as to imply that the action of touching mouths is disgusting. I believe the depiction of the two men at the end of the ad is objectionable for two reasons; CPR/mouth to mouth is a life-saving action that does save lives. To depict it in this way is to imply that a man should have reservations about performing CPR/mouth to mouth on another man which is a very negative community message. I also object to the depiction of the two men at the end of the ad on the grounds that we have laws in the country preventing discrimination on the grounds of sexuality. The ad implies that the contact the two men have is disgusting. This acts as a homophobic message to the community that is unnecessary and fuels further negative reactions toward gay men and lesbians in the community. Surely advertising roofs can be done in a more sensitive and creative way.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness of the aesthetic benefits Colorbond steel can bring to the Australian home.

The advertising strategy is based on encouraging prospective consumers to feel that by choosing

Colorbond steel for their roofing needs, they had "made the right choice". This strategy was executed by showing people becoming distracted from what they were doing by the beauty of their roof and other features of the house made from Colorbond steel. So engaged were they by the look of their new roof, they forgot all else! The tone and manner of the advertising was designed to be lightly humorous and engaging. The situations were deliberately chosen to invite empathy from the target consumer.

In the advertisement in question, we selected a surreal situation where a man is lying unconscious on his front footpath. The neighbour, who apparently is a good friend of the homeowner tries to revive the man. The man's spirit floats up to heaven but on seeing his beautiful home and roof he decides that life on Earth is too good to leave. The final scene with the neighbour performing mouth to mouth resuscitation is intended to highlight the close and open "mateship" between the two men in a humorous way.

Having carefully reviewed Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics, we do not believe that the advertisement portrays people in a way that is discriminatory, nor does it depict any activity that would be contrary to prevailing community standards or attitudes.

The advertisement is not intended to upset or offend viewers, and we believe treats the scene shown in a way that is humorous. In our view it complies with Section 2 of the Code, to the letter.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board noted the complainants' concerns about discrimination on the basis of sexual preference and presenting negative perceptions of CPR.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the interaction between the two men was intended to be humorous. It further considered that if there was any "gross out" factor it was because of the close relationship between two mates and should not be perceived to be a statement about or reflection on single sex relationships. The Board concluded that the advertisement did not show images that contravened prevailing community standards and did not therefore breach Section 2.1 or Section 2.6 of the Code.

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