



Case Report

1	Case Number	0416/16
2	Advertiser	Techtronic Industries Australia
3	Product	House Goods Services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	12/10/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement focuses on the New Vax Cordless Slim Vac range. It demonstrates the machine in use, highlighting its maneuverability, simplicity, and the convenience of these vacuums. We see a family in a kitchen preparing and eating breakfast while a dog shakes itself. A female voiceover says, "Breakfast, the most important meal of the day. And the messiest. I mean some people are animals."

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad is sexist and ageist. It portrays men and children as 'animals' and portrays women as the ones that need to clean up after them. It's 2016 and ads like this shouldn't exist.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

I would like to respond to a complaint that has been made in relation to the Vax Slim Cordless Vacuum Advertisement Ref No. 0416/16.

The complaint being that the advert breaches the Advertising Standards Code of Ethics Section 2.1 Discrimination or Vilification Gender.

On behalf of Techtronic Industries, we believe that the Vax TVC does not breach the codes of ethics, as it is not discriminating any age or gender in the communication but rather it is reflecting a busy household environment whereby the house hold problem (the mess being made) is created by members of the family. The solution being portrayed within the advert is the Vax Slim Cordless Vac whereby the focus of the advert is not who is doing the cleaning but rather the capabilities, efficiency and simplicity of the product featured.

The advert does not aim to stereotype a particular gender but rather to portray a busy household environment whereby the children are being prepared for their day, the father of the family is juggling tasks of feeding the child, taking a call and then takes the baby away as he heads out the door. The daughter heads off to school and the dog has also added to the mess within the household. The mess is then quickly addressed with the product which is being used by the mother of the house. This is not to imply that a female is the cleaner of the house but rather to depict a household problem being the mess created daily and the solution being the Vax product.

There is a secondary complaint that the advert depicts people as animals, however as per the sequence of the TVC the ad is portraying the family dog as one of the family who also has contributed to the problem, being the mess made.

Techtronic Industries takes this complaint seriously and has always upheld a high level of ethical standards demonstrated throughout our business values, behaviours and actions.

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 portrays men and children as animals and women as the ones who need to clean up after them, which is sexist and ageist.

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 that this television advertisement features a dad, two children and a dog in a kitchen at breakfast time making a mess which is then cleaned up by the mum.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement is sexist. The Board noted that although the voiceover does say “some people are animals” the Board considered that the advertisement focuses on the family dog shaking itself. The Board noted that prior to this we

see the dad and two children making a mess but considered that the female voiceover is light-hearted rather than accusatory and in the Board's view the reference to animals is intended to be humorous rather than discriminatory toward either men or children.

The Board noted that after the dad and children leave the kitchen it is the mum who cleans up. The Board noted that the dad is holding a baby in his arms and is following the older child to the front door and considered that the most likely interpretation is that the dad is taking care of the children while the mum clears up. The Board noted that the mum does not appear to be concerned about the mess in the kitchen and considered that there was no suggestion that women should clear up after their family but rather that in this instance the parents are sharing parenting/household duties and the mum is the one using the vacuum cleaner while the dad takes care of the children.

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement is ageist. The Board noted that the older child would be able to help tidy up but considered that the suggestion in the advertisement is that the child is on her way to school and in the Board's view this brief scene does not suggest that this child, or any child, expects a parent to clear up after them.

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.

The Board 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.