



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	94/00
2. Advertiser	Coca-Cola South Pacific Pty Ltd (Coca-Cola - Sydney Express)
3. Product	Food
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 11 April 2000
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement portrays young hitchhikers being picked up and driven to Sydney by two young men in a yellow bus. The atmosphere on the bus is convivial, with the passengers drinking Coca-Cola stored in ice containers. The advertisement concludes with the bus stopping again, when more hitchhikers than the bus can accommodate are seen lining the road, waving ‘Sydney’ signs. The driver remarks, ‘Should’ve brought a bigger esky’.

THE COMPLAINT

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

‘I am concerned that this advert portrays hitchhiking as a great way to travel and meet nice people. Hitchhiking is illegal and is very dangerous. There have been numerous instances when young people hitchhiking in Australia have found themselves in dangerous situations. I find this advertisement to be irresponsible and in the poorest taste.’

‘As far as I was aware “hitch-hiking” is an illegal activity. Aside from this, I believe we should be teaching our youth the dangers associated with “hitch-hiking”, not glamorizing it. In Western Australia alone there have been too many young women disappear, most likely as the result of accepting lifts from unknown people. I believe the images portrayed in this advertisement are very irresponsible and very insensitive.’

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (‘the Board’) considered whether this advertisement breached Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (‘the Code’).

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the Code and did not offend prevailing community standards. It was noted that the storyline in the advertisement was clearly fanciful and fictitious. It was also noted that the advertiser’s legal advice was that the act of hitchhiking is not, as suggested, an unlawful activity. The Board, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.