



## Case Report

1	Case Number	0495/14
2	Advertiser	S C Johnson & Son Pty Ltd
3	Product	House Goods Services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	26/11/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The cartoon style advertisement features a voiceover saying that there once was a boy who wished his mum had more time to play with him whilst a boy plays with toy bricks and his mum is seen cleaning in the background. The voiceover then goes on to say that the boy devoted his life to finding better ways for mums to clean.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*The ad stereotypes women as mothers and house cleaners. It is sexist and offensive to imply that women are cleaners.*

*It was incredibly sexist. The voice over says something along the lines "the little boy wanted more time to spend with his mum, so he invented Mr muscle so that mums could have more time to play". Basically the ad said that women should be cleaning but have time to spend with their kids. It is not okay for media to say that only women are cleaning and that it is their assumed role to be the stay at home wife. It is incredibly offensive to state that they made a product so mums can clean easier.*

*It's completely sexist. Why is it the woman's job to clean?? I find this offensive. Why is the*

*mum at home with the child? It's out-dated and sexist to perpetuate old-fashioned roles and attribute them to modern society. As a woman, I share the housework with my partner and I am highly offended that the child has declared the product is developed for mum to clean.*

*Why are only women responsible for cleaning?? Why can't the ad just promote the benefit of the product, rather than furthering the ridiculous 1950s-era stereotype of the housewife who has nothing better to do than - and indeed lives to - clean.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*We appreciate you bringing the consumer concerns related to our current TVC to our attention.*

*While there was no intention to diminish the role of men or to perpetuate a stereotypical role of women and their role in society, we value consumer feedback and we have made revisions to the current TVC.*

## **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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement is sexist in its stereotypical depiction of women as cleaners.

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 cartoon style advertisement features a voiceover saying that there once was a boy who wished his mum had more time to play with him whilst a boy plays with toy bricks and his mum is seen cleaning in the background. The voiceover then goes on to say that the boy devoted his life to finding better ways for mums to clean.

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the suggestion that mums are responsible for cleaning the home is sexist.

The Board noted it had previously dismissed a similar complaint regarding a woman doing the laundry in case 0196/10 where:

“The Board viewed the advertisement and considered that the scenario depicted was not

derogatory to woman, nor did it suggest that men would not consider undertaking such tasks. The Board further noted the scenario was one with which most people could relate to, or were familiar with, regardless of their gender.

The Board agreed that the depiction of a woman doing laundry is a stereotype that mums look after the laundry for the family. However the Board considered that this depiction is realistic and that there is no suggestion in the advertisement that there is anything wrong with the role that this woman has taken on. The Board considered that while this may be considered a stereotypical depiction there is no negative connotation of the woman's roles in this advertisement.”

The Board considered that the depiction of a mum as the person who cleans the home in the current advertisement is a stereotype which the broad community would be familiar with. The Board noted that the advertisement does not suggest men wouldn't or couldn't clean but rather that the mum in this particular advertisement is too busy cleaning to spend more time with her son, the main character. The Board noted that the advertisement does not suggest that women are of lesser status or value than men and considered that the suggestion that a son wants to spend more time with his mother is a positive message which highlights the importance of a mother.

The Board noted the advertiser had amended the advertisement to include mention of the father and considered that whilst this inclusion improves the advertisement in the Board's view the original version did not depict women in a negative or demeaning manner.

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 complaints.