



# Case Report

1	Case Number	0543/14
2	Advertiser	Rinnai Australia Pty Ltd
3	Product	House Goods Services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	28/01/2015
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A man in a white lab coat enters an elevator which has a diver wearing a wetsuit in it. The man then gets out and walks over to two identical looking showers. He goes to use the first one and as he tries to adjust the water temperature he gets wet. He then demonstrates the second shower which allows him to use the Rinnai Infinity Touch to control the water temperature by wireless remote. A woman wearing a tight white catsuit approaches the man with some towels whilst the man says, "Another touch of Rinnai genius".

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*Absolutely sexist representation of women who look completely out of place and ridiculously dressed (also very unnecessary in my opinion In order to sell water heaters). I am a medical doctor (i.e. scientific background) and find the 'uniforms' the female models were given to be completely ludicrous, especially when they were also given clearly fake glasses to 'look' pseudo intelligent. If the advertisers were truly being egalitarian they should have dressed the male actors in similar outfits or at least made the women wear the same outfits as the men. If this kind of laboratory existed in real life, every equal opportunity law that's ever been written would have been violated!*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*Purpose of advertisement: Brand awareness to plumbers and consumers*

*Advertisement placement: 4 month campaign commencing May until end August 2014. Prime Stations nationally on all channels including regional. We also advertised on Foxtel and YouTube.*

*Please refer below our consideration of all aspects of the advertising codes:*

### *2.1 Discrimination or Vilification:*

*Rinnai respectfully believes that:*

*The advertisement is not discriminatory and is not intended to be discriminatory as it does not portray either men or women in an unfair or less favourable way that casts them in a negative light.*

*The advertisement does not vilify any particular race, ethnicity or gender as it does not humiliate, intimidate, incite hatred, contempt or ridicule any particular group of persons.*

*The AANA Code of Ethics Practice Note, Page 3 suggests that: "Advertisements can suggest stereotypical aspects of an ethnic group or gender with humour provided the overall impression of the advertisement is not a negative impression of people of that ethnicity or gender."*

*The Rinnai advertisement does not depict or have the intention of depicting any particular gendered characters in a negative light.*

### *2.2 Exploitative and Degrading:*

*Rinnai respectfully believes that:*

*The advertisement is not exploitative as it does not "purposefully debase or abuse a person, or group of person for the enjoyment of other, and lacking moral, artistic or other values."*

*The advertisement is not degrading as it does not purport to "lower in character or quality a person or group of persons."*

*The portrayal of the women in cat-suits is creatively used to evoke a sense of sleekness, modernity and beauty in the product.*

### *2.3 Violence:*

*Not applicable.*

### *2.4 Sex, sexuality and nudity:*

*Not applicable.*

#### *2.5 Language:*

*Appropriate language has been used in the TVC advertisement. There is no strong or obscene language.*

#### *2.6 Health and Safety:*

*Advertisements are not contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.*

*There are no references or images of dangerous behaviour, bullying or inappropriate relationships that could harm health and safety.*

### **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 depicts professional women dressed in a manner different to the professional men and is sexist.

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 man demonstrating the problems associated with older style hot water systems as compared to the advantages of being able to remotely control the temperature of water in a shower using an instantaneous hot water system and that the final scene shows a woman offering him a towel.

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the woman is wearing a skin-tight cat suit and that this is a sexist representation of a woman. The Board noted the advertiser’s response that the woman’s white outfit was intended to be modern. The Board noted that the main focus of the advertisement was on the man demonstrating the product and considered that the scene showing the woman holding towels was very fleeting. The Board noted that the woman is wearing a white skin tight outfit but considered that the camera does not focus on her body and she is not presented in a manner which suggests she is of lesser value to the man or that she is there for any other reason than to offer a towel to the man who had to get wet during his demonstration. The Board noted that the main colour theme of the advertisement is white and considered that overall the depiction of the woman wearing white

is not a depiction 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.