



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0217/19
2	Advertiser	Electrolux Home Products
3	Product	House Goods Services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	10/07/2019
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a woman talking about being a mum and being able to recognise the different types of screams in her household, like the dog ruined my homework scream, and that the pause function on the cook-top comes in handy and helps her cope with life's little emergencies. And that it makes her feel really clever. A man is then heard screaming and crouching on top of a workbench to avoid a spider. The woman's voice can be heard advising him to trap it with a jar, and he responds that it is enormous.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The advertising specifically states by the woman at the end of the ad that "it makes me feel clever". The ad then finishes with a man kneeling off the floor on a workbench outside of the house where the product was demonstrated screaming like a little girl at the sight of a small spider.

This ad is specifically aimed at gender discrimination by depicting the woman inside as clever and managing the household and children while the incompetent male is hiding



and screaming in fright in the garage.

I find this content and message discriminatory and anti male in the extreme.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We refer to the complaint made in connection with the Westinghouse Induction Cooktop 'Scream' advertisement featured on free to air television (Channel 9) on 26 June 2019 (Advertisement). We thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to this complaint.

Background – the Westinghouse whitegoods advertising campaign

The Advertisement is part of Electrolux's larger campaign, including a digital media campaign, positioning Westinghouse products as 'clever' products which recognise the demands made on consumers' time and showcase products which allow consumers to efficiently multitask. Westinghouse puts Mum and Dad at the helm of the controls, helping them effortlessly deal with any situation. At the heart of the approach is the life of a modern Australian family. The character-lead approach shines a light on the everyday moments that take place in their chaotic and unpredictable household. This is done by playfully demonstrating relatable chaotic truisms and scenarios of a modern family to highlight the control that Westinghouse's range of products deliver. The target audience for the Advertisement is women aged 25-54. The observations in the Advertisement are intended to be light-hearted, humorous and memorable, particularly insofar as they depict life's little 'emergencies' to which women may need to devote attention as mothers and wives.

The advertisement the subject of the complaint shows a mother cooking a meal for her family and dealing with various domestic situations which require her attention. She becomes aware of these situations via different types of screams which occur off camera. When her attention is diverted from the task of preparing the meal, she is able to use the Westinghouse 'Smart' cooktop facilities to pause cooking and then quickly begin re-cooking the meal.

Response to issues raised in the complaint

Electrolux is committed to conducting all advertising and promotions to the highest standards and we take seriously any complaints made in relation to our advertising and promotions.

As requested, we have addressed the complaint by reference to all relevant advertising codes, being the AANA Code of Ethics (Code of Ethics).



Having considered the Advertisement and the complaint, as well as the requirements of the Code of Ethics, we respectfully submit that the Advertisement does not in any way contravene the Code of Ethics.

Please note that we have not assessed the complaint by reference to the:

- AANA Food and Beverages Marketing and Communications Code (please see our explanation below); or*
- AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children as the Advertisement is not targeted at children (please see our explanation below); or*
- Australian Food and Grocery Council Responsible Children's Marketing Initiative, as the Advertisement is not targeted at children; or*
- Australian Quick Service Restaurant Industry Code as Electrolux is not a signatory to this initiative.*

Application of the AANA Food and Beverage Marketing and Communications Code

We submit that the AANA Food and Beverage Marketing and Communications Code does not apply to the Advertisement for the following reasons:

- 'Food and Beverage Products' are defined in the AANA Food and Beverage Marketing and Communications Code to include any food or beverage products other than alcoholic beverages; and*
- the product advertised in the Advertisement, an induction cooktop, is not a food or beverage product for the purposes of the AANA Food and Beverage Marketing and Communications Code.*

Application of the AANA Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children

We submit that the AANA Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children does not apply to the Advertisement for the following reasons:

- a "child" for the purposes of the AANA Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children is a person 14 years old or younger;*
- the target audience for advertising of the Westinghouse Induction Cooktop and other whitegoods is women between the ages of 25-54;*
- the language and tone of the Advertisement is not of a childlike nature, and does not feature scenarios which are aimed at or are appealing to children; and*
- the Advertisement is not directed or targeted to children and has not been placed in media which is specifically directed or targeted to children.*

Code of Ethics

We submit that, having regard to section 2 of the Code of Ethics, the Advertisement does not contravene the Code of Ethics.



The Advertisement does not contravene section 2.1 of the Code of Ethics as 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.

The Advertisement is in no way discriminatory, inappropriate or anti-male, especially having regard to the relevant target audience, which is women aged 25-54. The Advertisement presents to the target audience, in a humorous way, common life emergencies that arise from time to time and need to be dealt with, including homework emergencies, sibling arguments and unwanted pests. The Advertisement is intended to be a light-hearted, tongue-in-cheek campaign designed to connect with the target audience - consumers who lead busy lives and take challenges in their stride.

The Advertisement does not contravene section 2.2 of the Code of Ethics as the Advertisement does not employ sexual appeal using images of a person under the age of 18 years nor does the Advertisement employ sexual appeal in a way which is exploitative or degrading of any individual or group of people. There is no debasement or abuse of any person or group of people.

The Advertisement does not contravene section 2.3 of the Code of Ethics as the Advertisement does not contain any violent graphics or imagery.

The Advertisement does not contravene section 2.4 of the Code of Ethics as the Advertisement is not sexually suggestive, does not contain nudity or references to sex.

The Advertisement does not contravene section 2.5 of the Code of Ethics as the Advertisement features language which is appropriate for the relevant audience and medium and does not feature strong or obscene language.

The Advertisement does not contravene section 2.6 of the Code of Ethics as the Advertisement does not depict any material which is contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety, including any unsafe practices or images.

The Advertisement does not contravene section 2.7 of the Code of Ethics as the Advertisement is clearly distinguishable as advertising to the relevant audience.

We note that sections 1 and 3 of the Code of Ethics do not apply to the Advertisement.

On the basis of the above, we do not consider that the Advertisement contravenes the Code of Ethics, having regard to section 2 of that Code or otherwise.



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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement was discriminatory towards men.

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 advertisement features a woman talking about being a mum and being able to recognise the different types of screams in her household, like the dog ruined my homework scream. The woman states that the pause function on her cooktop helps her cope with life's little emergencies and makes her feel clever. A man is then heard screaming and is shown on top of a work bench avoiding a spider, the woman calls out for him to trap it with a jar and he responds that it's enormous.

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."

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement is discriminatory and anti-male as it portrays the woman as clever and managing the household while the incompetent male is hiding in the garage.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that their target audience is women aged 25-54 and that this is why a woman is depicted using the product in the advertisement.

The Panel noted the Practice Note for the Code provides the following guidance on gender stereotypes:

"Stereotypes may be used to simplify the process of communication in relation to both the product offered and the intended consumer.

As such, advertisements may feature people undertaking gender-stereotypical roles e.g. a woman cleaning the house or a man doing DIY, or displaying gender-stereotypical characteristics e.g. a man being assertive or a woman being sensitive to



others' needs, but they should take care to avoid suggesting that stereotypical roles or characteristics are:

- always associated with that gender;
- the only options available to that gender; or
- never carried out or displayed by another gender.

as this may amount to discrimination on the basis of gender.

Portrayals may amount to discrimination or vilification as determined by the Community Panel where they depict unfair or less favourable treatment of gender; and/or humiliate or invite contempt or ridicule of gender.

For example, advertising which:

- depicts family members creating a mess while a woman has sole responsibility for cleaning it up;
- suggests that a specific activity is inappropriate for boys because it is stereotypically associated with girls, or vice-versa; or
- features a man trying and failing to undertake simple parental or household tasks.”

The Panel considered that while the woman is depicted as responding to the household emergencies, there is no suggestion that she is undertaking this role because of her gender and there is no suggestion that she is the one who always undertakes these tasks.

The Panel considered the advertisement is a humorous depiction of realistic household life and how the product can help the user respond to little emergencies while ensuring that the food isn't burnt.

The Panel considered the woman using the phrase 'it makes me feel clever' in response to the function on the cooktop is not suggesting the woman's intelligence is related to the functioning of her appliances, rather it relates to her ability to handle different small emergencies as they arise and her knowledge of the advanced features of the product being advertised.

The Panel noted the final scene of the advertisement where the man was depicted as fearful of a spider. The Panel noted that a fear of spiders is not an uncommon phobia and is shared by many members of the community.

The Panel considered that the male in the advertisement is seen on top of a bench in fear of a spider on the ground, and considered that a fear of spiders is not a gender-based stereotype. The Panel considered the man is not seen to be failing at a simple household task, rather he is shown to be afraid because of the large spider. The Panel considered that the advertisement does not humiliate or intimidate the man or incite hatred, contempt or ridicule him on the basis of his gender. The Panel also considered the man is not lowered in character or quality on the basis of his gender.



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 gender 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.

