



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
PO Box 5110, Braddon ACT 2612  
P (02) 6173 1500 | F (02) 6262 9833

**AdStandards.com.au**

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
ACN 084 452 666

# Case Report

1	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0205/19</b>
2	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>LG Electronics Aust Pty Ltd</b>
3	<b>Product</b>	<b>House Goods Services</b>
4	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>Internet-Social-Inst</b>
5	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>10/07/2019</b>
6	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Disability

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This Instagram advertisement features a video which starts with a man waking up in bed wearing a hairnet. Text superimposed on the screen states 'Life is messy...Fingerprints! Smudges! Germs! Creases! Water spots! and Stains!' as each description appears the man is seen obsessively trying to clean up the mess. The writing continues 'you could take extreme measures...' and the man is seen dodging around people on a sidewalk making sure not to step on cracks in the pavement' he then meets someone at a restaurant and opens up a briefcase which contains clean cutlery and a glass. The writing then states 'Or.....Let LG take the stress out of cleaning,'. Details of the LG Quad Wash with True Stream product is then shown.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*The main character of the ad was a man with obvious OCD and his illness was being framed in a derogatory way. The ad starts with him going about his day with his OCD ticks and ends by suggesting that this dishwasher can take the stress out of his life. It specifically says "Life is messy. Fingerprints! Smudges! Germs! Creases! Water spots! .*





*. . And stains!" All with exclamation marks! ODC is a serious (and sometimes debilitating) disability and shouldn't be made light of to sell dishwashers.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*Social media advertisement used on LG Facebook and Instagram channels. The 52 second video depicts a man who is regimented about cleanliness and promotes how the LG Quadwash Dishwasher with TrueSteam technology can take the stress out of cleaning, in a lighthearted manner. The content of the advertisement is designed to highlight and communicate the cleaning benefits of the LG Quadwash dishwasher using steam technology – delivering sparkling clean dishes with fewer water spots. This particular execution is due to end in approximately 2 weeks.*

*REASON FOR COMPLAINT: "The main character of the ad was a man with obvious OCD and his illness was framed in derogatory way" and thus a breach of section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics."*

*We refer to the letter received on 26 June 2019 in relation to the above complaint.*

*We have considered the complaint and the advertisement in question against Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics ("the Code").*

*The advertisement does 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. It does not employ sexual appeal, or portray sex, sexuality or nudity and does not present or portray violence.*

*The advertisement uses language which is appropriate in the circumstances and does not include strong or obscene language and is clearly distinguishable as advertising to the relevant audience.*

*We note that the nature of the complaint relates specifically to the concern that the advertisement in question contains material which trivialises or is derogatory towards people with an obsessive compulsive disorder.*

*We have carefully considered the Code, and have assessed its provisions against the content of this advertisement. We submit that the advertisement does not breach the Code on any of the grounds set out in Section 2 of the Code.*

*Section 2.1 of the Code sets out that "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 Practice Note to Section 2.1 of the Code provides the following definitions:*

*“Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment*

*Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule”.*

*We do not believe that the content of the advertisement contains any material that discriminates against or vilifies any person or section of the community.*

*Whilst the advertisement does feature a man who is regimented about cleanliness, this in itself does not discriminate against or vilify people with an obsessive compulsive disorder or mental illness generally. In fact the advertisement makes no reference to the main character having an obsessive compulsive disorder. Further, the main character is not portrayed in a way that is unfair, humiliating, intimidating or ridiculing and is not a negative stereotype of any person or section of the community.*

*We are disappointed that the complainant found the advertisement offensive which was not the intention of the advertisement. The advertisement is not intended to cause any offence, rather, it is designed to highlight the cleaning performance of LG Quadwash dishwashers using steam technology, in a lighthearted manner. We believe that reasonable audience members will recognise the same and view the advertisement as intended.*

*Accordingly, we submit that the advertisement does not discriminate against or vilify a person or section of the community on account of mental illness and therefore does not breach Section 2.1 of the Code or on any other grounds under the Code.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

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

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement discriminated against or vilified a person on the basis of a mental illness.

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

The Panel 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 Panel noted the Instagram advertisement features a man who is seen performing various cleaning tasks around his home including cleaning cutlery and a glass, before walking to meet a woman at a restaurant where he unpacks his own cutlery and glass to use.

The Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.1 provides the following definitions:

“Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment.

Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule.

Disability – a current, past or potential physical, intellectual, psychiatric, or sensory illness, disease, disorder, malfunction, malformation, disfigurement or impairment, including mental illness”

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement depicts a man with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in a way which frames his illness in a derogatory way.

The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that the advertisement depicts a man who is regimented about cleanliness but that does not make any reference to the main character having Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

The Panel considered that Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is an anxiety disorder which can be considered as a disability or mental illness (<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/anxiety/types-of-anxiety/ocd>).

The Panel considered that the man in the advertisement is seen to be a perfectionist and that he does not like a messy home. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not provide any definitive indication about whether the man has a mental disorder and that while some of his behaviour may be consistent with people with OCD it is not possible to diagnose someone with such a condition from behaviour in an advertisement.

The Panel considered that the man in the advertisement is not ridiculed, and is depicted as the hero in the advertisement. The Panel considered that the man is shown to be in control and is not negatively impacted by his need for cleanliness. The Panel considered that no-one in the advertisement is seen to laugh at or react negatively to the man, and the woman in the advertisement appears to be attracted to the man’s attention to detail. The Panel considered that the overall effect of the advertisement is a celebration of the type of person who would appreciate the benefits provided by the advertised product.



The Panel considered that the man in the advertisement was not shown to receive unfair or less favourable treatment, and he was not humiliated or ridiculed because of a disability or mental illness. The Panel considered that the depiction of the man would be unlikely to be considered by most members of the community to incite contempt or ridicule of people with a disability or mental illness.

The Panel 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 disability or mental illness and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaints.

