



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Ad Standards Limited
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0176-21
2. Advertiser :	Reckitt Benckiser
3. Product :	Health Products
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Determination	23-Jun-2021
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification
AANA Code of Ethics\2.6 Health and Safety

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts a father and son getting on public transport. One seat is available, as a man gets off. The father and son hesitate, but then use Glen 20 product to wipe down seat.

THE COMPLAINT

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

*They were not wearing a mask on a train.
BAD LOOK IN CURRENT TIMES.*

There are health and safety issues if people start to spray aerosols in confined spaces such as buses or trains as this can pose a fire threat as aerosols are combustible. There are also issues with commuters who have asthma or severe allergies who can be affected by the contents of the spray even though it is a small item. Objection is on health and safety grounds. Ad should not be showing someone spraying inside a confined space such as public transport.

I think the ad is really racist. The man who was sweaty looks to be Polynesian dark skinned athletic sweaty man. The father and son White preppy business and private school kid.



The look they give each other after the man has left and the relief they have Glen20 to clean the bus buzzer. It's that racist narrative that black peoples are dirty all over again !! Shocking and outright racist

The ad is offensive in terms of race and class. A professional white man and his priveleged looking son get on a bus, near an islander/black tradesman who is seated. When the tradesman gets up to vacate his seat and the bus, the white man cleans his seat and the red call button with a glen 20 wipe, implying that a black working class man is dirty and spreading disease. Very offensive.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thanks for sending through the notification. Please see below for our response to the concerns raised.

- 1. Masks: At the time of the TVC filming, the advice from the NSW government was that masks were not compulsory on public transport. All NSW health and safety requirements were carefully followed during the filming/production and the ad is a reflection of the ever-changing and evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. We recommend to always follow latest Health and Safety advice provided by the government.*
- 2. Objection for spraying aerosols in confined spaces: It's important to note that the Glen 20 "On the go" 100ml Sprays are in the format of "manual / pump sprays" and are not aerosol cans/propellants. The Glen 20 On the Go spray is designed for use on surfaces where the possibility to catch fire is low with correct usage and if not intentionally misused/ sprayed towards fire or another ignition source. The product usage in the copy is a demonstration of correct product usage with no ignition sources shown and reflects how a consumer should use the product correctly. The TVC features a statement "Follow directions for use" with directions for correct use on the product stating "keep away from heat, hot surfaces, sparks, open flames and other ignition sources." The bus environment is also not a completely confined space with windows which can be opened to allow airflow and the door frequently opened as well to allow people/airflow in and out.*
- 3. Discrimination: We recognise the importance of diversity and representation in Australia and in media, which is why we include a range of talent in all our advertisements. The advertising highlights the heightened germ concern shown by consumers within this environment (public transport), with the casting of 'sweaty gym goer' amplifying the germ concern through the occasion (germs, sweat, odour) as presented by the cast member returning home from a workout. Glen 20 is fully committed to supporting and representing diversity in all forms and ensuring this is reflected across our communications.*



We hope this helps to address the concerns and are happy to discuss further if any questions.

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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement:

- Is racist and classist.
- Depicts people not wearing masks on public transport which is against COVID-19 safety recommendations.
- Shows the use of an aerosol in a confined space which is a fire threat and can be dangerous if used around people with asthma.

The Panel reviewed 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
- Race - viewed broadly this term includes colour, descent or ancestry, ethnicity, nationality, and includes, for example, ideas of ethnicity covering people of Jewish or Muslim origin

Discrimination and vilification on account of class

The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement is classist in the depiction of the white collar family wiping down the man's seat after he gets up.

The Panel noted that class or socio-economic status is not a category under Section 2.1 of the Code, and as such these complaints do not raise an issue which can be considered under the Code.

Discrimination or vilification on account of race

The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement is racist in the depiction of the white family spraying the other man's seat after he gets up.

The Panel noted that the man who gets up appears to be from a Polynesian or similar background, and the father and son depicted appear to be Caucasian.



The Panel noted that there is an existing negative historical stereotype of people with darker-skin being dirty or unhygienic. The Panel acknowledged that the casting choices in this advertisement did allude to this negative stereotype, particularly through the depiction of the negative look on the father's face as he sees the vacated spot. The Panel considered that given the historical stereotype, some people may interpret this advertisement as showing the father spraying the seat because of the man's skin colour.

The Panel commended the advertiser's wish to be inclusive in casting talent but noted that advised that advertisers should be mindful of such stereotypes when casting for advertisements to ensure that any potential negativity does not lead to discrimination or vilification under the Code.

However, the Panel considered that this was not the intent of the advertiser, and that there was not an overall impression of negativity towards the man in the advertisement, despite the earlier interaction between the father and son. The Panel considered that the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the disclaimers stating the product is effective against COVID-19 virus meant that the overall impression is that the father wiped down the rail and sprayed the seat because of potential COVID-19 risk.

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 race, the Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Section 2.6: Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

Lack of masks on public transport

The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the people depicted on the bus were not wearing masks.

The Panel noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic there has been an increase in concern in the media and in the community regarding hygiene, and that some jurisdictions in Australia at certain times have required mask wearing on public transport.

The Panel considered that while current recommendations on hygiene measures during the COVID19 pandemic are important, the Panel has taken the view that a degree of regulatory pragmatism is needed when evaluating advertisements at this time. The Panel noted that there is no suggestion in the advertisement that hygiene measures are unimportant, or a depiction that trivializes the COVID-19 pandemic or suggests that people should not follow current health directives.



Use of aerosol in confined spaces

The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement shows the use of an aerosol in a confined space which is a fire threat and can be dangerous if used around people with asthma.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the product used is a manual pump spray and not an aerosol propellant.

The Panel considered that the spray is not a fire hazard and was not dangerous to use on a bus.

The Panel acknowledged that some people with asthma and allergies are particularly sensitive to certain smells and sprays. The Panel noted that aerosol sprays could have an overpowering effect, however again noted the product used in the advertisement was not an aerosol spray.

The Panel considered that the product was used in-line with its intended use and was consistent with how many surfaces in public are cleaned normally. The Panel considered that the use of the spray was not likely to cause harm to anyone in the vicinity.

The Panel considered that most members of the community would not consider the advertisement to portray material which would be against Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

Section 2.6 conclusion

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not contain material which would be contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety and determined that it did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Conclusion

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