



## Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0183/12</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Cheap as Chips</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Hardware/Machinery</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>Mail</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>23/05/2012</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Page 10 of Cheap as Chips Mother's day catalogue, on sale May 3rd 2012, features a pink tool set with the text, "ladies or low testosterone male pink tool set 6 piece".

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*The item is advertised as being "ladies or low testosterone male pink tool set 6 piece"*

*I find the implication that testosterone levels are in some way related to colour preference to be incredibly offensive in addition I am appalled by the implication that a homosexual male has a lower level of testosterone.*

*I have spoken with the manager of the advertising area of Cheap as Chips who stated that he considered the advertisement to be an attempt at humour and that it was not aimed at gay males but metrosexual males or effeminate males.*

*The onslaught of pink items over the last few years has been clearly targeted at the female audience. If a male wishes to purchase and use such an item for himself then good on him. However to blatantly associate the concept of "low testosterone" (something which can only be accurately determined by medical procedures) with a preference for pink items only reinforces stereotypical images in relation to male sexuality.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*The description provided for the tool set was meant purely in jest with no malice or 'vilification' intended whatsoever, we do try to employ a 'humorous bent' in our catalogues and this was an attempt at humour. In hindsight, it may have been lacking in good judgement or even in poor taste but the inference was not 'aimed' at any particular demographic. We are happy to take all viewpoints on board and will strive in any future attempts at humour to consider and understand their perspectives before proceeding to print.*

## **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 offensive and reinforces stereotypical attitudes in the community.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted that the advertiser's response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.1 of the Code. Section 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.

The Board noted that the advertisement depicts has the image of a six piece tool set coloured pink, and the text next to it reads "ladies or low testosterone male pink tool set 6 piece" \$10.

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement stereotypes men by implying that testosterone levels are related to colour preference and that homosexual males have a lower level of testosterone.

The Board noted that the advertised product was released as part of the Mother's Day promotional catalogue and was designed to target "Mum's". The Board considered that the wording was a tongue-in-cheek approach, intended to be humorous and light hearted.

The Board considered that there may be a portion of the community that would take offense to the suggestion of only males with low testosterone levels being interested in the colour pink, however the Board considered that the genuine idea of the product (and the advertising campaign) was in fact to make a more masculine style product ie tools, appealing to women by colouring them a more feminine colour.

The Board considered that the stereotyping of 'pink' for girls and 'blue' for boys is an age old tradition that would not be considered offensive by the broader community. A minority of the Board felt that the advertisement made an inference that a 'woman is a man with low testosterone' and that a 'man with low testosterone is the same as a woman' and that these are negative depictions. The majority of the Board however, considered that although the message may be stereotyping men as being effeminate, considered that the stereotype is not negative to the point that it would breach the Code.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not discriminate against or vilify any person or section of the community on account of sex and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.