



Case Report

1	Case Number	0520/14
2	Advertiser	Coles
3	Product	Retail
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	10/12/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A female shopper asks a Coles team member to confirm that Coles washing powder is \$4 every day. The Coles team member confirms this repeatedly whilst the shopper's partner looks on. The woman is then seen doing her laundry. Her partner is shown to spill coffee down his white shirt then comes home and shows the woman what he has done. The woman shakes her head and says, "Everyday!"

THE COMPLAINT

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

At the end of the advertisement, the protagonist (the red headed female shopper), has to deal with her "useless appearing" male companion who has spilt coffee on his shirt. To which she sarcastically says to the camera, "everyday" (italics here would help). Basically she is implying that her male, and by extension, ALL males are useless and need to be looked after. As a male, I find this incredibly sexist! I buy my own damn washing powder, and I wash my own damn clothes!

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

I refer to your letter dated 21 November 2014 advising Coles Supermarkets (Coles) of a complaint received by the Advertising Standards Bureau in relation to a Coles' television advertisement for Coles Brand laundry detergent (Advertisement). Specifically, the Bureau is concerned that the complaint raises issues under section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics. Coles understands the importance of ensuring that its advertising is accurate and in line with community values and standards when communicating with our customers, and is confident that the Advertisement is consistent with Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics. In relation to the specific information requests, Coles provides the following documents and information: Issues arising under Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics You have requested that our response addresses all parts of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics. The Advertisement features interactions between a customer and Coles team member in store, a man and a work colleague in a work environment, and a couple in a home environment. Coles submits that each part of the Advertisement, and the Advertisement in its entirety, complies with each of the principles set out in subsections 2.2 to 2.6 of the AANA Code of Ethics. A response on subsection 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics is set out below. Response to the complaint Coles understands that the essence of the complaint is that the female shopper in the Advertisement "is implying that her male, and by extension, ALL males are useless and need to be looked after." You have identified Section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics as the relevant section, which 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, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief", and that gender is the relevant factor that concerns the complainant. The main theme of the Advertisement is "everyday" pricing at Coles on Coles Brand Ultra Concentrate Laundry Powder, which delivers a brilliant wash every time. The Advertisement is delivered in a light hearted and humorous manner through interactions between a man and a woman, and a Coles team member. Coles rejects that the Advertisement implies that the man featured is useless, and therefore all males are useless. While it may be possible to draw a conclusion that the actual man featured is clumsy and perhaps does not do his own laundry, there is nothing in the Advertisement that allows a general inference to be drawn that all males are clumsy and do not do their own laundry, nor that all males are useless or inferior in some way. Equally, there is nothing in the Advertisement that allows a general inference to be drawn that all females are superior, not clumsy, and always do the laundry. The representation of the male character is not demeaning or derogatory, it is light hearted. The Advertisement does not humiliate or ridicule men, or make men appear inferior. Coles believes this is consistent with a number of previous complaints that the Board has considered and dismissed, including 0504/12 which noted in relation to an advertisement where a man was having difficulty fitting a car seat "...the suggestion that the man would not be able to fit a car seat is stereotypical and considered that it is presented in a manner which is mildly humorous and not negative or demeaning". Coles is satisfied that the Advertisement does not breach Section 2.1 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics as it does not discriminate or vilify a person on account of their gender.

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 concern that the advertisement implies that all men are useless and need to be looked after by a woman.

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 the advertisement features a promotion for Coles washing powder where the tagline of "every day" is repeated throughout. The Board noted the complainant's concern that the man in the advertisement spills his drink down his shirt and the woman's response indicates that the man does this every day.

The Board noted it had recently considered a similar complaint in case 0409/13 where:

"The Board noted that there are three versions of this radio advertisement and that each version features a male voice over describing tasks that some "others" can't do such as keep quiet whilst watching footy, eat carbs and have one mood all the time.

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement compares men and women in a manner which suggests that men are superior. The Board noted that whilst the advertisements do not explicitly say that women are unable to do the listed tasks the Board considered that the reference to "others" would most likely be interpreted as "women" by most members of the community.

A minority of the Board considered that the advertisement was mocking women and that the comparisons used in the advertisements were a repetition of negative stereotypes and were in breach of Section 2.1. The majority of the Board however considered that the overall tone of the advertisement was humorous and that whilst the advertisement uses gender stereotypes they are superficial and do not get to the heart of what women are. The Board considered that the comparisons made between men and "others" were not discriminatory and tended to make the men's comparisons appear superficial and undesirable.

The Board considered overall that the advertisement does not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of their gender."

In the current advertisement the Board noted that whilst the advertisement does play on the stereotype of a woman who does her male partner's washing in the Board's view these stereotypes are superficial and are presented in a manner which is not negative towards either gender. The Board noted that when the man shows the woman he has spilt his drink down his shirt the woman's reaction is one which suggests that it is not the first time he has done this but she is smiling. The Board considered that this scene is presented in a manner which is consistent with a domestic scenario many members of the community would be familiar with and in the Board's view it is affectionate ribbing and is not depicting either gender in a manner which is demeaning.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of their 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.

