



ADVERTISING  
STANDARDS  
BUREAU

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## Case Report

1	Case Number	0264/14
2	Advertiser	Virgin Money (Australia) Pty Limited
3	Product	Insurance
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Free TV
5	Date of Determination	23/07/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Open to a close-up of the husband, talking about his recent shock in being made redundant. He goes on to say that everything worked out okay because he had Virgin Income Protection and was protected if he could not work due to sickness, injury or involuntary redundancy. With Virgin Income Protection, he had more time to work out his next move, and try something different. Through-out the ad he tries on various job roles through costume, from a corporate suit, tradesmen outfit, chef uniform then fire fighter. He interacts playfully with the wife, and acknowledges with Virgin Income Protection he could pay the bills and still look after his family, after all, that's his real job anyway.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I was offended my the way the female was repeatedly sexually objectifies the male according to his occupations. I was highly offended as a male and it would not be aired if the roles were reversed.*

### THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*We have considered the single complaint and the advertisement in question in light of the provisions of the AANA Code of Ethics (“Code”). Provision 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.”*

*After carefully considering the Code and each provision against the content of the advertisement, we find that the advertisement does not breach the Code on any grounds. We have set out below, our reasons in relation to the relevant provision, namely 2.1.*

*In our view, the advertisement does not portray people or depict material that discriminates against or vilifies any person or section of the community. Whilst the advertisement does contain a family situation where the husband was recently made redundant, it does not portray the husband as inferior or demean him in any way. The man is reconsidering his career options, with the full and continual support of his wife. Neither, the man or the woman is treating the other in a predatory, derogatory or demeaning manner. In fact, the woman is fully engaged in the conversation and supportive of her husband as he takes the time to consider his next career move. They are conversing and their dealings with each other are conducted in a jovial and caring manner. She does not vilify him in any way.*

*The outfit change throughout the advertisement is used to illustrate that Virgin Income Protection covers a number of different roles and provides optional cover for involuntary redundancy. We developed the advertisement to counter a common consumer misconception that income protection is only available to people working in a limited number of professions. Provision 2.2 of the Code states, “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.” In our view, whilst the advertisement includes light hearted dialogue which may be considered to reflect sexual chemistry between the husband and his wife, which is normal in any spousal relationship, we do not use sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative or degrading of any individual or group of people. The husband and wife’s dealings with each other are conducted in a jovial manner, and plays out in a playful/caring way. The love, care and respect shown by the wife towards her husband, and vice versa, is apparent.*

*For completeness, our advertisement does not contain any content that would breach provisions 2.3 to 2.6 of the Code, that is, pertaining to violence, sex/sexuality/nudity, strong/obscene language or health and safety.*

*Conclusion*

*We took care in preparing the advertisement to ensure the advertisement was within the boundaries established by the AANA Code. The advertisement does not discriminate, vilify, degrade or exploit men or women, nor treat them in any manner that is insensitive to the relevant audience. We submit the advertisement does not breach any of the AANA Code.*

## **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 objectifies the man according to his occupations.

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 the advertisement features a man who states that he had been made redundant. The advertisement shows the man in various uniforms and outfits showing his wife the different clothing. The man continues to speak about income protection and what it can cover. His wife makes comments about each of the different outfits he is wearing.

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the female is sexually objectifying the man.

The Board noted that the man and the woman in the advertisement are portrayed as husband and wife and that they are seen laughing and giggling about the comments that the woman makes.

The Board considered that the depiction of the couple is shown as part of a caring relationship and that although her comments have mild sexual innuendo, she is shown to be clearly his partner and is attracted to him and to each of his uniforms which is indicative of her support for him, regardless of the occupation he is considering.

The Board noted that the advertisement was given a 'W' rating by CAD and considered that the innuendo would not be understood by young children and was not inappropriate in the context of a loving marriage.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates or vilifies a section of the community on account of gender and 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.