



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0272/18
2	Advertiser	Reckitt Benckiser (Aust) Pty Ltd
3	Product	House Goods Services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	20/06/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Cruelty to animals

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement for Dettol features a young boy who has a frog in a jar.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This advertisement showed a live green tree frog being kept in a glass jar. I believe this to be cruelty to animals. The frog was being used as a prop to show that Dettol wipes can clean up germs. I cannot believe that an animal was treated in this manner. The ad would have taken some time to film, no doubt causing great distress to the frog. As Dettol is highly toxic to frogs, due to their skin absorbing all types of moisture I feel that this ad is cruel and offensive to all those who are sensitive to animal welfare.

Towards the end of the advert a large live green tree frog was in a sealed glass jar. Green tree frogs are protected and this advert indicates that it is OK to cruelly contain a distressed protected reptile in an airtight container. I feel that this action contravenes Australia's environmental ethics.

This advert encourages people to think its OK to act this way with our fragile wildlife.



Dettol Healthy Clean wipes are toxic to green tree frogs.

1) This advertisement uses a living frog which is contained within a glass jar with a closed lid. This ad clearly promotes cruelty to animals and encourages the viewers that containment of living creatures within a restricted environment with also no access to air, water or food is acceptable.

2) Semantics used in this advertisement - detol is used for spraying frogs/toads within tropical Australian locations to eradicate them.

The ad shows a child with a green tree frog in a jar, I believe this to be wrong and promoting cruelty to animals. I also believe the green tree frog to be a protected species ?

I feel it's irresponsible of Dettol to feature a live frog in a sealed jar it promotes animal cruelty and am concerned of the fate of that frog given the length of time it takes to film a television commercial. It should be investigated

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Compliant reference number: 0272/18

Issues raised to Date: 2.3 – Violence Cruelty to animals.

Advertisers response to complaint

We refer to the above complaint received by Ad Standards on 2 June 2018, and notified to us by letter dated 4 June 2018.

The “whatsnew? Dettol Multi-Purpose Cleaner” advertisement shows a boy with a tree frog in a closed container. The boy brings the frog to the dinner table, and the boy’s mother takes the container holding the frog away from the boy. The use of the tree frog in this sequence of the advertisement as described was pre-approved by the Animal Welfare League NSW. The Approval Number is 01052018/02. A copy of the Notification Form has been uploaded. The live tree frog was supplied by a registered handler holding Reptile License AKL84734.

We do not consider that we have in any way breached provision 2.3 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code) in relation to Violence or Cruelty to Animals, or any other aspect of



the Code. It is important to note that:

(a) The tree frog was kept in a sealed, and well-ventilated container and was not exposed to discomfort or handling, other than by a registered animal handler;

(b) At all times a registered animal handler with a Reptile Licence was engaged to manage the welfare of the tree frog; and

(c) A veterinarian was had been identified to ensure swift and effective veterinary intervention if it had been required.

We were sorry to hear that the complainant was concerned by the advertisement. We would not engage, or engage any advertising or promotional agency, in any advertising activity that harmed any person or animal or give any inference or incitement of harm. We take these matters very seriously. We hope that you are able to alleviate the concerns of the complaint by relaying the welfare measures taken by the agency involved, including the registered reptile handler and veterinary oversight.

Finally, we note that your initial assessment is based on not having seen or heard the advertisement, and your letter suggests that formulating our response to address all parts of the AANA Code of Ethics. We do not consider that we are in breach of any aspect of the Code, and thus have limited our response to provision 2.3 – Violence Cruelty to animals.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Panel noted the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement promotes cruelty to animals.

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

The Panel noted that this television advertisement features a young boy with a frog in a jar.

The Panel considered whether the advertisement breached Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised".

The Panel noted the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement shows a young boy putting a jar containing a green frog on a kitchen counter, which constitutes



animal abuse and should not be broadcast.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the frog was kept in a sealed, well ventilated container. The Panel also considered the advertiser's response that there were a range of animal welfare controls in place for the advertisement including a registered animal handler and a veterinarian on set during filming.

The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the Green Tree Frog is a protected species. The Panel considered that the Green Tree Frog is a popular pet, and it is not unlawful to keep one as a pet in Australia, providing certain requirements such as a licence are met. The Panel noted that it is unlawful in Australia to take a frog from the wild, however considered that there is no evidence to indicate how the frog was obtained.

The Panel noted that there is no evidence of the frog being kept in the jar long-term, and considered it more likely that the frog was being transported while a habitat was being cleaned.

The Panel considered that the frog did not appear to be in distress or in any danger in the advertisement. The Panel considered that the boy's behaviour cannot be regarded as cruelty as such, as the behaviour did not cause harm to the frog.

The Panel noted concerns around the harmful effects of the advertised product on the tree frog. The Panel noted that there is no implication that the product would be used in connection with the tree frog.

The Panel determined that the advertisement does not depict or condone cruelty to animals. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaints.

