



Case Report

1	Case Number	0031/15
2	Advertiser	AAMI
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Pay
5	Date of Determination	11/02/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Physical Characteristics
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A woman in a full head and neck brace watches as a male boarder living in her home reaches for something in the fridge. he is wearing a very short robe and white underpants. The woman cannot turn her head away because of the neck brace.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

Number 1 it is demeaning to people who are portly and I do not want to see a larger gentleman bending over and showing his baggy fronts.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

Issues raised to date:

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Physical Characteristics*

2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

We would like to address some of the concerns and provide commentary relating to our advertising approach and the specific claims raised against Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.

At AAMI, we use character-driven humour across all our advertising to entertain and engage. The ‘Boarder’ ad mentioned was created to dramatise the consequences of not having income protection through a light hearted and humorous moment, with our ‘boarder’ entering the kitchen dressed in a skimpy and slightly daggy house coat. His actions & the way he was dressed were designed to make the point about how ‘overly comfortable’ he was.

In responding to all aspects of Section 2 of the AANA Advertising Code of Ethics, we would also maintain that the ad in question does not portray people or depict anything which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community (relating to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief). At AAMI, we feature both men and women in our character-driven ads, in various scenarios.

We also maintain that the advertising does not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people, and that there is no presentation or portrayal of violence. There is no use of strong or obscene language in this or any other AAMI advertising.

Finally, we also believe that the advertisement makes the point, with appropriate sensitivity to nudity for our audience. Our ‘Boarder’ character is not nude at any point, the use of the skimpy housecoat was necessary to create a caricature of his ‘overly comfortable’ behaviour and was believed to add to the humour. With regards to the comments about his weight, we can confirm that the casting brief and selection process did not specify weight and our chosen talent was selected on the basis of his ability to convey the character required for humour.

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 the complainant’s concern that the advertisement features inappropriate material and is demeaning towards women.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that ‘advertisements shall not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.’

The Board noted the advertisement features a woman in a full head and neck brace looking on as the male boarder living in her home appears in the kitchen wearing a short housecoat and reaches for something in a drawer. The woman cannot turn her head away because of the neck brace. The voiceover describes that with AAMI Income protection you won’t have to take in a boarder in the event of being without an income due to certain circumstances.

The Board noted the complainants concern that the advertisement is demeaning to people who are portly.

The Board noted that the boarder is a male and that he is presented in a non-glamorous orange coloured housecoat and that he is slightly overweight. The Board noted that the advertisement is not suggesting that the man is unhealthy and his weight is not highlighted in the advertisement.

The Board noted that the depiction of the boarder entering the kitchen and his efforts to get something from the drawer is shown in slow motion to increase the uncomfortable circumstance the woman is in as she cannot turn away due to the brace. The Board noted that the advertisement is light hearted and is aimed at adults who would potentially be seeking income protection. The Board noted that the comical nature of the advertisement is not intended to negatively portray the man as overweight but rather to highlight the awkwardness of the situation.

The Board considered overall that the advertisement does not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of their gender.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience".

The Board noted that as the boarder bends over his white underpants are revealed. The Board noted that the depiction of the man bending over is intended to put the viewer in the same position as the lady is with the neck brace, and that the awkwardness is humorous and not sexualised.

The Board considered that the depiction of the man is not sexualised and there is no nudity. The Board determined that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex with sensitivity to the relevant audience and did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.