



Case Report

1	Case Number	0271/17
2	Advertiser	Smart Homes for Living
3	Product	Real Estate
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	21/06/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Age
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a family (3 generations) in a dining about to light the candles on a girls' birthday cake. The girl's mother asks the father "where's your Mum". He calls his mother on the telephone, and starts giving her directions in their large new home. She appears in the hallway, and it becomes apparent that she was in the house, and she says "sorry, I took a wrong turn at the second bathroom".

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad pokes fun at a middle aged woman for getting lost in the house. She is depicted as dithery and apologetic and reinforces negative stereotypes of age and gender.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

This advertisement has been aired a number of times, and has been available on the internet (including Youtube) since December 2016 (30 second). This complaint is the first one in respect of this advertisement of which we are aware.

The complaint alleges that the advertisement discriminates or vilifies a person due to their age and/or gender, due to a portrayal of a middle aged woman getting lost in the house.

The advertisement does not discriminate against or vilify any person by reason of age or gender. The advertisement does not carry any implication about the attributes of either women or the elderly (and in fact the woman portrayed is not elderly, but only middle aged).

The advertisement is a humorous way of at showing that the house is large, in fact so large that it is possible to get lost in it, not that the grandmother is foolish or stupid for getting lost in the house. The humour is enhanced by the realisation that the grandmother is not being given directions to the house, but within the house. The humour comes from this situation, and not the attributes of the person – which are independent of the situation she is in.

The grandmother is not discriminated against in the advertisement – the whole narrative of the advertisement is her inclusion in the family birthday event. It does not vilify her – she is not subject to humiliation, intimidation, the inciting of hatred, contempt or ridicule, rather it is clear that she is welcomed as part of the family unit.

There is nothing in the advertisement that creates an overall negative impression of either women or the elderly.

A sister ad run as part of the same campaign shows a woman living with her parents – with the twist being that the parents have moved into her large Smart Home, rather than her not having moved out. This shows that the ads are directed at the humorous realisation of matters not being as assumed, not making fun of those that may have certain attributes.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (the “Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement makes fun of a woman getting lost in a house which reinforces negative stereotypes of older women.

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 this television advertisement depicts a grandma getting lost on her way back from the toilet in her son’s new house and ringing him for directions.

The Board noted that the advertisement depicts a family birthday celebration and considered that while some family members look a bit frustrated that the grandmother is taking so long to return from the toilet in the Board’s view this frustration is common in family situations

such as this and there is no suggestion that the grandmother is not welcome at this family gathering or that she is thought of in a negative manner.

The Board noted that the grandmother is relatively young and considered that she is depicted as being in control and aware of her surroundings: although she has got lost in the house, she is aware of the rooms she has passed and has taken control by ringing her son to confirm directions. The Board noted that the family pause the birthday celebration until the grandmother has returned and considered that the overall suggestion is that the grandmother is welcome and being included rather than being discriminated against because of her age.

The Board noted that the message of the advertisement is that the house is so big it is easy to get lost in and considered that although it was a woman who got lost in the Board's view the focus is on the size of the house and not on the gender of the person who got lost.

Overall 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 age or gender and 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.