



Case Report

1	Case Number	0258/15
2	Advertiser	AHM Health Insurance
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	08/07/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a woman asking her partner if he has sorted out their health insurance yet. He replies that he hasn't done anything about it, and proceeds to shy away from the conversation by sinking into the couch. Each time the camera focuses on him we see that he has sunk even further in to the couch until eventually only his arm is visible.

THE COMPLAINT

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

An unsmiling and bossy young girl accuses a gormless young man of not arranging THEIR insurance! (Why she is unable to do it, no-one knows!)

The gormless young man sinks further and further into the sofa as she accuses him. Then she takes his finger and places it on the computer.

Surely this would constitute abuse, were the genders reversed.

Why is one gender always treated negatively, abused and insulted, while the female is always treated positively, portrayed as sensible and intelligent?

This anti-male sexism in ads is an absolute disgrace. An absolute disgrace. Did you know

that young males commit suicide at 5 times the rate young females do?

I am convinced that the relentless humiliation and put downs in ads, comedies and film causes males to feel worthless.

I know they have a bad effect on me!

If this abuse was aimed at females in same way there would be public out-cry.

The big idea is to have a standard of treatment and uphold it across the Board. That is not hard. It is a disgrace.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

This TVC aims to promote ahm Health Insurance.

The advertisement uses humour to tap into a consumer tension, that people can tend to put things off, even avoid them, including things that can be of benefit, like taking out Private Health Insurance to insure their health and to potentially save on tax.

The advertisement demonstrates this with a young couple having a conversation in their home. The female talent asks her partner if he has indeed sorted out their health insurance yet, implying he has committed to doing this, yet he advises he hasn't actually done anything about it, and proceeds to shy away from the conversation by sinking into the couch.

The desired action is for consumers to find the ad humorous, encourage brand saliency and ultimately think/feel that ahm is "the health insurer for me".

ahm Health insurance aims to provide affordable and accessible health insurance to more Australians.

In response to the complaint, the advertisement was not intended to offend or to cause any of the concerns raised, which we deny, such as discrimination, violence, sex or sexuality, nudity, language or health and safety.

ahm have obtained internal legal advice prior to the airing of this ad. As this is privileged and confidential, we are not in a position to share this with ASB. However, it raised no concern or risk associated with the advertisement.

Some aspects of the complaint are incorrect, such as the reference to 'she takes his finger and places it on the computer'. The actual scene can be viewed in the TVC and there is no physical interaction or force used here.

The complaint goes onto state that the male talent is treated negatively, however, this is subjective and was not the intent in the script or the filming.

Furthermore, the complaint references anti-male sexism. Again, this was most definitely not intended and we suspect this is a matter of opinion and would not be interpreted by the vast majority.

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 concern that the advertisement is sexist in its depiction of a man being treated negatively by a woman.

The Board viewed 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 features a man sinking further in to a lounge to avoid his partner’s questioning regarding whether or not he has arranged their health insurance.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the man is treated negatively by the woman.

The Board noted that the woman’s questioning of the man is not aggressive and considered that the scenario depicted is one which would be familiar to many couples. The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the woman takes the man’s finger and places it on the tablet screen. The Board noted that the woman does not touch the man she merely holds the tablet near his hand and asks him to touch it with his finger and considered that there is no depiction or suggestion of physical abuse in the advertisement. The Board noted the overall humorous tone of the advertisement and considered that the woman’s behaviour is not inappropriate and she does not treat the man in a manner which is discriminatory or vilifying.

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 their gender.

The Board 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 complaint.