



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0326/18
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	25/07/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Age

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a female consumer's testimonial. The woman states the bedroom shown is a "typical teenagers room, it's dirty and it's smelly". The woman explains that she uses the product by sprinkling it on the carpet and brushing it in, then vacuuming it up. The advertisement ends with the woman stating "no dirt, no smell, no worries".

THE COMPLAINT

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

This commercial is depicting that all teenage boys are smelly and dirty. The commercials specifically says that teenagers rooms are dirty and smelly and there is a boy that is sitting on the bed. It implies that the rooms are generally unkept and shows a frustrated mother. This is completely generalising and is not the case. As a teenage boy I would expect them to be rather embarrassed and offended by this commercial. Imagine if it was an old person in the commercial and they said that the old person was smelly and generally couldn't look after themselves. Categorising all teenagers in this negative way is uncomfortable and offensive to a whole generation



of young Australian adults.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thank you for bringing to our attention the complaints you received regarding our Vanish Preen Carpet advertising. Reckitt Benckiser (RB) is committed to responsible advertising and we have carefully reviewed the complaint against all requirements of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics. We submit that the TVC does not portray teenagers in a way which discriminates against or vilifies them.

The TVC advertises Vanish Carpet Preen, which is a range of carpet dirt removers. The TVC features a consumer testimonial who gives her genuine opinion about the product performance in reply to a consumer statement.

Relevant Audience

The CAD Placement Code for this TVC is G. This means that it is classified as General in placement. It may be broadcast at any time except during P and C (Children's) programs or adjacent to P or C periods.

2.1 - Discrimination or vilification

We submit that the TVC does not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies teenagers.

As stated in the advertisement, the content is in response to a consumer statement "My son's bedroom carpets are dirty and smell bad. Help!" The presenter then describes the room shown as a typical teenagers room and is a genuine consumer opinion. The message of the advertisement is on the use of Vanish Carpet Powder to aid in cleaning of dirty and smelly carpets with vacuuming. RB does not consider that all teenage boys or all teenagers rooms are dirty and smelly or contain carpet that is dirty and smelly. The advertisement depicts a consumers opinion on usage of the product in various situations. RB has not intended any offense to teenagers and has not described them as dirty and smelly in this advertisement.

2.2 - Exploitative and degrading

We submit that the TVC does not degrade or exploit anyone. The overall TVC tone is positive. The CAD Placement Code is for a General Audience. We submit that these images do not degrade anyone.

2.3 - Violence

The TVC does not contain any violence.



2.4 - Sex, sexuality and nudity

The TVC does not contain any sex, sexuality or nudity.

2.5 - Language

We submit that the TVC does not contain any inappropriate, strong or obscene language. We submit that the language used is appropriate both to the topic and the CAD Placement classification.

We submit that the language used is not obscene or sexualised.

2.6 - Health and safety

The TVC does not show any material that contradicts the prevailing community standards of health or safety.

2.7 – Distinguishable as Advertising

It would be clear to the audience that this TVC is recognised as advertising and commercial in nature.

In light of the above, we strongly urge the Panel to dismiss the complaint and look forward to receiving the Panel's determination in due course.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement is ageist.

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

The Panel noted that this television advertisement features a mother stating that a bedroom is 'a typical teenager's room, dirty and smelly' and demonstrates how the product assists with cleaning the carpet.

The Panel 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 Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.1 of the Code which provides the following definitions:

"Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment

Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule".



The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement is ageist and suggests that all teenage boys are smelly and dirty.

The Panel considered the advertiser's response that the advertisement depicts one consumer's opinion on the usage of the product and does not suggest that all teenage boys are smelly.

The Panel considered that the word 'typical' did suggest that there is a stereotype relating to teenager's rooms being unclean.

The Panel considered that the room that was depicted was not overly messy, and it was clear that the dirt on the floor had been staged in order to demonstrate the product.

The Panel considered that the young boy depicted was not shown as unkempt or dirty and that there was no suggestion that he was smelly.

The Panel considered that comments made in the advertisement related to the room, not the boy, and considered that this was not a statement that would humiliate, intimidate or incite hatred, contempt or ridicule of the boy, or of teenage boys in general.

The Panel determined that the advertisement did not discriminate against or vilify a person or section of the community on account of age, and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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

