



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	101/04
2. Advertiser	Invista Australia Pty Ltd (Stain master carpets)
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 11 May 2004
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement features well known character Sir Les Patterson (played by Barry Humphries) who is hosting the launch of a new range of designer carpets in a fancy apartment. A “mini” version of his character runs around the party tripping over female waitresses or guests so that they spill their food or drink onto the carpet. The female cleaner arrives the next day and is perplexed by the mess she has to clean up. The tagline of the advertisement is “New designer carpets from Stainmaster. Still the master of stain resistance.”

THE COMPLAINT

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

“There is a culture that exists in this country where women have two primary uses. The first is a sexual nature and all that entails. The second is of a domestic nature, when she no longer fits in the first category. I see this culture again and again portrayed in the advertising industry.”

“Women must be shown as having value and more to contribute to society as a whole, rather than a mindless worthless sex object or domestic mothering doormat, solely there for the purpose of others.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“It was not our intention to cause any member of the public concern, or be perceived as in any way diminishing the role and value of women in society.”

“Please be reassured it was never intended as a sexist slur but a dramatised, good-humoured demonstration of the carpet’s stain resistant qualities.”

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted that in the context of prevailing community standards, the majority of people would find this advertisement humorous rather than offensive.

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to discrimination (sex)/vilification.

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