



Case Report

1	Case Number	0157/16
2	Advertiser	Stihl Pty Ltd
3	Product	Hardware/Machinery
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	13/04/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a woman using a Stihl pressure cleaner on a patio whilst a man sits nearby reading a paper. The man looks up and whistles at the woman; when she turns to him he points and says, "You missed a bit!" The woman reacts by spraying the spot the man is pointing to whilst keeping her eye on the man. The woman then smiles and continues cleaning and we see the man return to reading his paper, also with a smile on his face.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Smug-faced male lounging in his chair reading, whilst the female is performing the cleaning duties, and he has the audacity to tell her she's 'missed a spot'. She obeys like a employee/servant. He smiles.

Sexism, subjugation, treatment of equals.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In response to this claim that we breached section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics:

2.1 Discrimination and vilification – we have not breached

2.2 Exploitive and Degrading - we have not breached

2.3 Violence - we have not breached

2.4 Sex, sexuality and nudity - we have not breached

2.5 Language - we have not breached

2.6 Health and Safety- we have not breached

Response:

As a company we take sexism, subjugation and treatment of equals very seriously and in producing this commercial we took steps to ensure we complied with the 2.2 and 2.4 of the AANA code of ethics very seriously.

The complaint suggests that “Smug-faced male lounging in his chair reading, whilst the female is performing the cleaning duties, and he has the audacity to tell her she’s ‘missed a spot’. She obeys like an employee/servant. He smiles”.

Firstly - the ad is part of a series of ads where it showcases backyard banter/joking between a happy couple. In 2 of the 3 ads the rolls are reversed, whereby the lady in the ad is relaxing in a chair, whistles at the male and implies the same joking banter that “he has missed a bit”.

Secondly - the nature of the ad is light hearted humour showcasing backyard banter/joking between a happy couple both smiling and enjoying their garden and getting the job done.

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 concerns that the advertisement is sexist and treats men and women unequally.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response in particular highlighting that the advertisement under complaint is part of series of advertisements where both men and women are depicted as relaxing whilst the other works.

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 woman using a Stihl pressure cleaner, whilst a man sits nearby.

The Board considered that the woman presents as happy, fully dressed for the job at hand and is positively depicted as able to operate the machinery with confidence. The Board noted that there is playful banter between the two and there is no sense that her response to his interjection is other than amused.

The Board noted that the overall tone and theme of the advertisement is intended to be light-hearted and humorous and considered that the advertisement did not depict material that discriminated against or vilified any 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.

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