



Case Report

1	Case Number	0163/17
2	Advertiser	Helping Hand Aged Care
3	Product	Professional Service
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	26/04/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Age

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement is a 45 second (and 15 second cut down) which depicts a fictional event of an older woman playing the recorder at all times of her day, whilst her daughter talks to camera about her mum being frailer and looking at care options. The decision is made for the mum to remain at home with home care services, so everyone's happy.

THE COMPLAINT

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

*The Ad was offensive. It denigrated elderly citizens as incapable, mentally impoverished, simple and in need of firm direction and care.
It promoted discrimination.*

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thank you for taking the time to write to us in regards to your concerns on Helping Hand's current home care television advertisement.

I apologize if it has offended you or upset you in any manner - it was not the intent to portray

older people negatively, but rather celebrate passion, humor and choice.

The advertisement was developed in collaboration with older people, with the objective of, leading with humor, the conversation around aged care services. This is done to normalize what for many is a difficult conversation and decision to commence the engagement of aged care services. So, tongue in cheek, the advert was developed to achieve this goal. It is not a serious depiction but rather a fictional extreme to bring humor into the conversation.

Having said this, I do understand that what may be funny for some, others may cringe at. And again I apologize if this television commercial caused any offence.

Our organization does take our responsibility of care for older people very seriously and as shown in previous advertising (available on our website) - we have always tried to encourage open conversation, independence and choice in our services. Previous commercials focused on the stories of clients around social isolation and carers making a decision to place a family member into residential care. Whilst the current advertisement is not traditional in its nature, the intent is again to start conversations.

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 depicts an older woman in a manner that is offensive and denigrates elderly citizens.

The Board reviewed 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 this television advertisement shows an elderly woman playing the recorder around her home, while doing a crossword, playing to the budgie, and in the bathroom. She is heard saying that music is a big part of her life. Another woman (the daughter) is seen talking to the camera about how she arranged for ‘Helping Hand’ to come to the home to help her mother out with tasks in the home such as gardening and cleaning.

The Board noted that the advertisement is promoting the services of a care option that allows the elderly to stay in their own homes longer rather than going to into a retirement village or other aged care facility.

The Board noted considered the realistic community view that many people would prefer to live alone, rather than in a shared setting. This preference is shared across generations, but is a particular concern to older people when considering their future housing options. The Board noted there are a number of reasons for this preference, and in this particular advertisement, the point is made through the constant playing of music. This music, while delightful to the

player, would not necessarily be welcome by fellow aged-care home residents.

In the Board's view the elderly woman is portrayed in a way that is fun and shows her being capable and full of energy and is not a depiction that is demeaning.

The Board noted that the daughter speaks about her mother with tongue in cheek as she comments about the fact she is getting older and the options that were considered for her well being. The Board noted that the daughter does joke about having her mother move in with her family and there is an underlying tone and light humour around the constant recorder playing.

The Board noted that it had recently considered an advertisement for Reckitt Benckiser (0021/17) where a grandmother is seen using fly spray excessively. In that case the Board noted that "as automated bug sprays are a newer product it is reasonable to imply that older people may not be aware of this alternative and considered that while advertisers should take care on how they portray older people, in the Board's view the focus in the advertisement is on the behaviour and not the age of the woman."

Similarly in the current advertisement, the Board noted that the portrayal of the woman using the recorder as she carries out her varying tasks is humorous and a focus on her behaviour and not on the age of the woman herself. The Board noted that in the final scenes woman is shown to be resting in a chair and still holding the recorder as she sleeps. In the Board's view she is not depicted in a manner which is negative or ageist.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of age and 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.