



## Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0488/12</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Woolworths Supermarkets</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Food and Beverages</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>12/12/2012</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement depicts a woman who is very creative with how she presents cooked prawns. We see various creations she has produced in the past whilst her husband looks on proudly.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I am extremely offended by the advertisement. The ad makes fun of multicultural Australians with foreign accents. I am of Chinese decent and my family and I find the advertisement to be racist and offensive towards multicultural Australians.*

### THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*Woolworths takes its advertising obligations very seriously. It is Woolworths' submission that the complaint should be dismissed and no further action taken in the matter for the reasons expressed below.*

*A couple of points to note in response to the complaint:*

- *The ad is a celebration of cultural diversity in Australia. Our aim is to hero the fact that Australians do celebrate Christmas in many different ways, but that delicious fresh food is the centre piece of the many different tables, Christmas or other family gatherings around the country and whether this is fresh meat, seafood, vegetables, fruit or baked goods.*

- *The family in the Prawn advertisement are all Australians, whose ancestral roots may have come from different places. "Lucy", the hero of the ad, and her adoring husband are clearly very much in love with one another. The humour in the advertisement derives from Lucy's obsession about prawns and experimenting with food. At no point is there any suggestion that we are laughing at Lucy or anything about Lucy other than her food obsession.*

- *This advertisement was one of a series of three advertisements centered on similar humour and cultural diversity. One revolves around the Christmas Pavlova (and a Russian migrant family) and the second concerns a Christmas Ham (and a typical Australian family).*

*Woolworths appreciates the ASB's careful consideration of a complaint and will accept*

*Woolworths' submission that this complaint should be dismissed*

## **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 depiction of a woman speaking with a heavy accent.

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..."

The Board noted that the advertisement features an Asian woman talking about her love of prawns and the creative dishes she makes with them whilst her husband looks on proudly. The Board noted that the woman speaks with a heavy accent and that the complainant believes that the use of this woman in the advertisement is offensive towards multicultural Australians.

The Board noted that the Asian woman is presented in the context of a happily married Australian woman who is passionate about prawns and that her husband clearly adores her as does the rest of her family who appreciate her cooking skills.

The Board considered that the depiction of an Australian woman speaking with an accent

which belies her cultural roots does not of itself amount to a depiction which is discriminatory or vilifying. The Board noted that the overall tone of the advertisement is a tone which suggests this woman is appreciated by her family and considered that the advertisement is not making fun of people who speak with different accents.

The Board determined that the material depicted did not discriminate against or vilify any person or section of the community on account of gender and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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