



## Case Report

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Case Number</b>                   | <b>0065/13</b>                              |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Advertiser</b>                    | <b>Virgin Money (Australia) Pty Limited</b> |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Product</b>                       | <b>Insurance</b>                            |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Type of Advertisement / media</b> | <b>Pay TV</b>                               |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Date of Determination</b>         | <b>13/03/2013</b>                           |
| <b>6</b> | <b>DETERMINATION</b>                 | <b>Dismissed</b>                            |

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A man and a woman in a domestic situation of fitting a child's car seat into a car. The first scene contains the man trying to fit the car seat into the car and the woman offering her assistance in a trade-off, for the man undertaking the purchase life insurance they have previously discussed. During the discussion the man expresses his perceived view that purchasing the insurance is difficult and the woman states the reality that it can be a quick and easy process with Virgin Money. The woman hands the man a mobile phone to assist the man in calling Virgin Money. The features are displayed on screen in the next scene. The following scene contains the two characters, seated in car, either side of the child's car seat discussing how they were able to fit the car seat, purchase the Virgin Money's life insurance product and the woman states: what would you do if I wasn't around? The man appears to start day-dreaming and the woman appears to be unimpressed by his non-verbal response. The contact details are displayed again.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I believe this ad reinforces negative stereotypes of men not reading instructions to get projects complete and of men being apathetic when it comes to care of their family, this point is accentuated by the condescending tone of the mother.*

*This advertisement is only one example of many similar TV ads that I find mildly offensive,*

*because I feel they present a negative gender stereotype of men. An increasing number of TV ads seem to present men (particularly 'family-men' ie: 'dads') as pathetic imbeciles who require constant monitoring and correction by their ever-wise female partner. I don't think this advertising tactic would be at all acceptable if the gender-roles were reversed, and that women were constantly portrayed as childish idiots in a domestic context - so why is it seemingly ok for men to be presented as such?*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*Virgin Money (Australia) Pty Limited (Virgin Money) writes in response to the complaint lodged with the Advertising Standards Bureau on the 31 January 2013 and forwarded to us on the 20 February 2013.*

### *Advertisement description in complaint*

*The advertisement description provided in the complaint states: "A man appears to be struggling to install a child's car-seat, and a woman (presumably his spouse) arrives to assist him in this task. During this time, she educates him as to the potential benefits of a Virgin life-insurance policy."*

### *Reason for concern*

*The reason for concern provided in the complaint states that: "This advertisement is only one example of many similar TV ads that I find mildly offensive, because I feel they present a negative gender stereotype of men. An increasing number of TV ads seem to present men (particularly "family-men" ie: "dads") as pathetic imbeciles who require constant monitoring and correction by their ever-wise female partner. I don't think this advertising tactic would be at all acceptable if the gender-roles were reversed, and that women were constantly portrayed as childish idiots in a domestic context - so why is it seemingly ok for men to be presented as such?"*

### *Virgin Money response*

*We have considered the single complaint and the advertisement in question in light of the provisions of the AANA Code of Ethics. Provision 2.1 of the code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people 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."*

*After carefully considering the AANA Code of Ethics and each provision against the content of the advertisement, we find that the advertisement does not breach the AANA Code on any grounds. We have set out below, our reasons in relation to the relevant provision, namely 2.1. In our view, the advertisement does not portray people or depict material that discriminates against or vilifies any person or section of the community. The man may be at best be said to having difficulty with caring about the family's safety and putting the child car seat in the car. The woman could be at best be said to assisting and applying knowledge in getting the child car seat correctly and safely installed in the car, that could protect a child in the case of a car accident.*

*Neither, the man or the woman is treating the other in a predatory, derogatory or demeaning manner. The advertisement does not allude to the fact that women may have greater expertise in handling child car seats or installing child seats in a particular type of car. The advertisement does not allude to the fact that men may have no expertise in handling child car seats or installing child seats in a particular type of car.*

*We have developed the advertisement around a common human insight, of tasks that require a perceived degree of complexity are put off or deferred to another person who may have greater understanding. And it's sometimes easier to get someone else to assist us in understanding what may be perceived as a hard task but may turn out to be a rather easy task. We have used a light hearted approach, to demonstrate that purchasing life insurance can be completed in less time than installing a child car seat in a car. The overriding message of the advertisement is buying life insurance is easier than it is normally perceived and it can be completed in less time than installing child car seat in a car. We considered that this common reality is something that many viewers would be able to tap into and relate to.*

*In the context of this advertisement, there is no intention to make any general commentary about the role of women or men in relation to operating the child car seat or purchasing life insurance.*

*We conducted consumer research into the advertisement with the target market. The feedback received was that 77% of respondents stated they were either "Very Positive, Positive" or "Neutral" about their enjoyment after viewing the advertisement. The main messages identified in the advertisement were recorded as: Virgin Money Life Insurance doesn't have to be hard to purchase, It is easier to purchase Virgin Money Life Insurance than perceived, Acceptance is guaranteed, and Virgin Money offers an easy way to protect a family's financial security.*

*We have attached the following material in support of our view that includes a digital copy of the advertisement and copy of the script.*

*Conclusion*

*We took care in preparing the advertisement to ensure the advertisement was within the boundaries established by the AANA Code. The advertisement does not discriminate or vilify women or men, nor treat any manner that is insensitive to the relevant audience. We submit the advertisement does not breach any of the AANA Code.*

## **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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement reinforces negative stereotypes of men in its portrayal of a man unable to fit a child safety seat in a car.

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 that the advertisement features a man struggling to fit a child's car seat and his wife offering to do it for him if he agrees to purchase the life insurance they had previously discussed.

The Board noted that it had recently dismissed complaints about this advertisement under the

medium of TV (case reference 0504/12) where it:

“... noted the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement portrays men as unable to fit car seats or do any task unless it is easy. The Board noted that the suggestion that the man would not be able to fit a car seat is stereotypical and considered that it is presented in a manner which is mildly humorous and not negative or demeaning. The Board noted that the advertisement does not suggest all men would have a problem fitting a car seat, just this particular man, and considered that the overall tone of the advertisement is light-hearted and that the couple is presented as a team.”

Consistent with its previous determination the Board determined that, in this instance, the advertisement did not depict any material that discriminated against or vilified any person or section of society.

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

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