



## Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0309/13</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>RACQ</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Insurance</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>11/09/2013</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The 30 second television commercial expands the creative idea of “who knows what you’ll miss without RACQ Roadside Assistance” to the point of absurdity. The creative concept tells the story of a woman whose car breaks down on the way to a date and because she doesn’t have Roadside Assistance she never sees her date again but instead builds her life around her love of cats. The advertisement then shows an exaggerated and condensed timeline of what may have happened if she had purchased RACQ Roadside Assistance and made it to the date.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*PLACE: tv*

*MEDIA: TV*

*WHEN : the other day*

*AD DESCRIPTION: A woman who fails to buy insurance fails to marry and lives as the "crazy cat lady", if she had married she would have a good life and not be a crazy cat lady.*

*REASON FOR CONCERN:*

*I find this extremely distressing and offensive, it suggests that women who do not find a man or get married will live a 'spinsters' existence with cats, or somehow women who do not marry are just old 'cat ladies' its gender discrimination, out-dated and plain false. Cat owners are not all single women and women can have fulfilling lives regardless of whether*

*they marry and having more than one cat does not make you crazy. I find this extremely offensive and should not be on TV in this day and age. Its not the 1950's and there is nothing wrong with CATS.*

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## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*Our response to the complaint*

*Regarding the received complaint we are aware and actively comply with the AANA Code of Ethics. Referring, specifically to section 2 of the code, we dispute that that we are in conflict with:*

*2.1 – As this section of the code refers to vilification and discrimination, our commercial does not incite hatred of women or cat owners or position all people that own cats as being unequal to other individuals that are not cat owners.*

*2.2 – As this section of the code refers to sexual appeal and our commercial does not contain any sexually based content.*

*2.3 - As this section of the code refers to violence and our commercial does not contain any content that could be perceived as violent.*

*2.4 - As this section of the code refers to sex, sexuality and nudity and our commercial does not contain any nudity or sexually based content.*

*2.5 - As this section of the code refers to strong language and our commercial does not contain strong or obscene language.*

*2.6 - As this section of the code refers to community standards on health and safety, our commercial does not contain any content that pertains to prevailing community standards on health or safety.*

*The commercial is understood as being a humorous dramatization to illustrate the advertising concept of “the missed opportunity” of not having Roadside Assistance. The commercial is not realistic or in any way or predictive of the choices of all individuals. In addition, the complaint states that the advertisement was for NRMA insurance, this statement is incorrect. The complaint also states that the depicted woman was positioned as a spinster, at no time is the woman referred to as a spinster. Throughout the complaint the writer claims that the depicted woman as a “crazy cat lady” at no stage does the word crazy appear in the commercial. At no stage in the commercial do we denigrate cats or women.*

## **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 concerns that the advertisement is offensive in its suggestion that unmarried women are ‘crazy cat ladies’ and that this is discriminatory.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.1 of the Code. Section 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.”

The Board noted that the advertisement features a woman whose car breaks down and so she misses a date and ends up living alone with lots of cats.

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement suggests women who don’t marry become crazy cat ladies. The Board noted that the advertisement refers to the woman as the ‘cat lady’ and makes no reference to her being crazy or old. The Board noted that the advertisement does not suggest that all women who do not marry will have lots of cats and considered that the reference to a woman as a ‘cat lady’ is relevant in the context of her owning numerous cats. The Board considered that the advertisement presents a stereotypical image of a 1950s scenario of a woman’s life if she is unmarried and that this 1950s view was a negative view that marriage is the most fulfilling way of women. The Board considered however that this advertisement is most likely to be seen as being presented as a humorous and exaggerated consequence of not having the advertised product. The Board considered that Australian society has moved to a point of being to reflect on this stereotype in a humorous manner and noted that the advertisement does not suggest that owning cats means your life is not fulfilling. The Board considered that the overall tone of the advertisement is humorous and unlikely to be considered offensive by most members of the community.

Based on the above the Board determined that, in this instance, that the advertisement did not depict any material that discriminated against or vilified any person or section of society.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.