



MEDIA RELEASE

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Child abuse awareness campaign wins best radio ad of the year

A controversial advertisement for Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA), written by Steve Dodds from agency, Whybin TBWA in Sydney, has won the 2009 Gold Siren award for best radio ad of the year, as well as a Silver Siren for winner of the single advertisement category. Another ad, part of the ASCA campaign, has also won a Silver Siren as winner of the craft category at today's announcement in Sydney of the 2009 Siren Award winners.

The ASCA ad, called "21st Birthday", was announced as winner of the industry's annual award for creative excellence in radio advertising, and will be automatically entered into the Cannes Radio Lions to be held next month at the Cannes Advertising Festival. The ad, one of three in a campaign, is controversial in its use of humour to promote awareness about child abuse, and the television campaign has been heavily criticised for being "insensitive." ASCA is a national organisation which works to improve the lives of adult survivors of child abuse throughout Australia.

The awards were judged by the Siren Council, comprising creative directors and producers from advertising agencies and studios from throughout Australia. Judge, Emma Hill, Group Creative Director, Clemenger BBDO said of the winning ad: "It was the stand out ad in terms of making you stay, listening and feel something, even though that something was "incredibly uncomfortable." So many radio ads just wash over you and are easy to ignore. This one wasn't."

Ms Hill said the ad was not insensitive or inappropriate: "It's hard hitting yes, but I think it gets the message across that child abuse is very difficult to move on from and that victims need a lot of love and support to do so."

Judge, Craig Moore, creative director, One for All, said the ad was hard to ignore: "In past years there has been two or three standouts in the pack, this track won by a mile."

Writer, Steve Dodds from Whybin TBWA, said not many ads feature people laughing about child abuse: "Most public service commercials try to tug at the heart strings, or shock with graphic imagery. We figured people tune out to that kind of approach. A lot of people think victims of childhood abuse should just get over it and we wanted to show they can't. It'd be great if they could, but they can't."

ASCA Chair, Dr Cathy Kezelman said the organisation was thrilled with the impact of the radio campaign: "The three radio ads, the radio component of ASCA's national campaign are sharp and punchy and like the rest of the campaign, confront the long-term legacy of child abuse head on. They highlight the horror of emotional, sexual and physical abuse intentionally utilising both male and female perpetrators and victims. Like the rest of the campaign they bravely disarm the audience, shattering taboos and getting people thinking and talking about the repercussions of childhood abuse, often for the very first time. We are thrilled with their impact; they are spearheading real change."

The ad, "Rugby", also part of the ASCA campaign, won a Silver Siren Award today for the 2009 craft category winner. The ad was produced by sound engineer, Beau Silvester from Whybin TBWA and creative directors were Garry Horner and Matt Kemsley.

The other Silver Siren winner announced today was a campaign for Perth Zoo, called "Find your Animal", written by Kurt Beaudoin and Josh Edge from agency, The Brand Agency in Perth.

Judge, Emma Hill, Group Creative Director, Clemenger BBDO said about the Perth Zoo campaign: "Great campaigns win because great executions can keep coming and coming from the idea, without there being the classic example of a great script, then a good second one, then an ok third one. Perth Zoo won because the idea came from an interesting insight, and they proved endless executions can come from it. I thought the performances and casting were awesome."

Chief executive officer of Commercial Radio Australia, Joan Warner said the Siren Awards provided a great opportunity to recognise excellence in Australian radio advertising and highlight the great work being achieved.

"Each year the Siren Awards continue to raise the bar in terms of creativity and originality. There have been nearly 600 entries this year – a fantastic result which shows how important this Award has become. Also the success of past winners and entrants at Cannes is testament to the fact that great work is being achieved with radio ads in Australia," Ms Warner said.

Last year's Gold Siren winner was an advertisement for RACV Financial Services called "Disclaimer", written by Paul Reardon and Julian Schreiber from Clemenger BBDO in Melbourne, which went on to win a Silver Radio Lion at the 2008 Cannes Advertising Festival. The RACV ad was one of three 2008 Sirens finalists and winners that made it to the radio shortlist in Cannes last year.

The national Siren Awards, now in their fifth year, are run by Commercial Radio Australia and are designed to recognise the best radio advertising in the country. A winner is announced in each of the three categories: single, campaign and craft as well as an overall winner who receives the Gold Siren.

The winner was announced at a breakfast in Sydney today, hosted by Jonathan 'Jono' Coleman and Ian 'Dano' Rogerson, from the drivetime show, "The Jono & Dano Show", on-air on WS-FM (Sydney), GOLD 104 (Melbourne) and 4KQ (Brisbane), as well as many regional stations across Australia. The breakfast was followed by a one day seminar on how to write and produce good radio ads, called "Getting Radio off the Page".

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Media note: Winning ads can be heard and downloaded on website: www.sirenawards.com.au

List of 2009 Siren Award winners:

Siren Awards 2009 Overall Category Winner (Gold Trophy)

Agency: Whybin TBWA, Sydney
Writer: Steve Dodds
Client: Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA)
Commercial Title: "21st Birthday"

Siren Awards 2009 Single Category Winner (Silver Trophy)

Agency: Whybin TBWA, Sydney
Writer: Steve Dodds
Client: Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA)
Commercial Title: "21st Birthday"

Siren Awards 2009 Campaign Category Winner (Silver Trophy)

Agency: The Brand Agency, Perth
Writer: Kurt Beaudoin and Josh Edge
Client: Perth Zoo
Campaign Title: "Find Your Animal"

Siren Awards 2009 Craft Category Winner (Silver Trophy)

Agency: Whybin TBWA, Sydney
Sound Engineer: Beau Silvester
Creative Director: Garry Horner and Matt Kemsley
Client: Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA)
Campaign Title: "Rugby"

About the Siren Awards

What are the Siren Awards? The Siren Awards are a national, annual advertising award, started in 2005, designed to encourage excellence and creativity in radio advertising.

How do they work? The award recognises excellence in radio creativity – and contains five rounds each year, plus a final call round. The annual Gold Siren winner is chosen from the winners and highly commended in each round and is judged by the Siren Creative Council, a group comprising leading creative directors from national advertising agencies, radio stations and production studios.

Who can enter and how? People writing radio ads from advertising agencies or radio stations. Entry is free via a dedicated website. www.sirenawards.com.au

What are the categories? Radio Single, Radio Campaign (consisting of no less than three commercials) and the Craft Category.

Who judges the Award? The annual award is judged by the Siren Creative Council. The winner of each round during the year then judges the following round.

What are the prizes? Apart from recognition gained from winning the bi-monthly award, the ultimate winner for the year wins a trip for two to Cannes and is entered into the Cannes Radio Lions award. Other prizes include the Gold & Silver Siren trophy as well as inclusion on a CD which includes audio of all the Siren winners.