



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	110/99
2. Advertiser	Portmans Consolidated Pty Ltd
3. Product	Retail
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 April 1999
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement shows a young woman seated at a desk wearing a telephone headset and paging through an initially unidentified document on her desk which is subsequently revealed to be a magazine. She focuses on a photograph of a woman's suit and then turns to someone saying, 'Can you cover for me, I've just got to pop out and get a new suit...won't be long.' The camera then moves back to reveal that her desk is situated in an air traffic control tower complete with radar screen. A confused looking cleaning woman is shown standing next to the woman's desk. The radar screen appears to be going around and around and there is the sound of an aeroplane either landing or taking off. The words, 'A girl will do anything to get the look' are superimposed on the radar screen followed by the words, 'Portmans, get the look.'

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainants made regarding this advertisement included the following:

'This advertisement depicts young women as utterly self-centred, vain and irresponsible. It suggests they cannot do responsible jobs because they are so absorbed by appearance. It promotes sexism with this suggestion. It upsets me, as a woman who has fought for women's equal rights, because the implication is that we don't deserve equal opportunity: we are ninnyes and air-heads.'

'I felt so saddened, at a time when we think we have come so far in regard to breaking down the tired old stereotypes, that a company can insult all the female Air Traffic Controllers out there, by firstly labelling them with the term "girl"...and then questioning their professionalism, with the inference that their priorities, being females, naturally lie with a clothes bargain opportunity rather than with a job...'

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ('the Board') considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics ('the Code').

The Board determined that the advertisement's portrayal of the woman concerned did not constitute discrimination or vilification and did not breach the Code on this or any other ground. The Board dismissed the complaint. The Board noted that the advertiser had voluntarily withdrawn the advertisement in response to the complaints.