

---

## Research Report

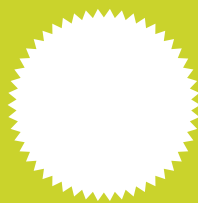
### *Community perceptions of violence in advertising*

*Produced for the Advertising Standards Bureau by*

Colmar Brunton

May 2009

---



Copyright © 2009 Advertising Standards Bureau.  
All rights reserved

Printed in Australia

Published by the Advertising Standards Bureau  
Level 2, 97 Northbourne Avenue, Turner, ACT, 2617

## CONTENTS

---

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| CEO introduction  | iv        |
| <b>Part 1 – Survey sample demographics</b>                  | <b>1</b>  |
| Gender  | 3         |
| Age   | 3         |
| State of origin   | 4         |
| Metropolitan area   | 4         |
| Language spoken at home                                     | 5         |
| Highest qualification                                       | 5         |
| Children in household                                       | 5         |
| Ages of children  | 6         |
| Annual household income                                     | 6         |
| <b>Part Two – Perceptions of violence in advertisements</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| AANA Code of Ethics and violence                            | 8         |
| Advertising Standards Bureau interpretation of violence     | 8         |
| Advertisements considered in research                       | 8         |
| Complainants as an indicator of community concern           | 9         |
| Board decisions matching community opinion                  | 10        |
| Acceptability of ads  | 11        |
| Complaint representation and ratios                         | 12        |
| Relevance of violence in advertising                        | 14        |
| Coincidental findings                                       | 16        |
| <b>Part Three – Advertisement responses – in detail</b>     | <b>17</b> |
| • Case Number 345/04 - Women's Policy Office WA             | 18        |
| • Case number 96/05 - Queensland Transport                  | 20        |
| • Case number 177/05 - Transport SA                         | 22        |
| • Case number 188/05 - PZ Cussons                           | 24        |
| • Case number 153/06 - Ford Focus                           | 26        |
| • Case Number 430/06 - Vodafone                             | 28        |
| • Case number 378/07 - Hoyts Saw 4                          | 30        |
| • Case number 396/07 - IAG                                  | 32        |
| • Case Number 58/08 - Loula Boutique                        | 34        |
| • Case number 91/08 - Wotif                                 | 36        |
| • Case Number 287/08 - Coca Cola Mother                     | 38        |
| • Case Number 393/08 - Cancer Council NSW, Girls Night In   | 40        |
| • Case number 421/08 - WorkCover Victoria                   | 42        |
| <b>Part Four – Complaints procedure findings</b>            | <b>45</b> |
| Awareness of place to complain                              | 46        |
| First port of call for complaints                           | 46        |
| Reasons for choosing to not make a complaint                | 47        |
| Concern about paid advertising standards                    | 47        |
| Topics of complaint made in the previous 12 months          | 48        |

## *CEO introduction*

A fundamental element of the advertising self-regulation system is the necessity for the Advertising Standards Board to be in touch with community standards around advertising.

Since 2006 we have committed to a program of research which provides the Bureau and Board with information about community standards in advertising and the extent to which Board decisions reflect community standards.

In 2009 we identified violence in advertising as an issue needing investigation. To this end, the Advertising Standards Bureau commissioned research into the community's perceptions of acceptability of violence in advertising.

The research, conducted by Colmar Brunton, collected information about the level of violence perceived, as well as the relevance of the violence depicted to the product advertised.

There were 13 advertisements chosen for the research which represent a selection of the varied issues which have been considered by the Board under Section 2.2 (violence) of the AANA Code of Ethics over the past five years.

Overall, results from the research show that Advertising Standards Board decisions regarding violence in advertising are closely aligned with the views of the community.

Information about the concerns of those surveyed, reasons they did or did not complain, who they complained to and general awareness of the Advertising Standards Bureau was also collected.

This report is designed to provide information and guidance to the Advertising Standards Board.

A guideline based on information collected from this research is being developed to draw together major points and will include "tips and traps" for the Advertising Standards Board when making determinations involving violence issues.

In addition, I hope that the information included here, along with the proposed guidelines, is interesting and useful to advertisers in designing campaigns, to academics and to other people and organisations with an interest in advertising self-regulation.

**Fiona Jolly**

Chief Executive Officer

May 2009

.....

*Survey sample demographics*

.....  
.....

# Part 1

.....



### Survey sample demographics

The research sample included 790 complainants drawn from ASB records and 1195 members of the general population sourced randomly from Colmar Brunton's online panel.

The complainant proportion of the sample was made up of 66 per cent female and 34 per cent male, with 70 per cent between 25 and 54 years of age. The general population sample was 51 per cent female, 49 per cent male, with 60 per cent aged between 25 and 54 years of age.

Geographic origin of the entire sample was spread out nationally in proportion to the population. As a result New South Wales had the highest percentage of sample, followed by Victoria.

Within the complainant sample there was a larger percentage of people (51 per cent) with a post graduate qualification, compared to only 29 per cent of the general population sample.

A slightly larger proportion of complainants had children at home (72 per cent) compared to the general population sample (65 per cent).

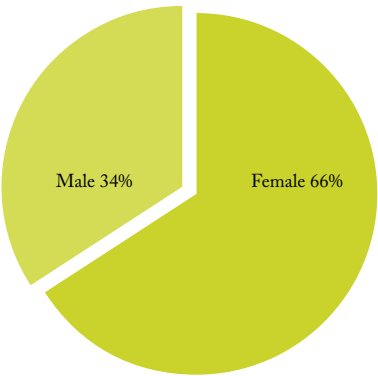
A significant proportion of the complainant sample (26 per cent) had an annual gross income over \$100,000, and a larger proportion of the general population sample was under \$40,000. A significant proportion of the complainant sample (22 per cent) and the general population sample (13 per cent) took the option not to answer this question.

Gender

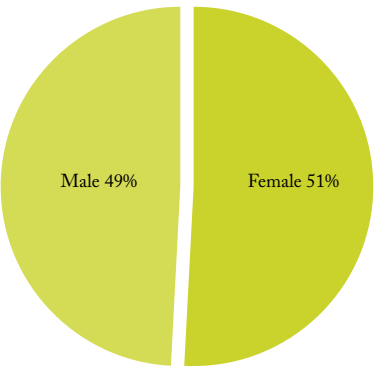
Of the complainant sample 66 per cent was female. Quotas were imposed on the general public sample to ensure a representative sample. With the general public quota and complainant sample the profile accurately reflects the Australian population.

Of the general public sample seven per cent had made a complaint about advertising. The female skew is evident in this group at 58 per cent.

Complaint Sample (n=790)



General Population Sample (n=1,195)

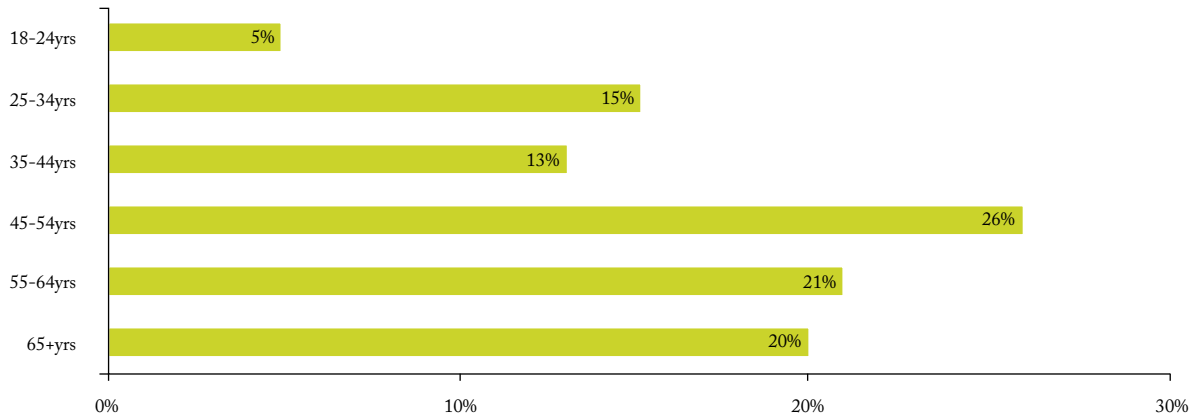


Age

There is a clear skew towards older complainants with those aged between 35 and 54 years making up over half of the complainant sample. In the general population, those that have made a complaint are mainly aged 45-54 years of age.

| Age Brackets           | Complainants (n=790) | General Public (n=1,195) |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 18 – 24 years old      | 5%                   | 11%                      |
| 25 – 34 years old      | 16%                  | 20%                      |
| 35 – 44 years old      | 26%                  | 20%                      |
| 45 – 54 years old      | 28%                  | 20%                      |
| 55 – 64 years old      | 17%                  | 15%                      |
| 65 years old and above | 7%                   | 14%                      |

Have made a complaint General Public (n=85)



## COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE IN ADVERTISING

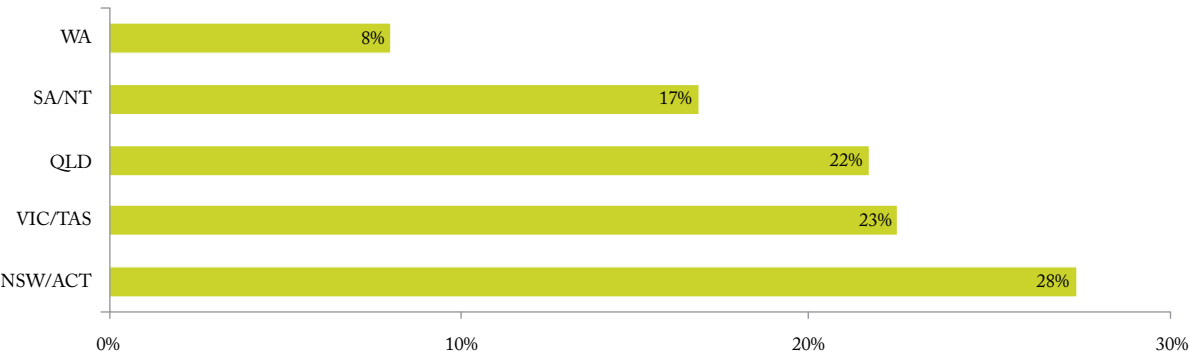
### State of origin

The origin of complainants was quite closely aligned to the population breakdown as seen by comparison to the general public sample. There was a slightly higher incidence of complainants originating in NSW and fewer from WA.

This bias towards NSW is also evident in the profile of those in the general public who had made a complaint.

| States  | Complainant Sample (n=790) | General Population Sample (n=1195) |
|---------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| NSW/ACT | 37%                        | 30%                                |
| VIC/TAS | 26%                        | 25%                                |
| QLD     | 19%                        | 20%                                |
| SA/NT   | 12%                        | 15%                                |
| WA      | 6%                         | 10%                                |

### Have made a complaint General Public (n=85)



### Metropolitan area

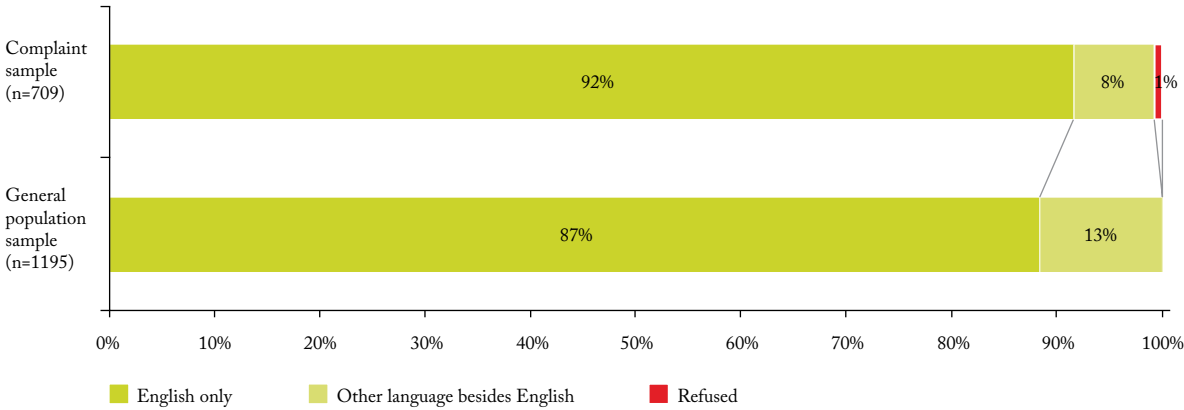
This table shows the proportion of respondents from each state that come from a metropolitan area. Among those complainants in NSW and ACT there was a skew towards those from regional areas compared to the general public sample. Similarly, proportionally fewer West Australian complainants are from the metropolitan area compared to the general public sample.

| States  | Complainant Sample (n=790) | General Population Sample (n=1195) |
|---------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| NSW/ACT | 58%                        | 68%                                |
| VIC/TAS | 74%                        | 72%                                |
| QLD     | 56%                        | 51%                                |
| SA/NT   | 80%                        | 79%                                |
| WA      | 71%                        | 77%                                |



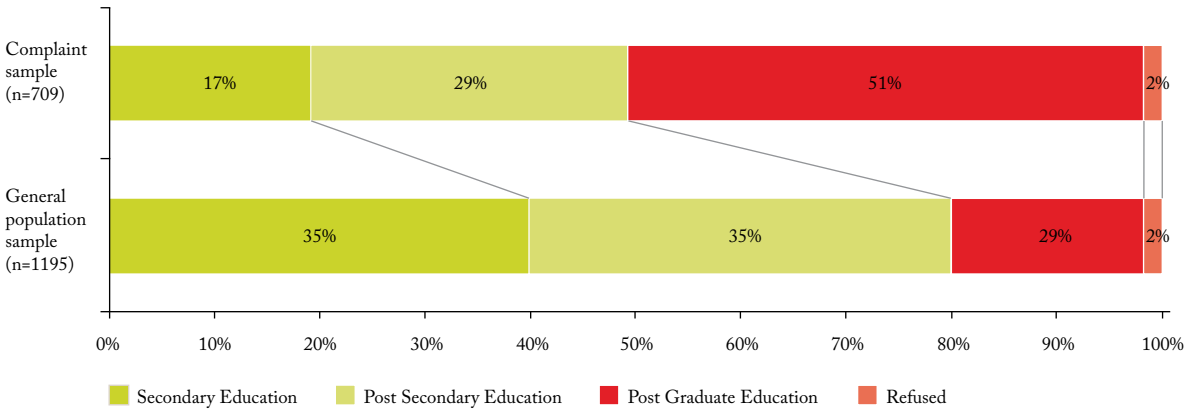
Language spoken at home

Nearly all of the respondents in the complainant sample speak only English at home (92 per cent). Compared to the general public sample, the complainants were significantly more likely to speak only English at home.



Highest qualification

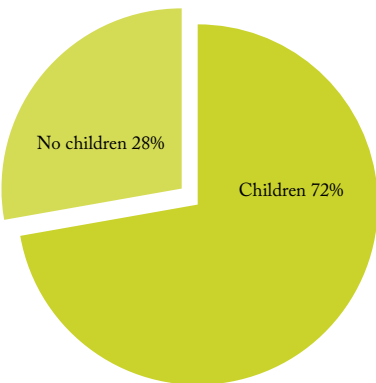
Complainants tended to have achieved higher levels of education compared to the general public. Of the complainant sample 51 per cent have a post graduate education compared to 29 per cent of those in the general public sample.



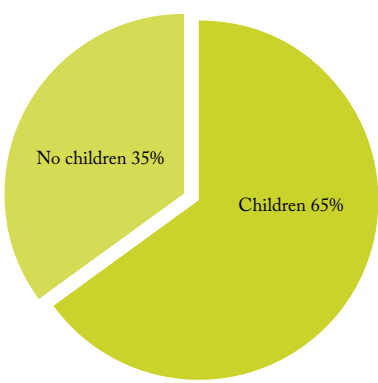
Children in household

A larger proportion of complainants have children at home compared to the general public sample.

Complaint Sample (n=790)



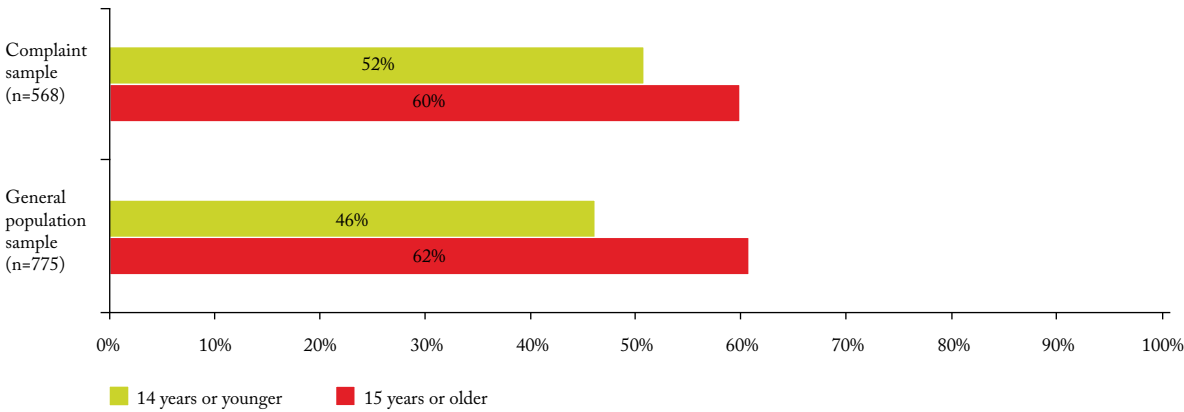
General Population Sample (n=1,195)



COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE IN ADVERTISING

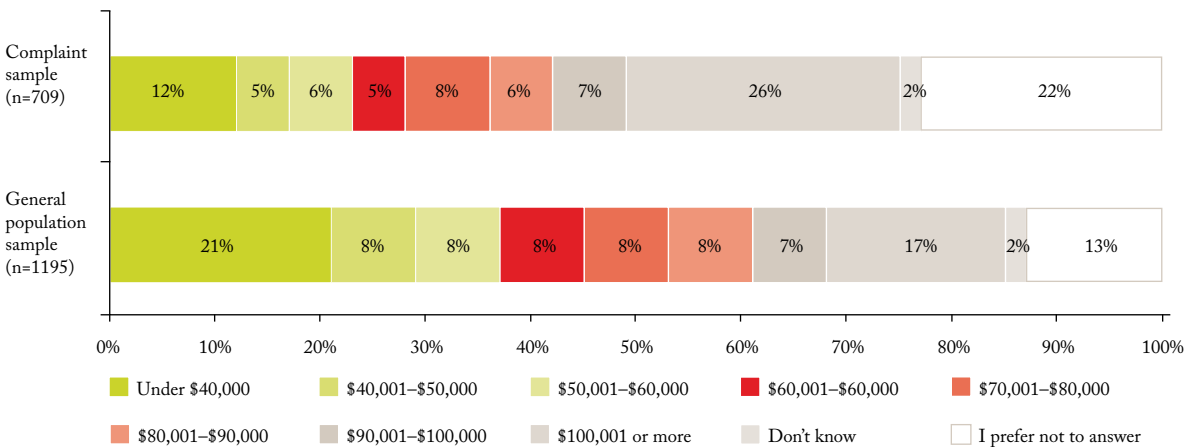
Ages of children

In both samples, the majority of dependents are aged 15 years and older.



Annual household income

Complainants tend to be skewed towards higher household incomes. A significant proportion of the complainant sample have an annual gross household income of \$100,001 or more per year (26 per cent) compared to the general population (17 per cent) and a larger proportion of the household income for the general public sample is under \$40,000.



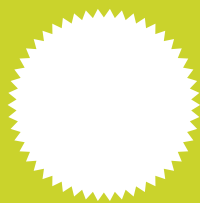
.....

*Perceptions of violence in advertisements*

.....  
.....

# Part 2

.....



### AANA Code of Ethics and violence

Section 2.2 of the AANA Code of Ethics states:

“Advertising or marketing communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.”

### Advertising Standards Bureau interpretation of violence

Violence as interpreted by the ASB incorporates a range of depictions and behaviour. These include:

- community awareness
- cruelty to animals
- bullying
- domestic violence
- children
- encouraging/inciting violence
- sexualised violence
- violence to people
- violent films and games
- weapons
- hooliganism
- vandalism and violence to property
- gore and horror.

### Advertisements considered in research

#### Case Number 345/04 – Women’s Policy Office WA

Considered by Board in December 2004 – Complaints **dismissed**

#### Case number 96/05 – Queensland Transport

Considered by Board in May 2005 – Complaints **dismissed**

#### Case number 177/05 – Transport SA

Considered by Board in June 2005 – Complaints **dismissed**

#### Case number 188/05 – PZ Cussons

Considered by Board in July 2005 – Complaints **dismissed**

#### Case number 153/06 – Ford Focus

Considered by Board in May 2006 – Complaints **dismissed**

#### Case Number 430/06 – Vodafone

Considered by Board in November 2006 – Complaints **upheld**

#### Case number 378/07 – Hoyts Saw 4

Considered by Board in November 2007 – Complaints **upheld**

#### Case number 396/07 – IAG

Considered by Board in December 2007 – Complaints **upheld**

#### Case Number 58/08 – Loula Boutique

Considered by Board in April 2008 – Complaints **upheld**

#### Case number 91/08 – Wotif

Considered by Board in April 2008 – Complaints **upheld**

#### Case Number 287/08 – Coca Cola Mother

Considered by Board in August 2008 – Complaints **upheld**

#### Case Number 393/08 – Cancer Council NSW Girls Night In

Considered by Board in October 2008 – Complaints **dismissed**

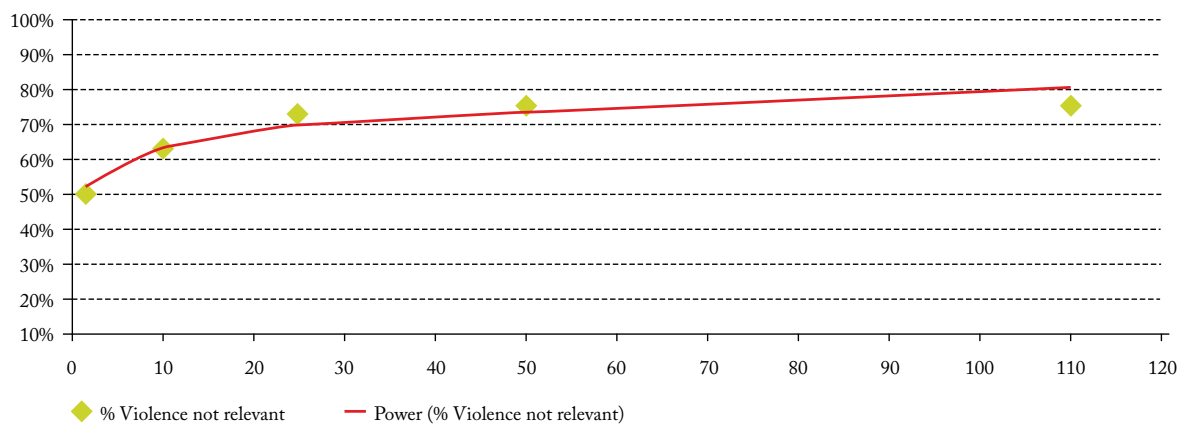
#### Case number 421/08 – WorkCover Victoria

Considered by Board in November 2008 – Complaints **dismissed**

Complainants an indicator of community concern

**Complainants do appear to be broadly indicative of the wider community.** Complainants are more likely to consider an ad violent, for the violence to not be relevant to the subject being advertised, and for the ad to be unacceptable. However, the pattern of their relative discontent across individual ads is exactly parallel to that of the wider community. This suggests that complainants are more ‘sensitive’ than the general community to violence, but that they do not appear to be reacting in ways that are qualitatively different to the rest of the community. As such, their complaints can be broadly considered to be a meaningful indicator of community attitudes.

The raw **number** of complaints received does NOT appear to meaningfully reflect the **magnitude** of community concern. When a calculation is conducted to establish the proportion of the general public represented by each individual complaint, there is a very big range and no clear predictive relationship. If there is a possible relationship among the ads tested, it is between the number of complaints and the proportion of people who feel that the violence is not relevant to the subject of the ad – but only for national TV campaigns.



- While there is very little apparent capacity or the number of complaints to predict or reflect the magnitude of unacceptability in the community at a general level, there is a suggestion in the data that – for national TV campaigns at least – the number of complaints may be indicative of the proportion of the population who find the violence in an ad not relevant to the product being advertised.
- The chart shows that when looking at the five national TV campaigns in the study, an increase in the number of complaints was quite predictive of a higher proportion of the community who felt that the violence was not relevant.

### Board decisions matching community opinion

Generally, the **decisions made by the board have reflected the feelings of the wider community**. With the exception of one community announcement (which was considered inappropriate by a relatively large proportion of the general public) the top six ads that were most unacceptable to the general public (and to complainants) had complaints upheld. The pattern of upholding complaints matches almost exactly to the ranking of inappropriateness by the general public.

|                                 | Number of complaints received | % of general public considering ad unacceptable relative to time zone | Outcome of Complaint |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Coca Cola Mother                | 50                            | 76%   | Upheld               |
| Loula Boutique                  | 3                             | 50%   | Upheld               |
| Vodafone                        | 1                             | 45%   | Upheld               |
| IAG Trolleys                    | 2                             | 43%   | Upheld               |
| Transport SA (Trains)           | 6                             | 40%   | Dismissed            |
| Wotif.com                       | 24                            | 38%   | Upheld               |
| Hoyts Saw 4                     | 1                             | 38%   | Upheld               |
| PZ Cussons                      | 106                           | 37%   | Dismissed            |
| Ford Focus Fishbowl             | 11                            | 25%   | Dismissed            |
| Queensland Transport (Speeding) | 87                            | 16%   | Dismissed            |
| WorkCover Victoria              | 18                            | 14%   | Dismissed            |
| Women's Policy Office           | 1                             | 13%   | Dismissed            |

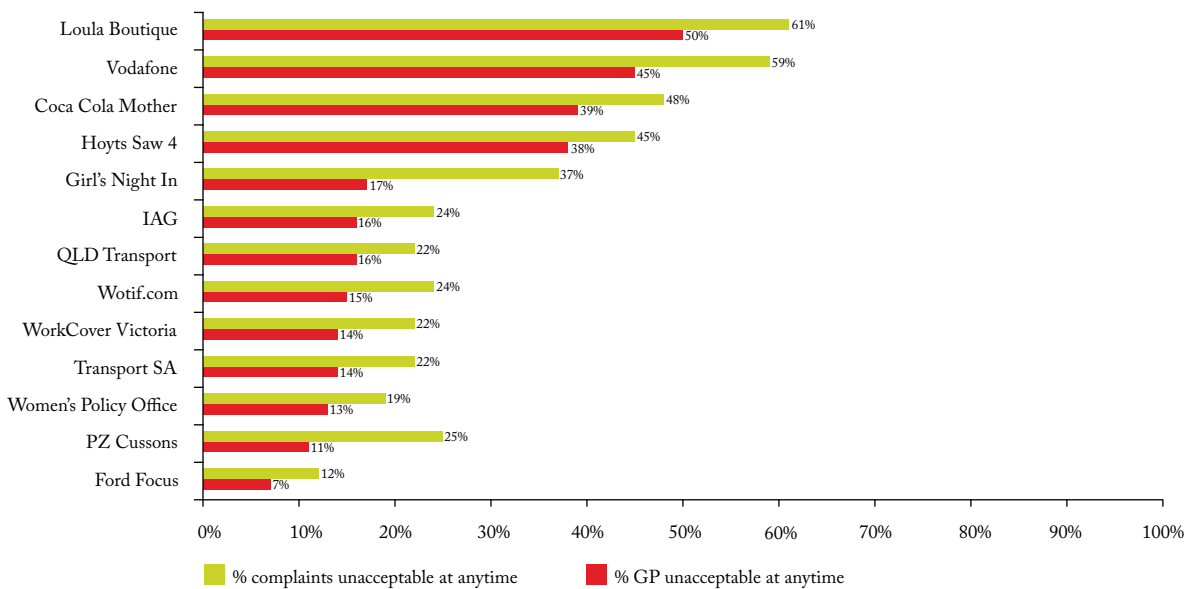
### Acceptability of ads

This research suggests that **any complaint is an indicator that a substantial proportion of the community is likely to find an ad unacceptable**—but that higher numbers of complaints do not necessarily mean a higher proportion of people feel this way.

A key question for the research was whether the number of complaints received tells us anything meaningful about the community's level of acceptability of the ad. Among the violence ads tested, there was **no evidence of any relationship between the number of complaints and the magnitude of community unacceptability**.

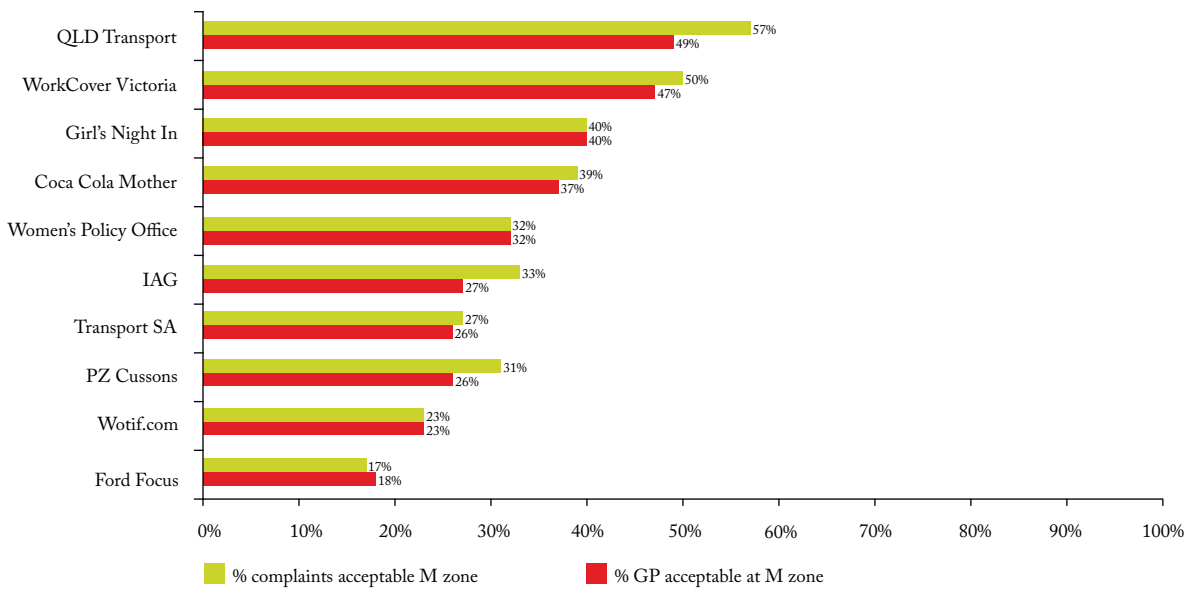
However, it was clear that for any ad that received even one complaint, there is a substantial proportion of the community who felt it is unacceptable. Across all the ads tested, at least 13 per cent of the general public felt that they were unacceptable in their specified time zone, with an average of 38 per cent. Taking out the five ads that had a community awareness component (where perceptions of acceptable violence were quite different), the minimum level of unacceptability was 25 per cent and the average 47 per cent. It seems that while the number of complaints is not a sufficiently sensitive indicator from which to predict the exact level of unacceptability in the community – any complaint is indeed an indicator of a substantial level.

Acceptability of ads - generally



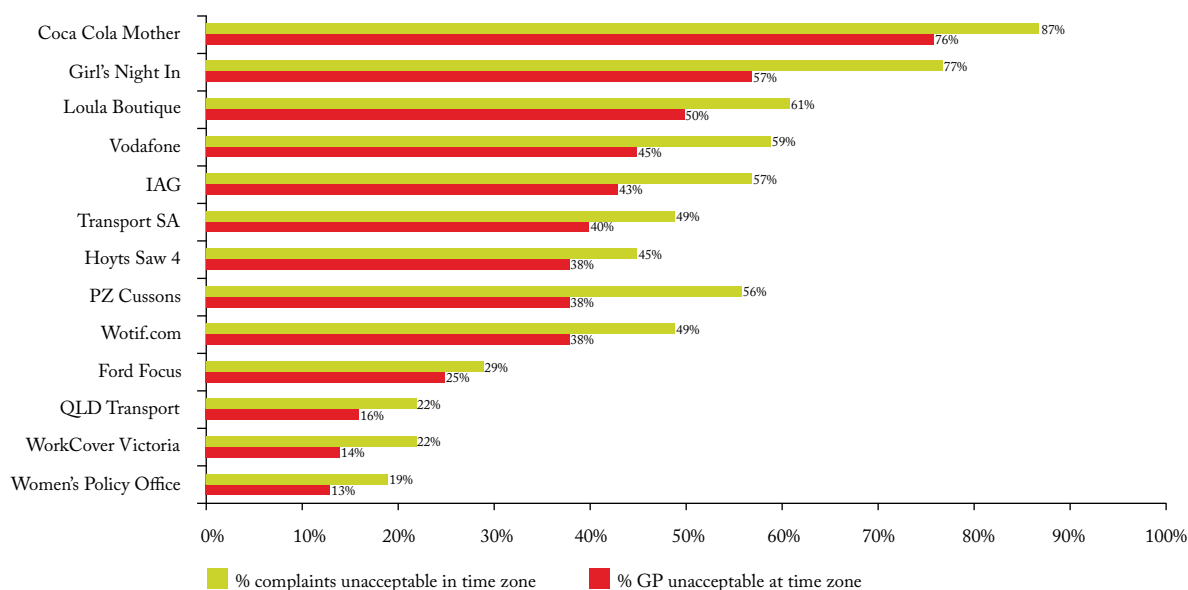
*Of interest in this graph is the similarity in ranking of the ads. While the complainants have higher incidences of considering each ad to be unacceptable, the ranking of ads is the same for the general public and for the complainants. This suggests that the complaints response to ads is broadly indicative of community sentiment.*

Acceptability of ads in M time zones



*Ranking of the ads that are acceptable in M time zones is also very similar across the complainants and the general public.*

## Acceptability of ads relative to time zone



*This analysis shows consistent differentials between the complainants and the general public, but a very similar pattern between individual ads. This chart also suggests that the general public are more open to the concept of showing more violent ads in "M" time zones while complainants tend to consider the ad to be unacceptable at any time, regardless of time zones*

## Complaint representation and ratios

### Ratio calculation

The following table provides the ratio of the number of complaints to the potential number of the general public who considered the ad to be unacceptable. A number of factors have been taken into account in calculating this ratio.

- The different mediums of the ads means there is a high degree of variation in the population exposed to each ad. For example, the number of people who are exposed to a national television campaign is vastly different from the number of people who were potentially exposed to an ad in a magazine.
- Obviously the extent of exposure impacts on the size of the population that is potentially impacted by the ad and therefore able to make a complaint. In order to account for this difference, the research made some basic assumptions about the various population sizes.
  - For a nation-wide campaign and for state based television campaigns the research used a rounded number based on the population of the relevant area.
  - For ads that are on radio the research assumed a 15 per cent exposure within the relevant population. This is based on experience with testing awareness of campaigns over many years and with many clients.
  - Similarly, the research assumed that five per cent of the relevant population might be exposed to print media.
- The rating and relevant time zone of the ad has also been taken into account. Where an ad had general play exposure (i.e. was rated "W" or "PG"), those who considered the ad to be unacceptable at any time plus those who considered the ad to be acceptable only in "M" time zones have been grouped as considering the ad to be unacceptable. Where an ad was classified as "M", only those who considered it unacceptable at any time have been taken as considering the ad as unacceptable.



The research used these population estimates to calculate a 'normalised' incidence of complaints per a potential population of 100,000, as this provides an even base for comparison between ads. This provided a comparable measure of how many people potentially considered an ad offensive to every complaint actually made across ads from different mediums and different geographic areas.

The following shows how the ratio of complaints to offended general public was calculated, using a national television ad as an example.

- National television campaign so a potential viewing population of 21.7 million
- 50 complaints were received
- Ratio of complaints to population is 50:21,700,000
- To calculate the number of complaints per 100,000 viewing population:  $50 \text{ complaints} / 21.7 \text{ million} \times 100,000 = 0.23$  complaints per 100,000 viewers.

#### Ratio of complaints to incidence of considering the ad unacceptable in time zone

|                                 | Number of complaints received | Number of complaints per 100,000 potential viewers | % of general public considering ad unacceptable relative to time zone | Outcome of complaint |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| <b>IAG Trolleys</b>             | <b>2</b>                      | <b>0.01</b>  | <b>43%</b>  | <b>Upheld</b>        |
| Ford Focus Fishbowl             | 11                            | 0.05   | 25%   | Dismissed            |
| <b>Wotif.com</b>                | <b>24</b>                     | <b>0.11</b>  | <b>38%</b>  | <b>Upheld</b>        |
| Coca Cola Mother                | 50                            | 0.23   | 76%   | <b>Upheld</b>        |
| Transport SA (Trains)           | 6                             | 0.35   | 40%   | Dismissed            |
| PZ Cussons                      | 106                           | 0.49   | 37%   | Dismissed            |
| <b>Loula Boutique</b>           | <b>3</b>                      | <b>0.69</b>  | <b>50%</b>  | <b>Upheld</b>        |
| <b>Vodafone</b>                 | <b>1</b>                      | <b>0.71</b>  | <b>45%</b>  | <b>Upheld</b>        |
| <b>Hoyts Saw 4</b>              | <b>1</b>                      | <b>0.71</b>  | <b>38%</b>  | <b>Upheld</b>        |
| WorkCover Victoria              | 18                            | 0.33   | 14%   | Dismissed            |
| Women's Policy Office           | 1                             | 0.33   | 13%   | Dismissed            |
| Queensland Transport (Speeding) | 87                            | 1.98   | 16%   | Dismissed            |

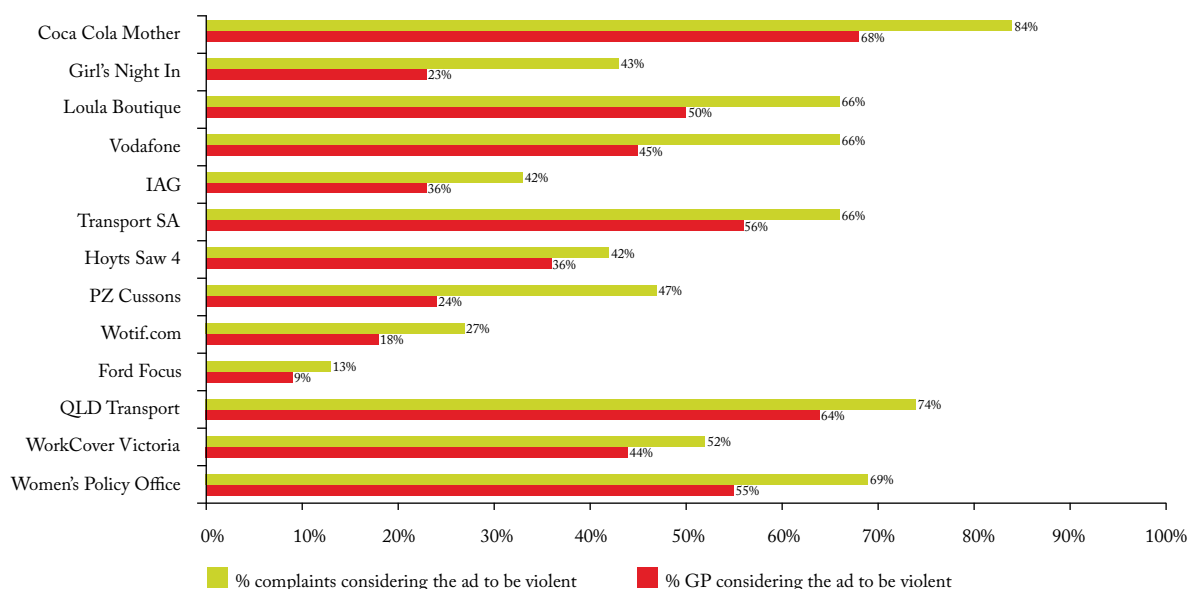
#### Ratio of complaints to incidence of considering the ad unacceptable by type of media

|                       | Average number of complaints received | Average number of complaints per 100,000 potential viewers | Average % of general public considering ad unacceptable relative to time zone | Incidence of complaint being upheld |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Television (Total)    | 38.0                                  | 0.44   | 36%   | 3 of 8                              |
| Television (National) | 38.6                                  | 0.18   | 44%   | 3 of 5                              |
| Television (State)    | 37.0                                  | 0.89   | 23%   | 0 of 3                              |
| Radio*                | 1.0                                   | 0.33   | 13%   | 0 of 1                              |
| Print                 | 1.7                                   | 0.71   | 44%   | 3 of 3                              |

### Relevance of violence in advertising

The general public is more likely to consider violence in advertising to be acceptable if the ad is portraying an important message, or if the violence is relevant to the topic. Complainants, however, tend to have a more blanket approach, feeling that the violence could be down-played and not lose the impact of the message.

### Incidence of considering ad to be violent

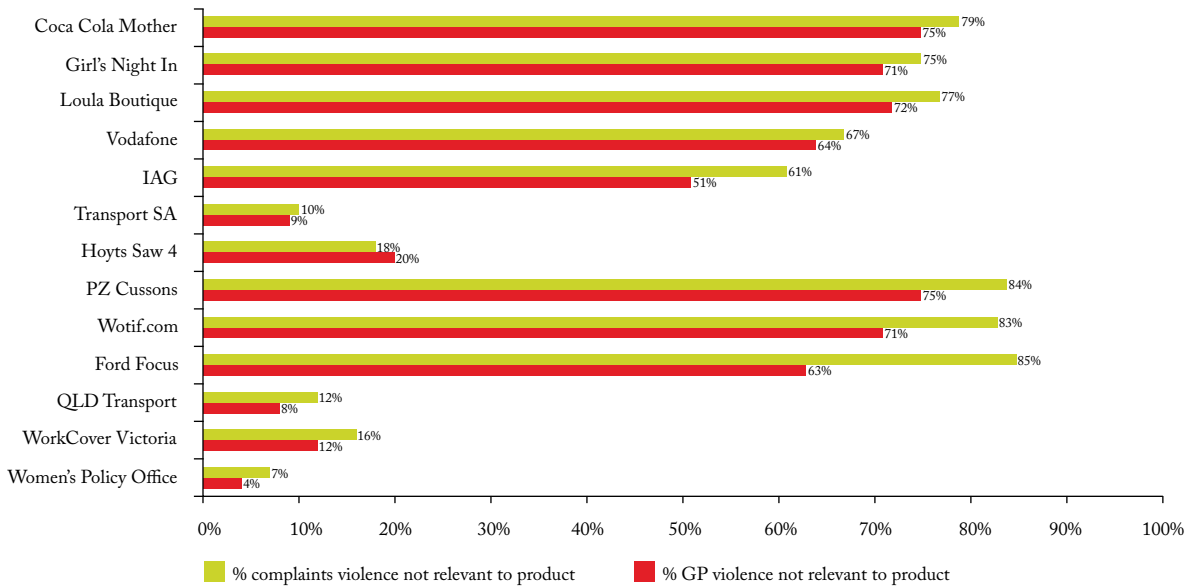


- While complainants consistently tend to consider the ads to be more violent than the general public, the ranking of the ads across both groups is again very similar. This shows that while complainants may have more extreme views, their perceptions are broadly aligned with those of the general public.
- What is also clear is that the overall level of unacceptability is not directly tied to the perception of it being violent.
- It is clear from this analysis that complainants tend to perceive ads to be more violent compared to the general public.

It is **clear that violence in advertising is considered more acceptable for ads relating to community announcements.**

However, the violence in this context can be overdone and there were many comments (particularly from complainants, but also from the general public) that one community awareness ad in particular went too far in its violence and was not necessary to convey the appropriate message. Responses to two community awareness ads, one which included children and the other domestic violence, also showed that violence involving children is especially sensitive and likely to cause a more passionate response, as does violence against animals and women.

Perceptions of acceptability and relevance of violence



- *There is a stronger alignment in the extent to which the violence in the ads is seen as being relevant to the product between the general public and the complainants.*
- *There is also a stronger relationship between acceptability and the 'relevance' of the violence. It appears that community acceptability of violence in advertising is more attuned to relevant violence than to violence per se.*
- *Generally, public service messages are seen as having relevant references to violence.*

The general public tends to find an ad acceptable, even if it includes violence (at least in M time zones), **if that violence is relevant to the product**. However, complainants are more likely to still consider the ad to be unacceptable to show. From this the research analysts conclude that the number of complaints received for an ad with a community service message is likely to reflect a lower proportion of the general population, compared to a similar number of complaints for an ad with no community message.

Ratio of complaints to incidence of considering the ad unacceptable by categories of violence

|                                  | Average number of complaints received | Average number of complaints per 100,000 potential viewers | Average % of general public considering ad unacceptable relative to time zone | Incidence of complaint being upheld |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Other                            | 26.5                                  | 0.46   | 63%   | 2 of 2                              |
| Property/ Vandalism/ Hooliganism | 1.5                                   | 0.36   | 44%   | 2 of 2                              |
| Cruelty to Animals               | 17.5                                  | 0.08   | 32%   | 1 of 2                              |
| Community Awareness              | 46.5                                  | 1.17   | 28%   | 0 of 2                              |
| Graphic Images and Themes        | 9.5                                   | 0.52   | 26%   | 1 of 2                              |
| Domestic Violence                | 53.5                                  | 0.41   | 25%   | 0 of 2                              |

While the domestic violence category had the highest average incidence of complaints received, the representation of the general public who considered the ads to be unacceptable is the lowest. Vandalism on the other hand has a very low number of average complaints but a large proportion of people consider it to be inappropriate.

### Coincidental findings

Concern for the **exposure of children** to advertising is a big influencer of perceptions of violence. This is particularly evident where there are concerns that children might **imitate the behaviour**. In this context, respondents wanted to see realistic outcomes of the violence portrayed. People also had concerns that ads with a community service aim may cause distress to anyone with experience in these areas – such as those who had suffered domestic violence or a car accident.

Females tend to be more likely to consider a violent ad to be unacceptable and also have a higher incidence of lodging complaints overall.

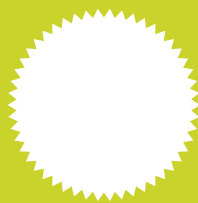
.....

*Advertisement responses – in detail*

.....  
.....

# Part 3

.....



### Case Number 345/04 - Women's Policy Office WA

#### Summary

The majority of respondents felt the Women's Policy Office WA advertisement was acceptable to play on the radio, with significantly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was significantly higher among the complainant sample.

A dominant reason for people considering this ad to be unacceptable related to fears of children being frightened by it, or of it triggering negative memories for those who had been in a similar situation. There was also a degree of concern about the language used which was considered too strong for general radio presentation.

There was a similar amount of agreement to the level of violence in the ad being relevant to the product advertised.

**Differences by gender** - Differences were noticed in the general population sample where females (36 per cent) were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (45 per cent).

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged between 55-64 years in the general population were more likely to be accepting of this advertisement being played at any time of the day than those who were not in this age group.

**Differences by education** - Differences were noticed in the complainant sample by respondents whose highest level of education achieved was secondary school. These people were more likely to consider the ad acceptable to be played in M rated time zones.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, more respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were more likely to say the advertisement was acceptable and that the level of violence in the ad was relevant to the product being advertised.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

For both the general public and the complainants the evidence of violence in the ad was clear in its content. The aggression in the male voice, the escalating tension, the increasingly aggressive language and the final sound effects suggesting something breaking or someone falling all contributed to the sense of violence in the ad.

One of the key reasons for the ad to be considered violent was the clear intention for violence that is portrayed in the script and the acting. There was nothing to suggest any of the violence is accidental or unintended.

There were concerns, particularly among the complainants sample, about this ad being inappropriate for children as they may fail to understand the context of the ad. There was concern about needing to explain the ad to children and to explain domestic violence. In some cases there were concerns that children who may have experienced domestic violence may be traumatised by the realism of the ad.

Another strong concern, particularly among the complainants, was that the language used, even in the context of the ad, was too strong and inappropriate. Use of terms such as "bullshit" and "slut" were considered too strong for young people and inappropriate generally. It was felt that this type of language was not necessary to convey the important message.

Among the general public sample there were a lot of comments about the ad provoking feelings of discomfort and unease in the listener. However, there was also a much stronger sense in this group that while the ad contained violence, it was necessary to convey an important message. This sentiment was mentioned by far fewer complainants.

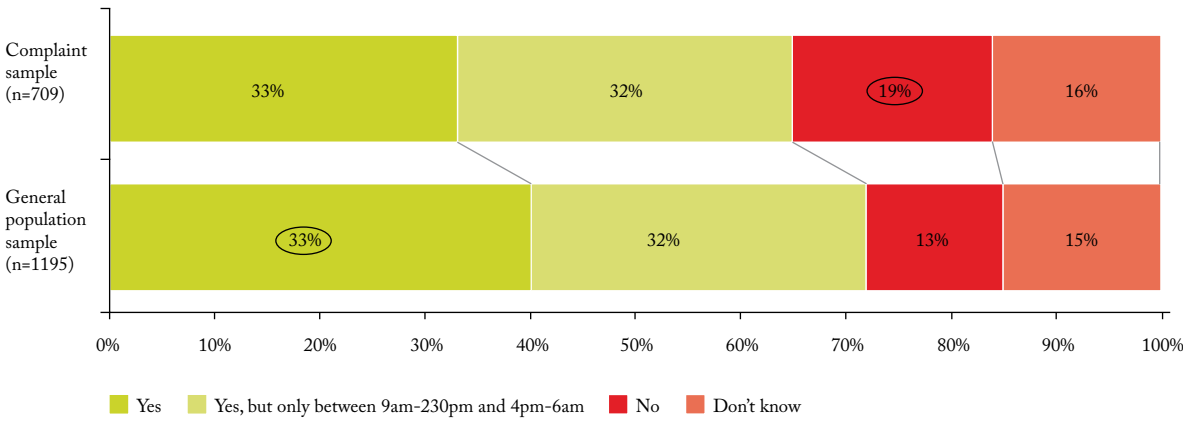
Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

Both the complainants and the general public that did not consider this ad to be violent gave very similar reasons for this perception - that while the ad depicts violence, the point of the ad was to prevent violence. There was a sense that it is an important message and the violence is required to get the message across.

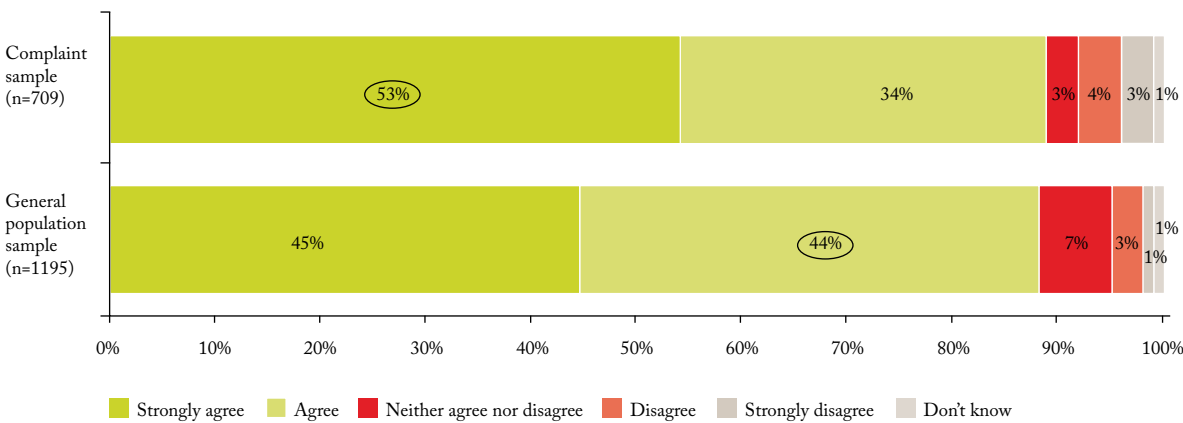
Similarly, the ad was seen to be realistic and to be educational which offset the sense of the ad being gratuitously violent. Some comments were made that compared to reality, the ad depicts a relatively minor display of domestic violence and was therefore not as violent as it could be.

There were also comments in both groups that the violence in the ad was implied – not shown. There was a perception that the actual violence is left to the imagination and therefore the ad itself was not violent. The lack of visual violence also contributed to this perception.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case number 96/05 - Queensland Transport

#### Summary

Most respondents felt the Queensland Transport ad was acceptable to be shown at any time of the day, with slightly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was significantly stronger among the complainant sample.

The majority of respondents considered the violence in the ad to be relevant to the advertised product.

**Differences by gender** - Differences were noticed in the general population sample where females were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (females 22 per cent, males 37 per cent).

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged 55 years plus were more likely to be accepting of this ad than those who were younger. Those aged 18-24 years in both samples were less accepting.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, respondents with children considered the advertising most appropriate within the M rated times.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were more likely to say the ad was acceptable to show on television, but only between 8.30pm at night and between 12 midday and 3pm (M rated time zones).

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

Most comments related to the obvious violent aspects of the ad with respondents talking about the impact of the car, the image of the seriously injured mother and the baby crying. Many mentions were made about the blood, and particularly the image of a child covered in blood. The evidence of physical and emotional suffering reinforced the perceptions of the ad as violent. Many respondents found the ad provoked feelings of nausea or depression.

The presence of a child and a mother as the victims of the accident made the ad seem particularly violent. The general public tended to find this ad shocking but thought it was acceptable if it works to save a life. The complainants tended to consider the violence in the ad to be too much and not necessary despite the important message the ad conveyed. They generally felt that the same message could be portrayed without the violent images.

Some respondents also commented on various other unsafe behaviours depicted in the ad such as the father testing the BBQ with the son in close proximity. Others felt that a child of that age should not be in the front seat and a few thought that the father and son were not wearing seatbelts. Closer inspection shows they are wearing seatbelts although this is not necessarily obvious in the ad.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

Reasons for considering the Queensland Transport ad to not be violent were very similar among both the general public and the complainants.

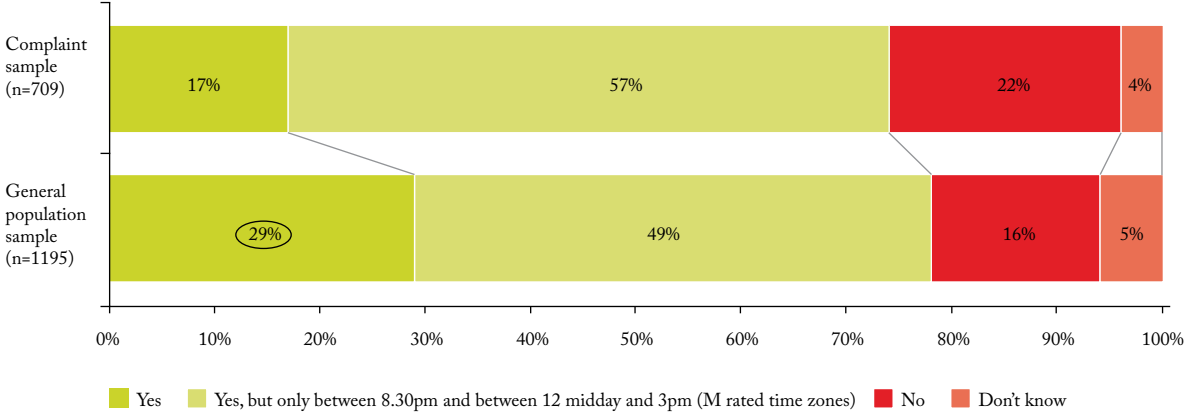
While the ad was seen to be graphic, according to respondents, this did not necessarily mean that it is a violent ad. A lot of people commented that it was graphic and shocking and yet they didn't classify it as violent. The ad is seen to be realistic – any violence in the ad is not seen as gratuitous and this contributes to an overall sense of the ad not being violent.

Similarly, the ad is seen to be conveying the realistic consequences of the driver's behaviour. There was a sense that if the ad serves to save one life, the shocking and graphic nature of the ad was worth it.

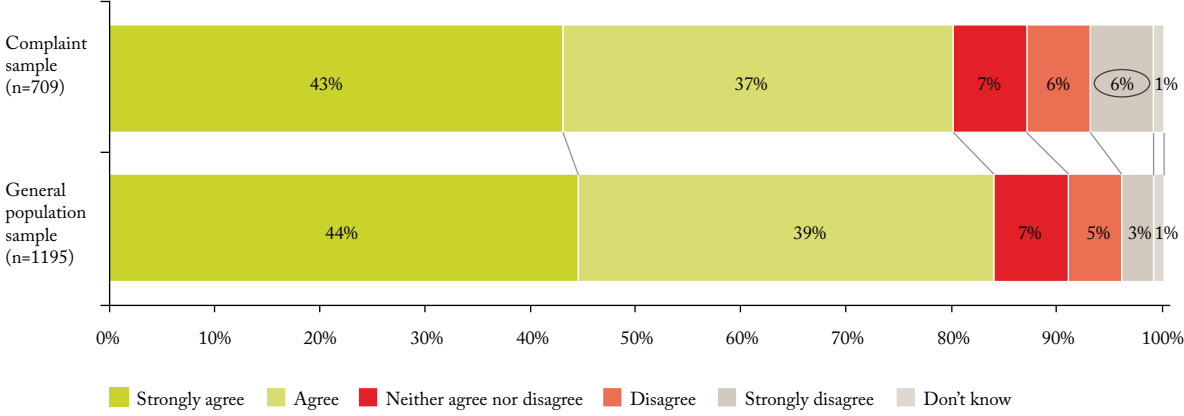
Some respondents commented that it was not violent as the ad did not show the actual impact. 3



Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case number 177/05 - Transport SA

#### Summary

A number of respondents felt the Transport SA ad acceptable to be shown at anytime of the day, with significantly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainant sample.

The general population and the complainant sample presented similar levels of agreement that the violence was relevant to the product being advertised. Of the complainant sample 81 per cent and of the general population 84 per cent agreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant.

**Differences by gender** - Differences were noticed in the general population sample where females were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (females 77 per cent, males 85 per cent), however females found the ad to be significantly more acceptable than the males did if it were screened during M rated time zones.

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged between 25 and 34 years of age in the complainant sample were more likely to be accepting of this ad during the M rated time zones than those not in this age group. In the general population, respondents aged 65+ were particularly accepting of the ad to be played at any time of the day.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, more of those respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were more likely to say the advertisement should not be shown compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

Most of the respondents, both general public and complainants, considered this ad to be violent due to the content of the ad. The look of fear and anguish just before the train strikes and the inference of children in particular being hit by a train both contribute to the sense of violence in this ad.

A number of respondents, particularly complainants, considered the ad to be more violent than was necessary to convey the required message. It was seen as graphic, confronting and disturbing, especially as it involved children. Most of these respondents believe that the same message could be conveyed without showing the accident.

More common among the general public was the perception that while the ad was violent, the violence and shock value were required to convey an important message. By these people it was seen as not overly realistic, gratuitous or confronting, but rather as having sufficient impact to convey the message.

Some were concerned that the message was inappropriate for children and that it would be difficult to explain the consequences of the ad to children. This was a particularly common perception among the complainants sample.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

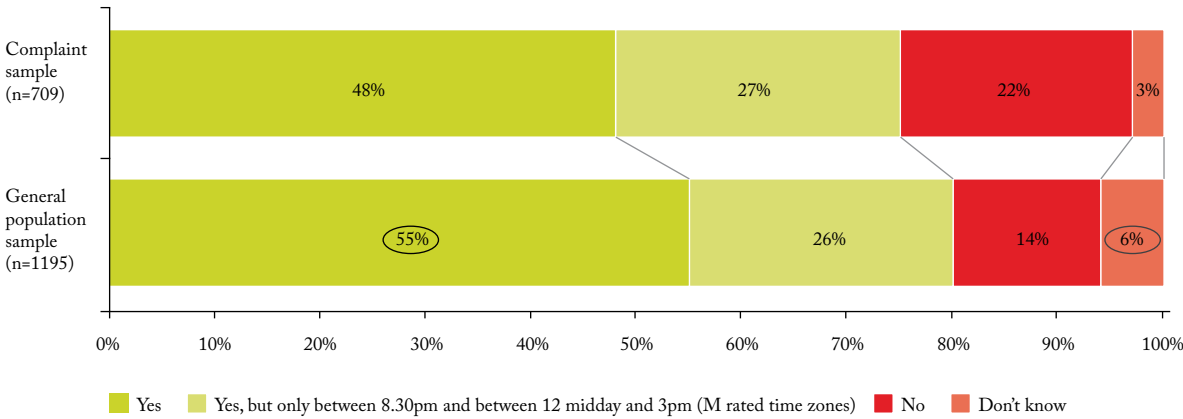
Complainants and the general public had similar reasons for not considering the Transport SA ad to be violent.

Reasons largely related to the use of the graphic which precluded the depiction of blood and gore in the ad. While the content of the ad was still considered to be shocking by many, the absence of this level of consequence being shown meant that it was generally not perceived to be a violent as the subject could be.

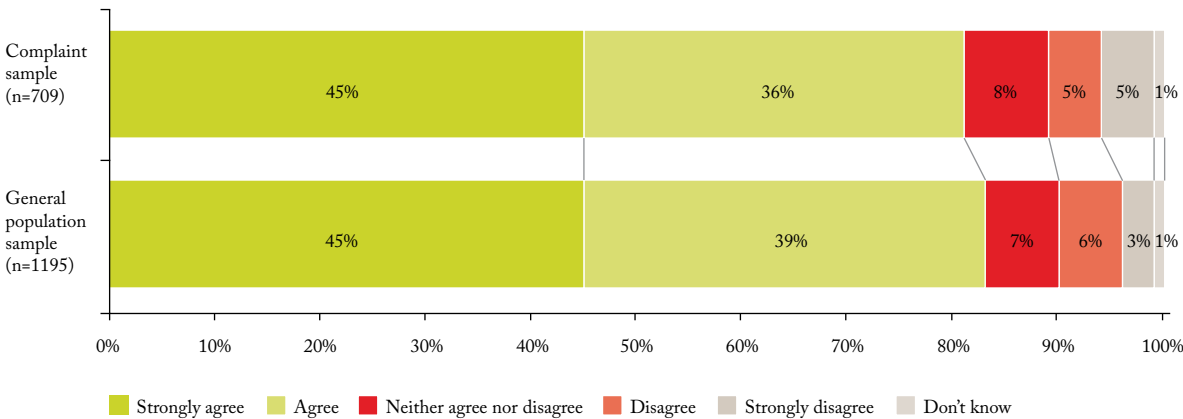
Similarly, the lack of evident suffering shown in the ad offset perceptions of the ad being violent.

The ad was also not perceived as violent due to its educational nature and the important message that was conveyed. The scenarios presented were seen to be realistic and not graphic – avoiding any use of gratuitous violence and therefore resulting in the ad being seen as not violent.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case number 188/05 - PZ Cussons

#### Summary

A significant number of the general public considered the PZ Cussons Morning Fresh ad acceptable to be shown at any time of the day, compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainant sample.

Of the complainant sample 84 per cent disagreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant, with 75 per cent of the general population feeling the same.

**Differences by gender** - Slight differences were noticed in both samples where females were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males when shown at any time of the day.

**Differences by age** - Both samples showed acceptability of the ad and displayed similar agreement toward the level of violence it contained.

**Differences by dependents** - More respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children, particularly among the general public.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were more likely to say the advertisement should not be played compared to those who have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

The act of the man being hit on the head with a spanner, however playful or gentle, was seen to constitute a violent act by most of the general public and complainants who considered this ad to be violent. The fact that the strike was clearly intentional was seen to convey violence.

There was a large degree of concern, among both samples that there were no realistic consequences of the strike, with many people suggesting that to hit someone on the head with a spanner could cause significant and painful consequences.

Another of the key reasons for considering this ad to be violent was the risk that children would consider this behaviour to be acceptable and imitate it, potentially causing significant harm to someone as a consequence of seeing the ad. Similarly there was concern, particularly among the complainants, that the ad would have to be explained to children and was therefore unacceptable to show at times when children may watch it.

Evident among both groups, but particularly among the complainants sample, was the concern that the ad depicts and inherently condones domestic violence. Many comments were made that if the gender roles were reversed, and the ad depicted a man hitting a woman with a spanner that it would be unacceptable and generate a lot of concern. This was seen as a double standard and it was suggested that no violence between a man and woman is acceptable, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator.

Some comments were also made that the ad depicted derogatory stereotypes of both the male and the female in their respective domestic roles. While this does not necessarily infer violence in the ad, it was another reason why the ad was considered unacceptable. There was also a feeling, mostly among the general public, that the violence was unnecessary to the product and that this made the ad unacceptable.

Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

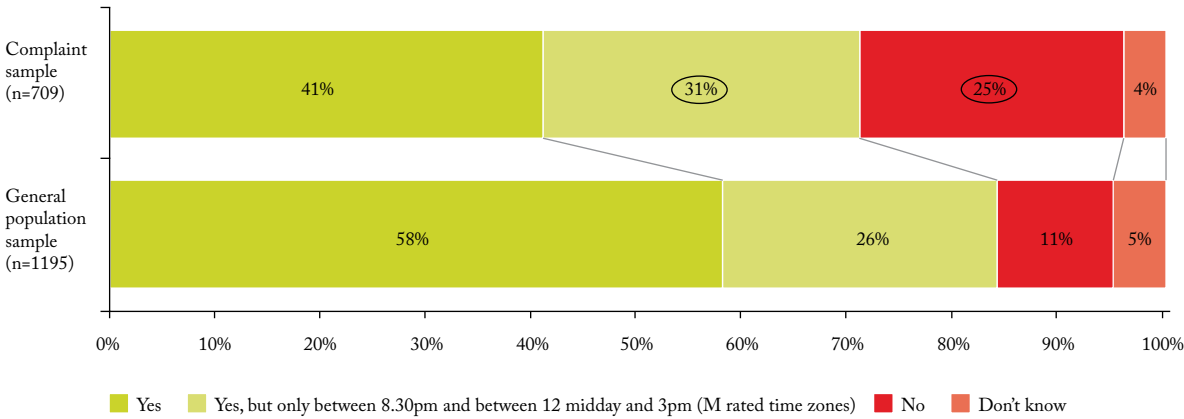
Reasons for the ad not being seen as violent were very similar for both the general public and for non-complainants.

The key reason for not seeing the ad as violent was the evident lack of harm in the man’s reaction. The lack of any blood or gore and the “amusing” sound effect conspired to make the strike seem playful and not harsh.

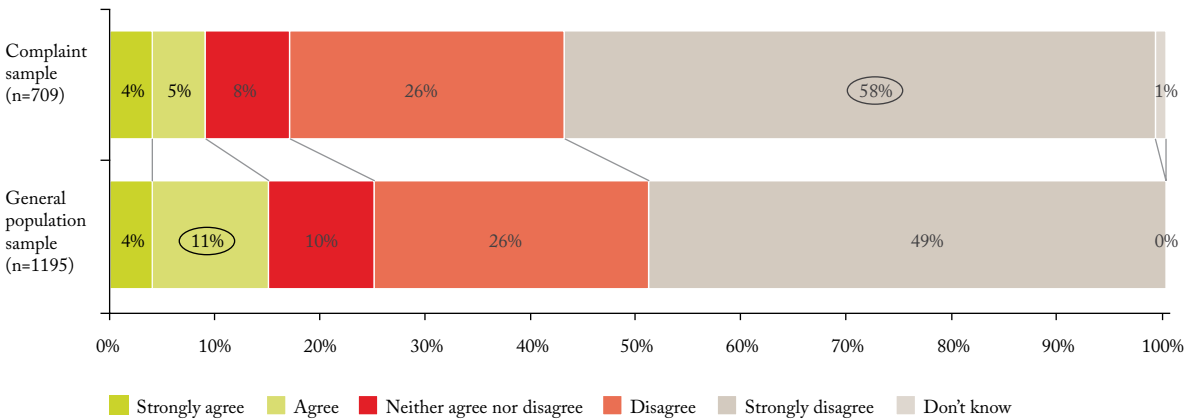
Similarly, the female was not seen as intending to harm the male. The strike was described as a “playful tap” or a “slap on the wrist” with no intention to cause pain and injury. There was also no other violence in context – there was no argument and only minimal apparent animosity between the couple.

The overall humour in the ad contributed to the sense of “all in good fun” and offset the potential for the ad to be seen as violent.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case number 153/06 - Ford Focus

#### Summary

The majority of respondents felt the Ford Focus Fishbowl ad was acceptable to be shown at anytime of the day, with slightly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainant sample.

The general population sample had a higher level of agreement that the violence was relevant to the product being advertised. Of the complainant sample 62 per cent strongly disagreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant.

**Differences by gender** - No differences by genders were noticed in the complainant sample or the general population sample.

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged between 18 and 44 years were more likely to be accepting of this advertisement than those who were in the 45 plus age group.

**Differences by dependents** - In the general population sample, more respondents without children considered the advertising appropriate compared to those with children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were more likely to say the advertisement should not be played compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

Those in the general public who considered this ad to be violent were primarily concerned that it portrayed cruelty to animals. The fate of the goldfish was considered unnecessary in the context of the ad.

Among the complainants there was comment about the apparent disregard for a living creature. The woman's reaction to the loss of the fish was seen to be inconsiderate and dismissive, contributing to the sense of violence in the ad.

Some complainants also found this ad inappropriate for children, largely due to the disregard of the young woman to the fate of the fish. People were concerned about needing to explain the likely fate of the fish to children.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

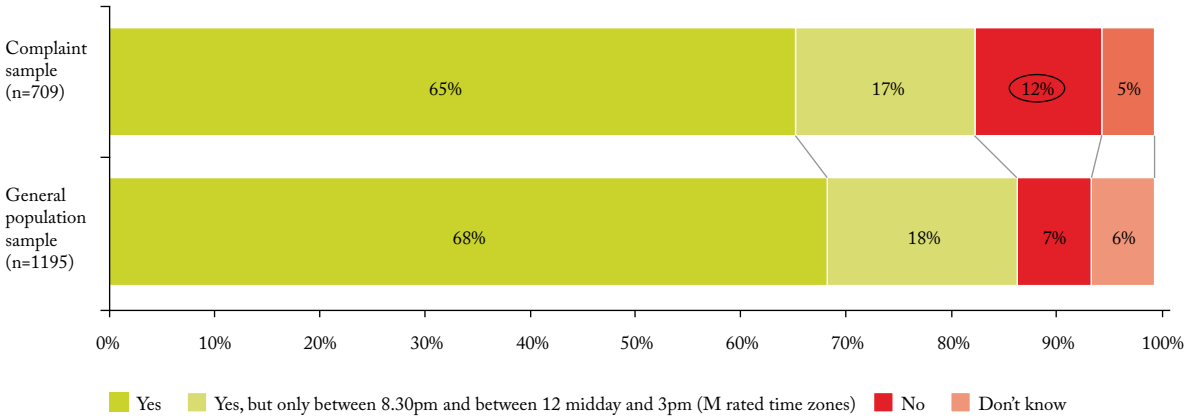
The absence of any blood or gore led to the larger proportion of people considering the ad not to be violent. The clearly unintentional act of letting the fish fall into the drain also offset any potential for the ad to be seen as violent.

Some respondents, both among the complainants and the general public indicated that the ad was not violent as there was no clear harm to the fish – there was no evidence that the fish would not survive the fall into the stormwater. It was suggested that if the fish had fallen to the ground and be seen to die, that this would constitute violence.

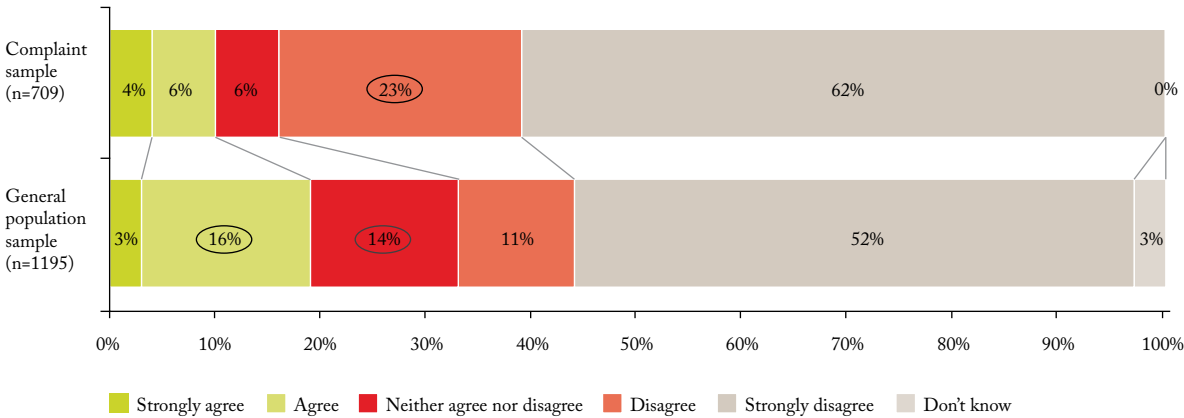
A number of comments, especially prevalent among the general public was that the victim was “only a fish”- an animal that is not sufficiently sophisticated to suffer from being dropped into a drain.

For some, the humour in the ad offset any potential for perceptions of the ad being violent. It was seen as quirky and unrealistic and so not violent in context.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case Number 430/06 - Vodafone

#### Summary

Most of the general public felt the Vodafone Mobile Office ad was acceptable for print, with significantly more of the complainant sample finding it unacceptable.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainant sample.

The general population and the complainant sample presented similar views about the relevance of the violence to the product being advertised. Of the complainant sample 67 per cent, and of the general population 64 per cent, believed that the level of violence in the ad was not relevant.

**Differences by gender** - Differences noticed in the complainant sample showed females (25 per cent) were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (36 percent).

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged between 18 and 44 years were more likely to be accepting of this ad than those who were in the 55 plus age group. The 55-64 year olds in the complainant sample did not find the ad acceptable and indicated a significantly higher level of perceived violence in the ad.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, more respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were significantly more likely to say the advertisement should not be shown compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

The general public and complainants had similar reasons for considering this ad to be violent. It was largely considered violent in the context of violence to property – evident in the graffiti. The nature of vandalism was also considered violent showing aggression in the words used and the way the words were written.

The ad was seen to send the wrong message by implicitly condoning this type of property violence and in that way making it acceptable.

There was some concern that the wording used - “rot in hell” - was not appropriate as it suggested violence and implied a threat to the car owner. There was also concern that this language was not suitable for children – especially with this being a print ad and there being limited opportunity to control exposure.

The ad itself was seen as offensive and distasteful and the use of violence was seen to be unnecessary to promote the product. Some respondents had concerns that the ad would need to be explained to children, that children might consider this type of behaviour acceptable or that children might imitate the behaviour based on their exposure to the ad.

Some comments were also made, particularly by complainants, that the reason the ad was seen as being violent was that the evident response was so misaligned to the complaint.



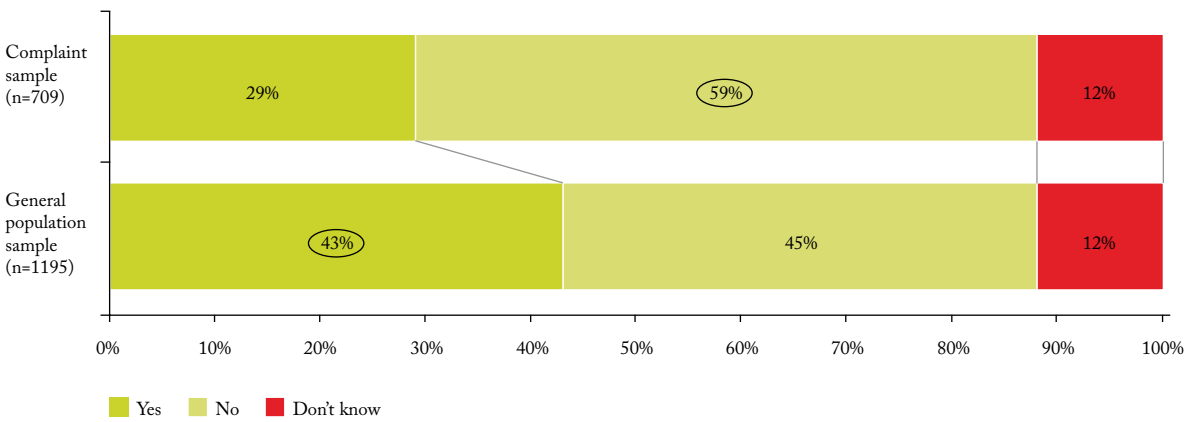
Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

The overriding reason for complainants to see this ad as not violent was that the act was perpetrated against an object (a car) and no people were involved in any violent act. Complainants drew the distinction between vandalism, which was seen as violence against an object, and violence, which was seen as against a person.

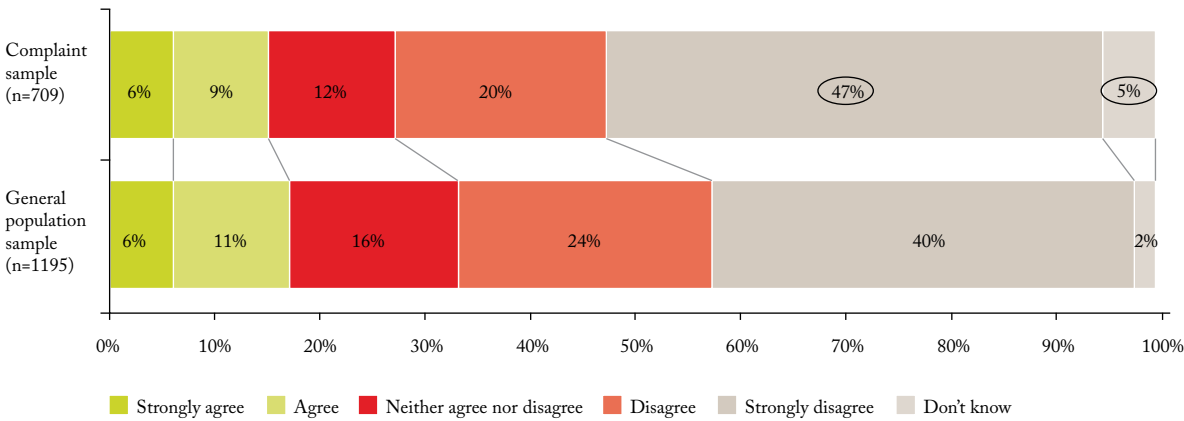
A lot of concern was expressed, by both complainants and the general public, that the language depicted was inappropriate, especially the term “rot in hell”. Comments were made that in the context of the ad, this message was unnecessary and that the rest of the ad made the point without this embellishment. There was concern among both groups that this language was inappropriate for children in particular.

Other reasons that the ad was not seen to be violent was that it depicted the aftermath of violence and not the act itself.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case number 378/07 - Hoyts Saw 4

#### Summary

Respondents in the general population felt the Hoyts Saw 4 ad was acceptable to be shown on an outside billboard, with significantly more of the complainants finding it unacceptable.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainant sample.

The general population sample had a slightly higher level of agreement that the violence was relevant to the product being advertised (59 per cent) compared to the complainant sample (56 per cent).

**Differences by gender** - Differences were noticed in both samples where females (29 per cent) were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (41 per cent).

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged between 18 and 34 years were more likely to be accepting of this advertisement than those who were in the 45 plus age group. Respondents aged 45-54 years in the general population sample were significantly less accepting of the ad.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, a significantly higher number of respondents without children considered the advertising appropriate compared to those with children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were significantly more likely to say the advertisement should not be shown compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

The biggest concern among the general public and complainants who considered this ad to be violent was that it infers intentional and malicious violence. The ad was seen to clearly depict instruments of torture. The use of the strap line "it's a trap" was seen to reinforce this inference of intentional violence.

Other reasons for seeing this ad as violent were emotive responses such as it being disgusting or provoking nausea in the viewer. The inferred violence was seen to not be necessary to convey the required message, and of being too graphic for public display.

There were also concerns that exposure of children to the ad would cause disturbance and that parents would have to explain to children what the ad was suggesting. This was largely deemed to be inappropriate given the exclusive nature of the film rating. Some concerns were more generally about public display of any sort of inferred or actual violence which is deemed inappropriate.

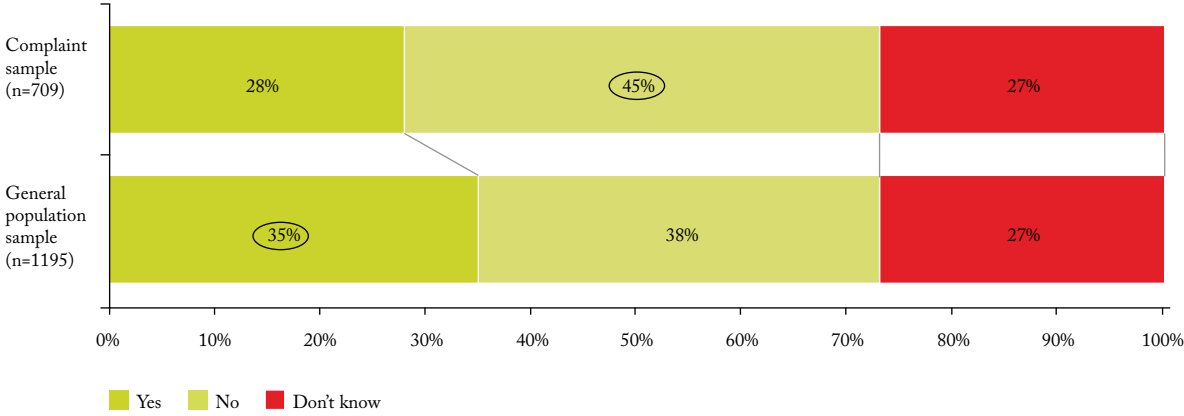
#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

Generally the Saw 4 ad was considered distasteful, but that it lacked any direct reference to violence or depiction of a violent act.

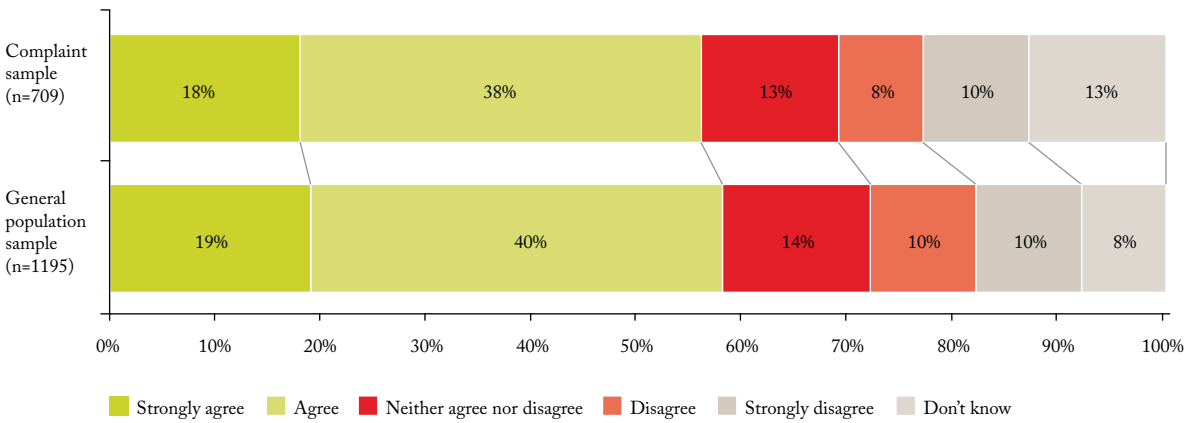
The ad was seen to infer violence and many respondents felt that a certain level of sophistication was required to understand the inference. There were comments that children would be unable to read the inference into the image and therefore not be negatively affected by the imagery. Similarly, comments were made that unless the viewer had some idea about the content of the movie, they would see only surgical instruments and not infer any intentional violence.

A number of people felt unable to comment on this ad as they didn't feel that they sufficiently understood what message was being conveyed.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case number 396/07 - IAG

#### Summary

The majority of respondents felt the IAG Trolleys ad was acceptable to be shown at any time of the day, with significantly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

A similar level of respondents believed the ad was not violent.

The general population sample had a slightly higher level of agreement that the violence was relevant to the product being advertised. Of the complainant sample 61 per cent disagreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant.

**Differences by gender** - Differences were noticed in both samples where females were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males.

**Differences by age** - Those aged between 18 and 44 years were more likely to be accepting of this advertisement than those who were in the 55 plus age group.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, more respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were more likely to say the advertisement should not be played compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

Most of the general public and complainants who considered this ad to be violent considered the irresponsible activity, the speed of the activity and the actual crashing into the wall to be violent depictions.

There was a lot of concern generated by this ad that children might imitate the behaviour and cause harm to themselves or others. The ad was seen to promote the activity through the fun the characters were evidently having and through the use of humour. There was concern that children would feel that the ad was saying this behaviour is acceptable and fun.

A lot of respondents thought the ad was just silly and offensive and unnecessary considering the product being advertised.

Some of those who considered this ad to be offensive felt that there was evidence in the ad that one of the characters was hurt in the impact. Violence was also seen to be inferred in the lack of concern of one character for the other.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

Complainants and the general public had similar reasons for not seeing this ad as being violent.

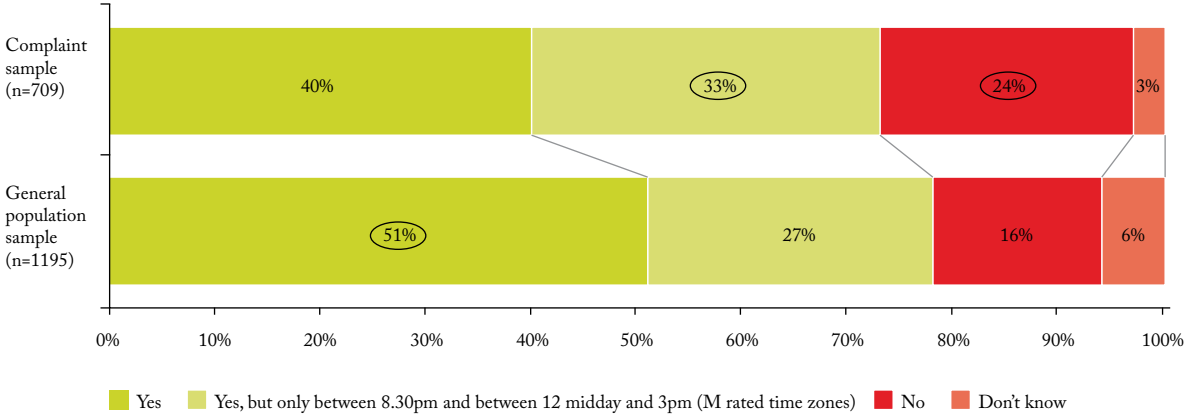
For those who did not see this ad as violent it was generally because there was no aggression in the ad, just stupidity. There was little or no evidence of any harm coming to either of the perpetrators, especially as the victim was seen to get up at the end of the ad.

The humorous context of the ad was also seen to offset any perceptions of violence, as did the lack of realism with the car moving of its own accord.

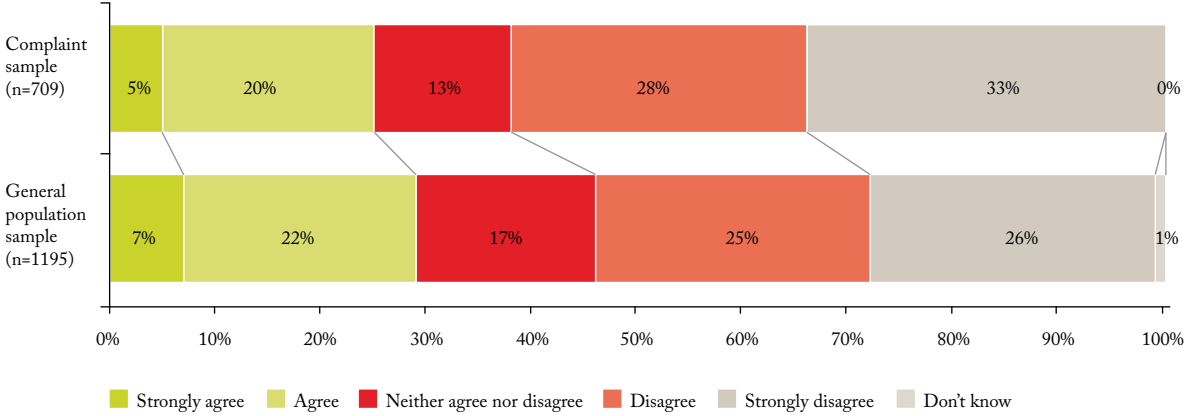
Many comments about why this ad was not violent related to the male getting hurt as a result of his own stupidity and deserving the consequences of his actions. Some commented that it was nice to see the consequences of the childish behaviour.

Despite not seeing the ad as violent some concerns were expressed about children imitating this ad – especially when the activity of driving around in a trolley was depicted as fun.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case Number 58/08 - Loula Boutique

#### Summary

The majority of respondents felt the Loula Boutique ad to be unacceptable for print, with significantly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainant sample.

The general population and the complainant sample had similar beliefs that the violence was not relevant to the product being advertised. Of the complainant sample 77 per cent, and 72 per cent of the general population, disagreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant.

**Differences by gender** - Differences were noticed in the both samples where females (38 per cent) were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (46 per cent).

**Differences by age** - Those aged between 18-24 years were more likely to be accepting of this advertisement than those who were in the 25 plus age group.

**Differences by state** - In the general population, respondents that live in Victoria and Tasmania strongly disagreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant to the product being advertised.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, more respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were significantly more likely to say the advertisement should not be shown compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

Complainants and the general public both felt that this ad was violent because it suggested that a woman had been murdered and the corpse placed in a boot. The positioning of the limbs was seen to provoke a sense of the body being dead or unconscious. The presence of the rope suggests a murder crime. Some respondents thought it may be depicting a sex crime.

There were many comments, especially among the complainants that this image glamorised murder and rape and was inappropriate in any context as it breached social norms. It was also seen to be desensitising people to images of corpses and to murder in general as well as condoning disrespect for human life.

This ad was seen as violent by both groups because it portrayed a woman in a violent situation. Similarly, it was seen to reflect recent actual crimes and to be violent and inappropriate by association.

Overall, there was a strong sense of it being inappropriate to use such imagery to sell shoes and accessories.

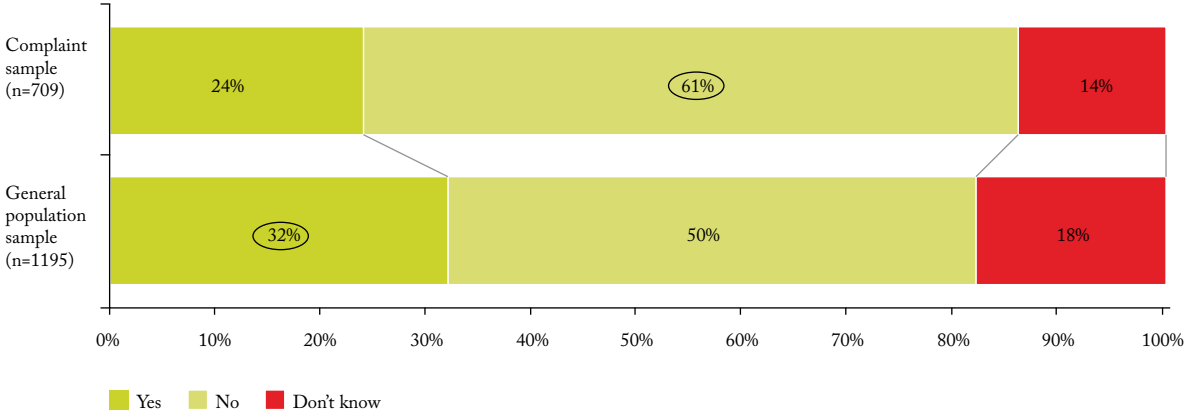
#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

The main reason for those who did not consider this ad to be violent was a lack of actual violence being depicted. Any violence in the ad is inferred. There were comments that the ad is more “arty” than violent.

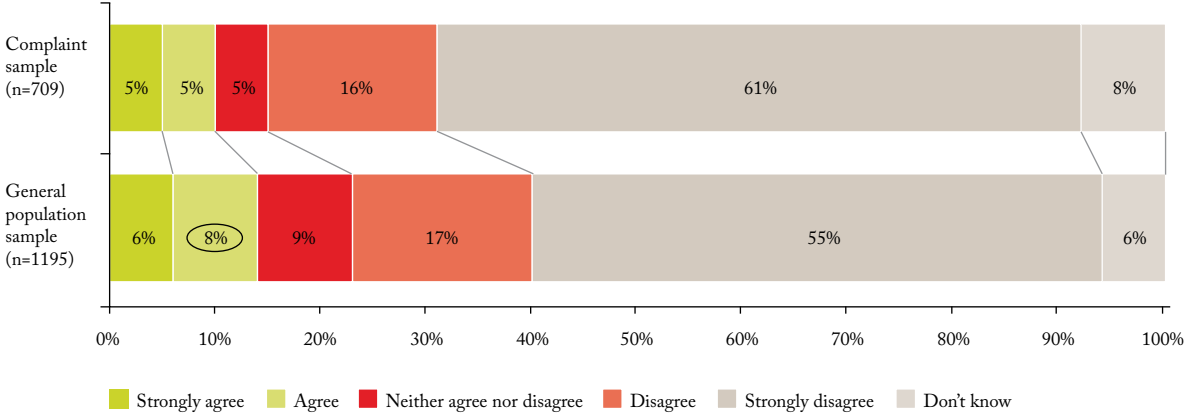
Some saw humour in the ad and this offset any concerns about violence.

Some felt that the image was clearly staged and that the body may be a mannequin and therefore not violent.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case number 91/08 - Wotif

#### Summary

The majority of respondents felt the Wotif.com advertisement was acceptable to be shown at any time of the day, with significantly more of the general public finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainants.

The general public had a higher level of agreement that the violence was relevant to the product being advertised. Of complainants 68 per cent strongly disagreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant.

**Differences by gender** - Female complainants (46 per cent) were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (38 per cent).

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged between 18 and 44 years were more likely to consider the ad to be acceptable compared to those aged 55 plus.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, more respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were more likely to say the advertisement should not be shown compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

Most complainants and general public were concerned that this ad depicted violence towards animals. There was a sense that the sport depicted was uncivilised and unnecessarily cruel as it involved live animals. The ink squirting from the squid was considered to be violent and likened to blood coming from a living creature. Similarly, the apparent relish with which the people partake of the sport was seen to be unacceptable in the context of their actions.

This ad was also considered violent because the cruelty perceived in the ad was associated simply with sport and this suggested condoning cruelty purely for the sake of entertainment which reinforced perceptions of the ad as unacceptable.

Viewers also reported having an emotional or physical response to the ad indicating that it made them feel sick and that it was disgusting and confronting.

There was also a sense that part of the reason for considering the violence unacceptable was the lack of connect between the violence displayed in the ad and the product. There were a number of comments that the ad would discourage people from using the service being advertised rather than encourage it.

Reasons for finding the ad violent were very similar between complainants and the general public, although complainants were more likely to indicate that the ad does not reflect society standards and was therefore unacceptable.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

The main reasons for both complainants and the general public not finding the ad violent is the lack of obvious indications of distress. There is no aggression being displayed and no people are hurt. The absence of these indicators is seen to preclude the ad being perceived as violent.

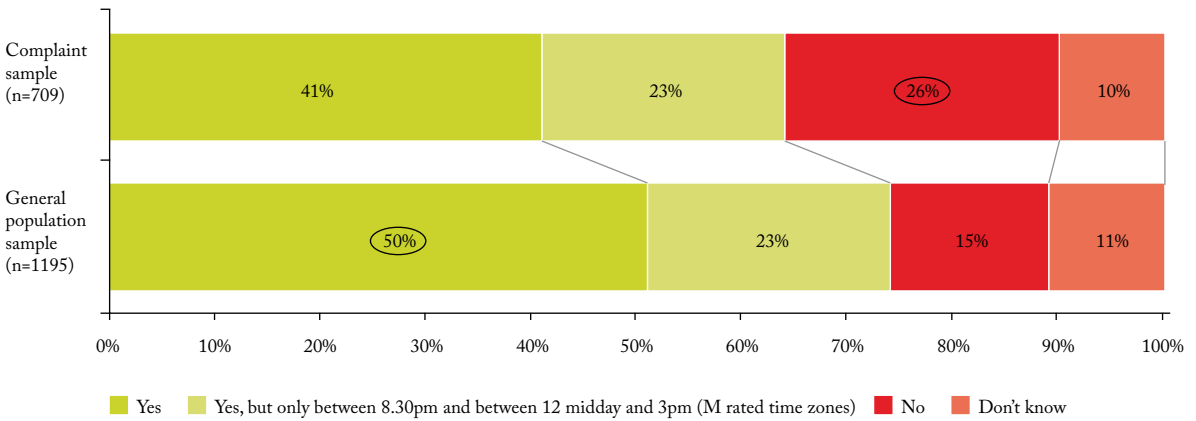
Some commented that the actions of the people in the ad were clearly voluntary, and that there are many different cultures in the world. Again, as there was no obvious distress or coercion, the ad was not seen as violent.



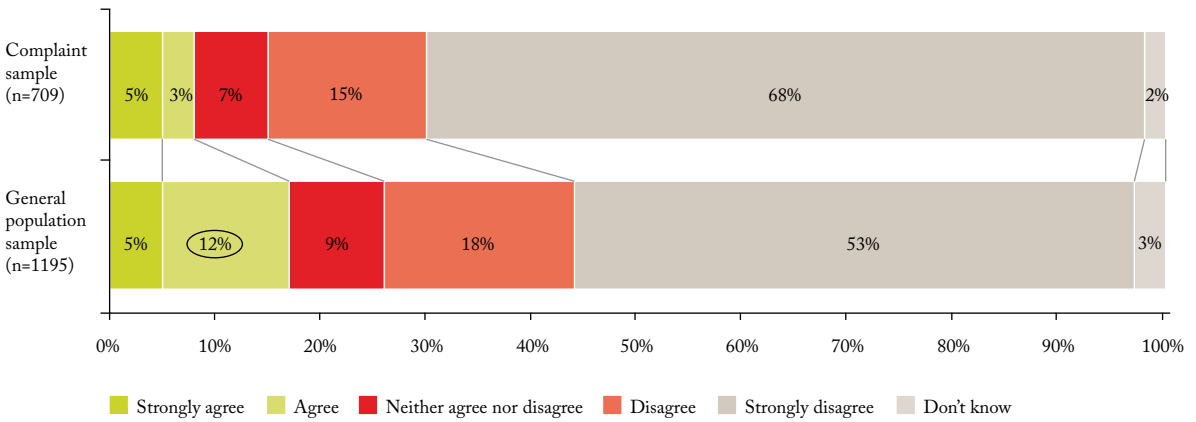
There is also a sense of fun and absurdity in this ad that is seen to offset any potential for it being seen as violent. Some people commented that it is so absurd that children would understand that it is a joke and not be disturbed by it or try to imitate the behaviour.

In relation to the potential for animal cruelty that was raised by those who consider the ad to be violent, those who didn't consider it violent commented on the preparation of any animal-based food as having a similar connotation of violence. The ad was seen as no more violent to animals than images of fishing.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case Number 287/08 - Coca Cola Mother

#### Summary

The majority of respondents felt the Coca Cola Mother ad was acceptable to be shown at any time of the day, with significantly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainant sample.

Respondents in both samples did not agree that the violence in the ad was relevant to the product advertised.

**Differences by gender** - Differences were noticed in both samples where females were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males.

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged between 18 and 34 years were more likely to be accepting of this ad than those who were in the 44 plus age group. Respondents aged 55 years plus displayed a significantly higher level of unacceptability and agreement to the ad being violent.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, more respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were significantly more likely to say the advertisement should not be shown compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

The ad content itself was deemed to be violent by both the general public and complainants. The presence of an SAS-style military team, the smashing of windows, the various assaults depicted and the fact that the scientists demonstrate a fear response to the attackers all contributed to the sense of this ad being violent.

Similarly, the fact that the attack occurs suddenly and on “unsuspecting” innocents who are merely working in their workplace was considered violent.

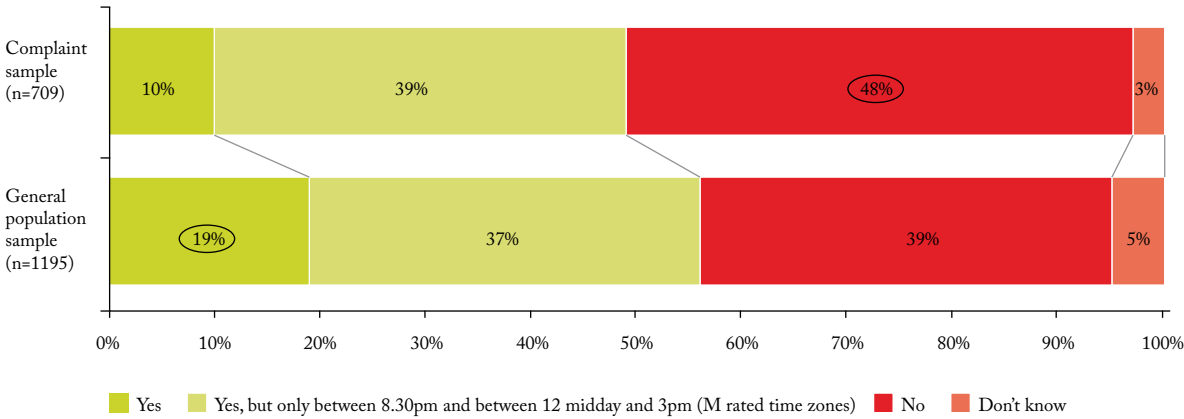
Many respondents commented that the violence in the ad was completely unrelated to the product being sold and was gratuitous in its lack of appropriateness. There were also concerns that the ad was too like a terrorist attack which was considered to be inappropriate in the current world climate.

There was concern for children being exposed to this advertising which was seen to condone assault as an appropriate response to a difficult situation. Comments were made that the “punishment” is completely out of tune with the extent of the offence.

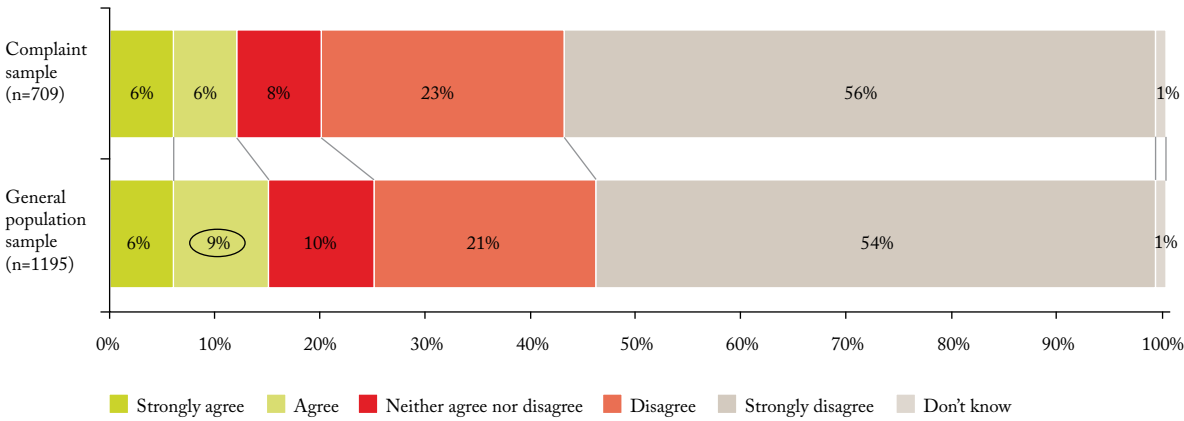
#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

Those complainants and general public who did not consider this ad to be violent considered it to be blatantly playful and farcical to the extent that the violence could not be considered real. This perception of lack of violence was enhanced through the lack of weapons, blood and evident injury. Respondents noted that the only thing that was seen was shoving, with all other events being implied and happening off screen. There was sense of the ad being more slapstick humour than intended violence.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case Number 393/08 - Cancer Council NSW Girls Night In

#### Summary

The majority of respondents felt the Girls Night In ad was acceptable to be shown at any time of the day, with significantly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was significantly stronger among the complainant sample.

The general population and the complainant sample presented similar levels of agreement that the violence was relevant to the product being advertised. Of the complainant sample 75 per cent, and 71 per cent of the general population, disagreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant.

**Differences by gender** - Slight differences were noticed in the general population sample where females (72 per cent), were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (75 per cent).

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged between 18 and 34 years were more likely to be accepting of this ad than those who were in the 35 plus age group.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, a significantly higher number of respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were significantly more likely to say the advertisement should not be shown compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

The physical restraint of the male was seen to constitute violence in this ad. The female was seen to intentionally and forcibly put the male in the position and was seen disregarding any discomfort he may be in. This lack of concern was seen to constitute a violent act.

Many comments were made in both groups about this ad trivialising domestic violence and to be degrading to the male.

It was seen to encourage a divide between the sexes and to present one gender dominating another in a way that would be unacceptable if the gender roles were reversed. It was seen to condone this type of violence and to send the wrong message about how males and females can treat each other.

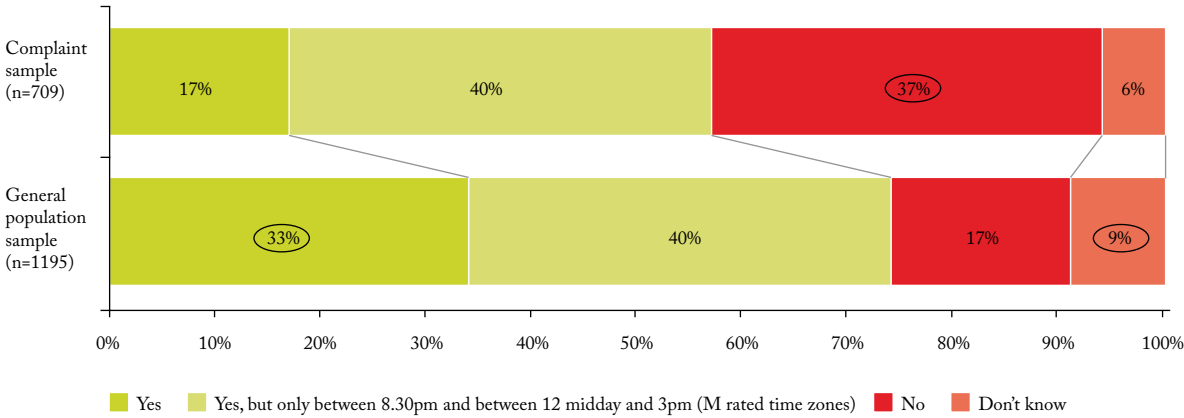
The act of violence in the ad was seen to be inappropriate for the context of the product – especially when the ad was promoting a charity event.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

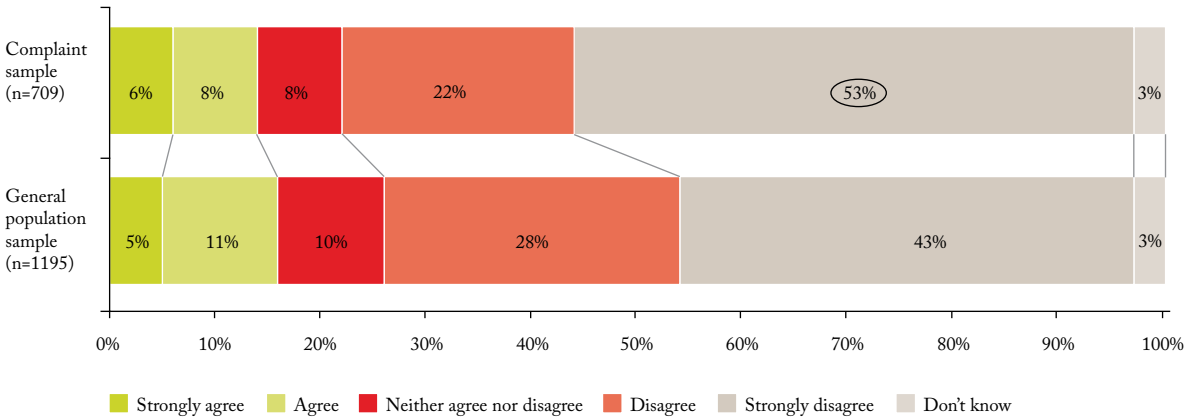
The main reason that both the complainant sample and the general public sample perceived this ad as not being violent was the humorous context in which the ad was presented. The presence of a male bound in a cupboard was seen as a funny and trivial inclusion in the ad.

The other reason this ad was perceived to not be violent was that the male shows no obvious signs of distress or discomfort.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product



### Case number 421/08 - WorkCover Victoria

#### Summary

The majority of respondents felt the WorkCover Victoria Apprentice Chef (M rated) ad was acceptable to be shown at any time of the day, with significantly more of the general population finding it acceptable compared to the complainant sample.

Agreement that the ad was violent was much stronger among the complainant sample.

The general population and the complainant sample presented similar levels of agreement that the violence was relevant to the product being advertised. Of the complainant sample 75 per cent, and 78 per cent of the general population, agreed that the level of violence in the ad was relevant.

**Differences by gender** - Differences were noticed in the general population sample where females (27 per cent) were more likely to consider the ad unacceptable compared to males (41 per cent).

**Differences by age** - Respondents aged 65 years plus in the general population were less accepting of this ad than those not in this age group.

**Differences by state** - In the general population, respondents that live in Victoria and Tasmania were significantly more accepting of the ad if it were shown during the M rated time zone.

**Differences by dependents** - Across both samples, more respondents with children considered the advertising inappropriate compared to those without children.

**Differences by complaints history** - Respondents in the general population that have made a formal complaint about advertising were more likely to say the ad should not be shown compared to those that have never made a formal complaint.

#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as violent

The main reason that this ad was considered violent was the evidence of suffering. The obvious vocal distress combined with the final image of the badly burned face demonstrated violence towards the victim. Despite recognition that the violence was unintentional it was still seen to be a violent ad.

The general public were evenly split on whether they considered this ad to be unnecessarily graphic, or that the graphic nature was required to convey an important message. More complainants considered the ad to be too graphic and that the harm depicted was unnecessary to convey the message.

A lot of respondents cited an emotional response to the ad commenting that it was disgusting, disturbing or provoked feelings of nausea. This emotional and physical response was also closely linked to perceptions of an ad being violent.

Again, in both groups, concerns were expressed about the exposure of children to this advertising, and of the need to explain to children what happens to the victim and why. Some were concerned that this ad would be distressing for children, especially with the obvious signs of suffering that are included.

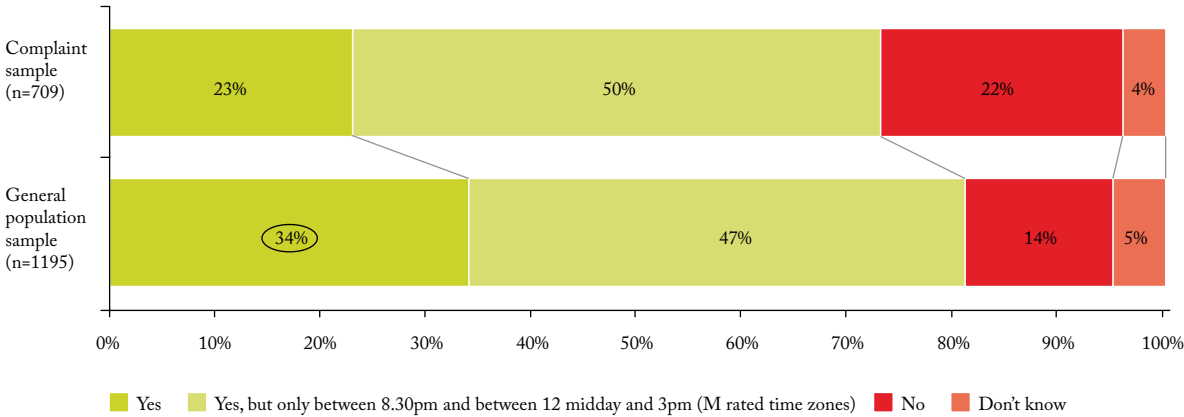
#### Reasons for perceiving the ad as not violent

The main reason for not seeing this ad as violent was the accidental nature of the incident and the fact that there was no aggression shown between two or more people. Similarly, as the harm caused by the accident is self-inflicted, it was not seen as being a violent act.

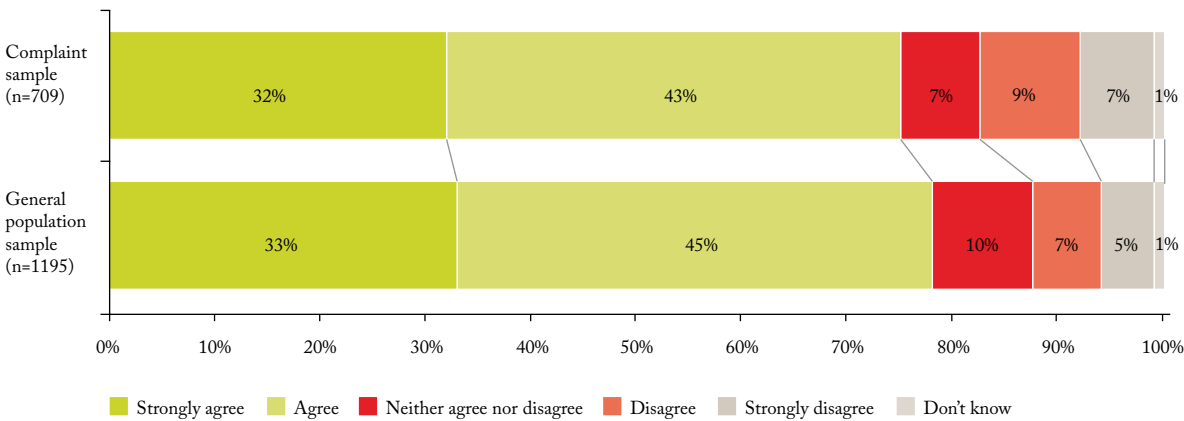
The ad was seen as depicting a real life scenario and to be conveying an important message. While the consequences of the accident are seen as being graphic, some respondents did not see this as meaning the ad was violent.

Some people did comment that the graphic nature of the ad was not necessary and that there must be better ways to convey the message.

Acceptability



Relevance of violence to advertised product







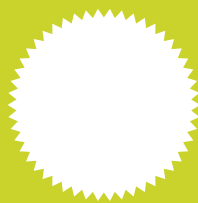
.....

*Complaints procedure findings*

.....  
.....

# Part 4

.....



### Awareness of place to complain

Awareness of the Advertising Standards Bureau as the place to complain jumped to 67 per cent spontaneous awareness from the 10 per cent spontaneous awareness result in the December 2006 research. In the 2006 research awareness of the ASB jumped to 65 per cent after prompting.

Of the general public 67 per cent were aware that they could complain to the Advertising Standards Bureau if they had a complaint about paid advertising in relation to language, discrimination, concern for children, violence, sex, sexuality, nudity or health and safety. A significantly higher proportion of the general public nominated the media source as the organisation they could complain to compared to the complainants.

### Spontaneous awareness of complaints organisations

| Organisations   | Complainant Sample (n=790) | General Public Sample (n=1195) |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Advertising Standards Bureau                          | 96%                        | 67%                            |
| Advertising Claims Board                              | 2%                         | 7%                             |
| Free TV   | 19%                        | 19%                            |
| The TV/Radio station where you saw / heard the advert | 55%                        | 58%                            |
| The newspaper/magazine where the advert was printed   | 39%                        | 48%                            |
| Other   | 7%                         | 3%                             |
| Don't know  | 1%                         | 9%                             |
| None / there's no where to complain to                | -                          | 4%                             |

### First port of call for complaints

Survey results showed that complainants were most likely to complain in the first instance to the ASB. The general population were more likely to complain in the first instance to the media source (television or radio station or print outlet) on which they saw the advertisement.

The general public is much more likely to go to the media source (such as the TV station, newspaper or radio station) with their complaint compared to the complainants. 31% of those in the general public who had made a complaint, had made their complaint to the Advertising Standards Board, and 8% to the Advertising Standards Bureau. Most complainants would go to the Advertising Standards Bureau or Board.

### Organisations to which complaint was made

| Organisations   | Complainant Sample(n=747) | General Population Sample (n=48) |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Advertising Standards Board                             | 64%                       | 31%                              |
| Advertising Claims Board                                | 1%                        | -                                |
| Advertising Standards Bureau                            | 34%                       | 8%                               |
| Free TV   | 4%                        | 15%                              |
| The TV / Radio station where you saw / heard the advert | 13%                       | 48%                              |
| The newspaper / magazine where the advert was printed   | 3%                        | 10%                              |
| Other   | 9%                        | 6%                               |
| Don't know  | 2%                        | 8%                               |

### Reasons for choosing to not make a complaint

For those who had concerns but had not made a complaint, the most common reason for inaction, among both complainants (40 per cent) and the general population (45 per cent), was that nothing would happen, that it was not worth complaining. This percentage has risen since the previous research in 2006, when 18 per cent of the sample believed that nothing would happen, that it was not worth complaining. In the 2006 survey, another five per cent of people believed the issue was too personal or not a big enough deal for others.

In both surveys the reason of being 'too lazy' to complain was high – 22 per cent in the recent survey and 35 per cent in the 2006 survey.

Both complainants and the general population had a similar incidence of considering the process too bureaucratic. The general population had a higher incidence of being deterred by not knowing how to complain, who to complain to and a perception that the process is too complicated.

### Reasons for choosing to not make a complaint

| Organisations                                | Complainant Sample (n=25) | General Population Sample (n=453) |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Too complicated / complex                    | 4%                        | 15%                               |
| Didn't know who to complain to               | -                         | 15%                               |
| Didn't know how to complain                  | -                         | 16%                               |
| Process of complaining is too bureaucratic   | 20%                       | 21%                               |
| Too lazy / couldn't be bothered              | -                         | 22%                               |
| Nothing would happen / not worth complaining | 40%                       | 45%                               |
| Other  | 28%                       | 10%                               |
| Don't know                                   | 16%                       | 6%                                |

### Concern about paid advertising standards

Of complainants two per cent, and 58 per cent of the general public, had not been concerned about any advertising they had seen in the previous 12 months.

Among the complainant sample the most common causes for concern were sex, sexuality and nudity (48 per cent), concern for children (43 per cent) and language (22 per cent).

Among the general population sample the main cause of concern was sex, sexuality and nudity (26 per cent), with concern for children equal with language as the next highest cause for concern at 14 per cent.

### Incidence of having been concerned about paid advertising standards

| Topics                   | Complainant Sample (n=790) | General Population Sample (n=1195) |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Language                 | 22%                        | 14%                                |
| Discrimination           | 21%                        | 7%                                 |
| Concern for children     | 43%                        | 14%                                |
| Violence                 | 21%                        | 13%                                |
| Sex, sexuality or nudity | 48%                        | 26%                                |
| Health and Safety        | 21%                        | 6%                                 |
| Other                    | 19%                        | 3%                                 |
| None of these            | 2%                         | 58%                                |

Topics of complaint made in the previous 12 months

Of the general population sample 90 per cent had never made a complaint about advertising and of this sample 58 per cent had not been concerned about advertisements they had seen in the past 12 months.

In the complainant sample, only two per cent had not been concerned in the past 12 months.

The topics about which complainants registered a complaint are aligned with the incidence of concern with sex, sexuality and nudity and concern for children being the main topics of complaints.

Topics of complaint made in the previous 12 months

| Topics                   | Complainant Sample (n=771) | General Population Sample (n=501) |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Language                 | 14%                        | 2%                                |
| Discrimination           | 16%                        | 1%                                |
| Concern for children     | 34%                        | 3%                                |
| Violence                 | 14%                        | 2%                                |
| Sex, sexuality or nudity | 37%                        | 5%                                |
| Health and Safety        | 13%                        | 1%                                |
| Other                    | 17%                        | 1%                                |
| Not made a complaint     | 3%                         | 90%                               |