



## **CASE REPORT**

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 90/99  |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Women's Policy Development Office, WA (Freedom from Fear Campaign) |
| 3. Product                    | Community Awareness  |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | TV   |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1                 |
| 6. Date of determination      | Tuesday, 13 April 1999   |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Dismissed  |

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENTS**

The Board listened to a number of radio advertisements and viewed a number of television and print advertisements in the series.

### Radio advertisements

There were six radio advertisements in the series. Each advertisement followed a similar theme beginning with male voiceover saying, 'You can stop domestic violence we can help you change...' followed by a scenario in which a man calls in to the domestic violence helpline where they speak to a telephone counsellor. Some of the dialogue in the advertisements includes the following:

Male voice: 'A couple of weeks ago...I just gave my wife a shove and she hit the wall...and then last night...I just hit her' and 'I...rang up a couple of weeks ago and told you I was about to hit my wife... I just feel like its all churning up again and I'm going to do it again...' and '...My wife said she was going to leave...she said she didn't want to be hit anymore...'

### Television advertisements

The Board viewed three television advertisements following a similar theme with varying scenarios, all of which are followed by a male voiceover saying, 'Do something about it...call the men's domestic violence helpline (some information regarding the helpline is also superimposed on the screen). In all the scenarios children are shown either overhearing or witnessing a domestic violence incident involving the sounds of a man and woman arguing and some close ups of an angry looking male followed by what appears to be the sound of someone being struck.

### Print advertisements

The print advertisements include the following:

- a graphic of a man in profile followed by the words, 'Men's domestic violence helpline (phone number provided)...A free service for men who want to break the cycle of domestic violence.'
- A photograph of a man sitting on the ground head in hand alongside the telephone. The words, 'You can stop domestic violence we can help you change' appear above the photograph. In the bottom corner of is a small logo and the words, 'Men's domestic violence helpline...'
- A close up photograph of a woman. Behind her two children are seated close together on a couch. The words, 'Every time you hurt her...they cry too' are superimposed on the photographs. In the bottom corner of is a small logo and the words, 'Men's domestic violence helpline...'

## **THE COMPLAINT**

Comments which the complainants made regarding this advertisement included the following:

*'I believe that both these advertisements are extremely sexist particularly in an era of "equality". If these ads were portrayed in the female role, they would have been taken off the air the next day...advertisements reflects (sic) that men are the only perpetrators of violence and "ISTD,s" which is not the case.'*

*'...there is clear gender bias with the inference being presented that all domestic violence is perpetrated by men...the overdramatisation (sic) of a man shouting in a vehicle is often a feature of menstruating women, or women unable to deal with their frustrations...these advertisements are stereotyping negatively all white males...'*

*'The... advertisement portrays that men (ALL) men (as a group-everyone) is responsible for domestic violence...Domestic violence is a problem that some men have to face...the advertisement... is sending the wrong message to society and our children.'*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

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

The Board determined that, viewed in the context of the message as a whole, none of the portrayals in any of the advertisements viewed/heard could be construed as constituting discrimination or vilification and/or as breaching the Code. The Board found that none of the advertisements in the series offended any other sections of the Code and dismissed the complaint.