



Case Report

1	Case Number	0315/12
2	Advertiser	Carnival Australia
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	08/08/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

We open on two middle-aged ladies laughing hysterically next to an open fridge door. We cut to what they're laughing at. On the fridge door is a photo of one of the ladies' husband. He's standing on a beach wearing his swimwear, revealing tan lines. In the far distance, we see a P&O Cruise ship. At the top of the photo we see hints of P&O Cruises brand circle fridge magnets.

A male hand shuts the fridge door, revealing the husband. The husband says 'we need some new memories'.

We cut back to the fridge door as it shuts. We can see the fridge magnets clearly now holding the photo. They form the P&O Cruises brand circle lock up. To one side we can see a photo of the husband and wife on another holiday.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This ad is demeaning to men and make their physical appearance a reason for mockery. I find these ads sexist and deeply deeply offensive.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

P&O Cruises strongly rejects the allegation that the advertisement discriminates or vilifies the male depicted on the basis of his gender. The advertisement in no way exploits stereotypes or characteristics particular to the male gender in a discriminatory or vilifying manner. Rather, the advertisement portrays a scene between a couple and a friend which focuses on the male's choice of swimwear. The focus of the advertisement is to encourage the target audience to replace old memories with new, exciting memories by cruising with P&O Cruises. The intent behind the humour in the advertisement is to suggest that older memories, and arguably outdated fashion sense, may have become embarrassing when viewed in current light. The humorous exchange does not relate to particular characteristics of the male gender, it relates to a fashion choice made by the male depicted.

P&O Cruises does not accept that the advertisement is sexist in any way. The male depicted in the advertisement could easily be interchanged for a female character without impacting the key message. The advertisement does not mock the physical appearance or characteristics of the male depicted, it relates to the fact that the male's choice of swimwear has become outdated.

The relevant audience for the advertisement may be broadly characterised as young couples. In P&O Cruises view, it would be understood by any reasonable viewer that the advertisement is not intended to discriminate against or vilify the male gender. The advertisement was reviewed by P&O Cruises Legal Department in accordance with ordinary practice.

P&O Cruises does not accept that the advertisement infringes clause 2.1 of the AANA 2012 Code of Ethics ('the Code') nor do we accept that the advertisement breaches prevailing community standards.

Having reviewed section 2 of the Code in its entirety, P&O Cruises is of the view that no other provisions are relevant to this complaint.

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 demeaning to men and highly offensive.

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, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief."

The Board noted that the advertisement depicts two middle-aged ladies laughing hysterically next to an open fridge door. On the fridge door is a photo of one of the ladies' husband. He's standing on a beach wearing his swimwear, revealing tan lines. In the far distance, we see a P&O Cruise ship. A male hand shuts the fridge door, revealing the husband. The husband says "we need some new memories". There is another photo of the husband and wife on another holiday.

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement is sexist and demeaning toward men by intentionally mocking physical appearance.

The Board noted that the images of the photo of the man is designed to make his tan lines from previously worn swimwear look as outdated and humorous as possible. The Board considered that the footage is very clearly fabricated to appear like the man had made a bad fashion choice in swimwear and was boldly posing for the photo without consideration of how the tan lines would look.

The Board noted that the tagline stating "We need some new memories" is spoken by the man and suggestive that he is unhappy about the existing photo and would like it to be replaced by some new ones. The Board considered that the man does appear to be mildly upset by the ridicule directed at him by his wife and friend but that this type of gentle mocking is consistent with behavior that commonly takes in place in homes and among family members and friends and that most members of the community would relate to this behavior and view the situation as humorous and light hearted.

The Board considered that the humorous exchange does not relate to particular characteristics of the male gender, it relates to the man's arguably outdated fashion sense. The Board considered that this style of 'friendly' mocking is not discriminatory to the point of vilification.

The Board noted a similar complaint about a similar advertisement for Carnival Australia (case reference 314/12) was dismissed.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not discriminate against or vilify any person or section of the community on account of sex and 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.