



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Case Report

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| 1. Case Number : | 0129-21 |
| 2. Advertiser : | Massel Australia |
| 3. Product : | Food/Bev Groceries |
| 4. Type of Advertisement/Media : | Radio |
| 5. Date of Determination | 26-May-2021 |
| 6. DETERMINATION : | Dismissed |

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This radio advertisement states:

Voiceover: In breaking news, kitchen shy husband uses wok for the first time. Children and wife astounded.

Man: I really didn't know what the wok was for. But then I found this recipe for chicken and broccoli stir fry and I thought "I can do this", and I did.

Voiceover: Massel's stocks and gravies. It's great news if you're looking to lift your meal from ordinary to sensational. Proudly Australian owned, all natural, gluten free and plant based since 1982. Massel's stocks and gravies, it's quality you can taste.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The advertisement used the negative, sexist stereotype of the clueless man. He can't even use a wok. I can't imagine that such a negative representation of a woman would be acceptable.



THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

It has been brought to our attention that a complaint has been raised claiming that the attached radio commercial "S-MASS230221-B.mp3" has been reported for potentially being in breach of AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification\Gender.

The radio commercial in question is satirical in nature and features a "kitchen-shy husband" who uses a wok for the first time. The character claims he "did not know what the Wok was for" but soon learns what it is for, by following a recipe and successfully using the wok.

There is no discrimination, vilification, degradation or exploitation in any form. In fact, we fail to see how this could be seen as anything other than a story of empowerment for the character.

The attached script was written by a writer from Nova FM in Sydney who had the following comment when advised of the complaint.

"Obviously we never set out to offend listeners or customers, and we certainly never break the law when it comes to advertising.

Most importantly, no Commercial Radio Code of Practice has been broken with this commercial. The same goes for Commercial Radio Guidelines.

I also don't believe section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics has been breached.

Parody & satire is commonly used in advertising and this is exactly what we have done here. When heard in context, I'm certain a fair & reasonable person would not feel we have crossed any lines."

Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

We aim to continue to encourage our consumers to try new things in the kitchen via our radio advertising campaign whilst remaining within the boundaries set out in the code of practice.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether the advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement is uses an offensive and negative stereotype of a man.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.



Section 2.1: Advertising or Marketing Communication 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.

The Panel noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of:
Discrimination - unfair or less favourable treatment
Vilification - humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule
Gender - male, female or trans-gender characteristics.

The Panel noted the Practice Note for this section of the Code:

“Harmful gender stereotypes are unacceptable because they perpetuate unconscious bias and rigid norms of femininity and masculinity that shape what it means to be a girl, woman, boy or man. Advertisements should take care to avoid suggesting that skills, interests, roles or characteristics are:

- *always uniquely associated with one gender (eg. family members creating a mess while a woman has sole responsibility for cleaning it up);*
- *the only options available to one gender; or*
- *never carried out or displayed by another gender, as this may amount to discrimination on the basis of gender.*

“This includes, but is not limited to advertisements that:

- *mock people for not conforming to gender stereotypes;*
- *portray an activity or product as being inappropriate for a girl or boy because it is stereotypically associated with another gender; or*
- *portray one sex failing at a task that is stereotypically associated another gender (eg. a man trying and failing to undertake simple parental or household tasks).”*

Does the advertisement portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person on account of gender?

The Panel noted that the advertisement does not suggest that the man usually does not cook or is incapable of cooking. Rather, the advertisement suggests that he did not know what a particular pan was used for/how to use it and the Panel considered that this is not indicative of him being incapable of cooking or generally incompetent.

The Panel considered that the phrase “kitchen shy” relates to the man being unsure about a particular kitchen pan rather than relating to him never cooking. The Panel noted that it is clear that the man does not shy away from cooking the recipe he found.

The Panel considered that while there may be a stereotype that men are inexperienced in the kitchen and this advertisement may lean into that stereotype briefly in the beginning, it becomes clear that the man is keen to cook and able to cook.



The Panel considered that the content of the advertisement did not show the man to receive unfair or less favourable treatment because of his gender, and did not humiliate, intimidate or incite hatred, contempt or ridicule of the man because of his gender.

Section 2.1 conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did not portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender, the Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Conclusion

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