



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	96/05
2. Advertiser	Queensland Transport (anti-speeding campaign)
3. Product	Community Awareness
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Community Service advertising – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 10 May 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens with the scene of a father and son attempting to light a barbeque. When the father realises that the barbeque is out of gas, the father and son leave the house in the car to purchase more gas. The father and son are then shown to be driving along a dual lane carriageway. The advertisement then cuts to a young woman pushing a pram. The next scene shows the speedometer of the vehicle (indicating that the car is speeding). As the driver of the car attempts to change lanes he is forced to brake suddenly and in an attempt to avoid hitting the car in front he swerves off the road and onto the footpath. The car is then shown to be on a collision course with the mother pushing the pram. The screen then goes momentarily blank and the sound of the car striking the woman is heard. The next scene shows the baby who has been thrown from the pram covered in blood and screaming. The mother of the child is shown to lay motionless on the ground and covered in blood. The driver of the vehicle runs from the car to collect the distressed baby. The tag line of the advertisement is 'Every k [kilometre] over is a killer'.

THE COMPLAINT

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

"This was very distressing.

"In the attempt to shock and disturb viewers the advertiser has gone too far with the present scenario and used graphic images and sound. The rating of M for this advert is too low given the content of the advert and, as a minimum, prior warning should be given before the advert is screened so people can take action to avoid watching."

"The ad was over the top and grossly inappropriate for any time of television."

"I found it horrifying and very distressing and I think the real purpose of the ad was lost."

"This advertisement which is supposed to show the dangers of exceeding the posted speed limit is erroneous as the speeds and stopping distances shown have little or no bearing on the outcome of the incident depicted."

"I understand the message trying to be put across but I felt this crossed a number of lines with no huge chance of solving a problem that will never be fixed in this manner."

"I find the new advertisement very distressing and am so physically upset by the campaign. The advertisement is overly violent and graphic and should not be shown on television."

"The end of the ad (where the baby and mother are covered in blood) came as a complete shock. I consider those images to be excessively violent and disturbing. I think the images shown in the ad are gratuitous, extreme and unnecessary."

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

“While the ads are very emotional, this approach is warranted if it can help save lives on our roads. This road safety advertising is based on extensive research which showed this approach to be effective because it appeals to viewers on an emotional level.”

“Experts also consider highly emotive ads to be the most effective in influencing behaviour, as long as they are relevant to the audience and generate a “this could happen to me” response.”

“Research also showed that 88% of the target audience believe that graphic road safety advertising is effective.”

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 that despite the display of graphic violence there was a need for these particular advertisements to get the message across. The Board concluded that the use of violence in this advertisement was justified given the cause it was trying to promote. The Board also noted that this advertisement was shown late in the evening when young children were not likely to be viewing the advertisement. Although the advertisement used very powerful images, the Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to violence.

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