



## Case Report

1	Case Number	0520/16
2	Advertiser	Reckitt Benckiser (Aust) Pty Ltd
3	Product	Toiletries
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	07/12/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens with two women acting playfully and then cuts to shots of the parts of the body that the Veet product is designed to be used on, followed by a picture of the advertised product.

We then see a woman indicating that the product is suitable for use on the bikini area, followed by scenes showing how the product works.

We then see the product being used to trim and shape the eyebrows, followed by a scene showing two women ready to leave a house. The advertisement finishes with an end shot of the product and product name.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*I believe this Ad is for titillation purposes as the young girls are as stated above are wearing under wear only and stroking their bodies particularly the genital area with several close up shots of their vagina area. I am offended that a product for hair removal for eye brows under arms etc is focussed on the genital area and believes this type of advertising to be inappropriate for television. I would feel the same if it were males portrayed in this fashion*

*as well.. The ad alludes to the sexualisation of females in advertising as this ad is shown on both FREE and PAY TV .. I find the close up shots in particular of females giving the impression of stroking their genital area is with these hair removal very offensive and feel this ad should be withdrawn from Australian TV altogether. How did this pass the advertising standards set out in Australia.*

## **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 complaint you received regarding our Veet advertising. Reckitt Benckiser (RB) is committed to responsible advertising and we have carefully reviewed the complaint concerning the TVC, including all components of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics.*

*The Veet TVC referred to, promotes the Veet Beauty Styler, a product for use on sensitive body parts such as the face, underarm and bikini area to shave, trim and shape body hair, as such we have shown these areas in the TVC.*

*In direct response to the complaint, the women in the TVC are not stroking their bodies, they are simply indicating an area of the body on which the product is suitable for use. We do not believe that this was shown in a provocative or titillating manner.*

*We are confident that this TVC does not breach Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics, as detailed below:*

*2.1 Discrimination or Vilification. The TVC does not discriminate or vilify against any person or section of the community.*

*2.2 Objectification Exploitative and degrading – Women. The content of the TVC is not exploitive or degrading. It does not portray women in an exploitive or degrading manner, there is no suggestion that the women are objectified or demeaned. The target market for this product is adult women, as such the actors in the TVC are shown both using the product and indicating the parts of the body that the product is suitable for use on.*

*2.3 Violence. The TVC does not portray any violence.*

*2.4 Sex/sexuality/nudity – general. The two women featured in the TVC are wearing underwear, no more revealing than swimwear and it is appropriate in the context of the product being advertised. There is no nudity shown in the TVC and it is not sexual in nature.*

*2.5 Language. The TVC does not use any inappropriate language.*

*2.6 Health and Safety. The TVC does not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.*

*As outlined above the Veet TVC, subject to this complaint, depicts the product in an*

*appropriate manner, with due regard for Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics. Additionally it has been appropriately granted a G rating.*

## **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 shows several close ups of women’s genitals, and shows women stroking their bodies including the genital area.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board noted that this advertisement depicts two women having a pillow fight in their underwear. The advertisement focuses on the parts of the women’s bodies the products can be used on, including underarms, eyebrows and bikini area. The advertisement finishes by showing the two women dressed and ready to leave the house.

The Board noted that in order to be in breach of this section of the Code the image would need to use sexual appeal in a manner that is both exploitative and degrading.

The Board noted the Practice Note for Section 2.2 which provides the following definitions:

- “Exploitative means clearly appearing to purposefully debase or abuse a person, or group of person, for the enjoyment of others, and lacking moral, artistic or other values;
- Degrading means lowering in character or quality a person or group of persons.”

The Board noted the women in the advertisement were fully covered at all time, and considered the tone of the advertisement was more playful and sexual.

The Board noted the advertisement did include some close shots of the bikini area, but the women were wearing underwear and the focus was relevant to the product being discussed.

The Board considered that the advertisement was not overly sexual, and was not exploitative or degrading of the women.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading to any individual or group of people.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience”.

The Board considered the complainant's concerns that the women were seen to be stroking their genital area. The Board noted that the women in the advertisement never touched this area, and considered that they indicated the area to show that the product could be used.

The Board acknowledged there is a general sexual connotation to women having pillow fights in their underwear, but considered in this advertisement the pillow fight was more playful than sexual.

The Board noted the women were depicted in their underwear and considered that they are appropriately covered at all points in the advertisement.

The Board noted that the advertisement had been rated 'G' by CAD and considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant broad audience which would include children.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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