



## **CASE REPORT**

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Complaint reference number | 136/08  |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Service Central (Aust) Pty Ltd                  |
| 3. Product                    | House goods/services                            |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | TV  |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination      | Monday, 19 May 2008                             |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Dismissed                                       |

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

This television advertisement shows the torso of a man and a woman leaning against a wall with the man rubbing chocolate sauce onto the woman. The woman is wearing a white bra and the man is shirtless. The woman then pours a bottle of chocolate sauce down the man's chest. The screen pans out to show the couple on a large TV screen in a service control room, with the staff watching them. The 'Chief' of the service control room walks toward the screen, and a woman walks hurriedly along beside him. The woman says "Carpet cleaner required, Chief". The Chief replies "Right, check location and availability! Max, check credentials and customer ratings". The large screen in the control room displays a variety of images listing the types of services available and the profiles of service staff. A voice over states 'At Service Central we find all types of services for all types of jobs...' The Chief states "Have the best matches called". On the large screen the couple are seen rolling around on the carpet. The couple are covered in chocolate however the man is wearing dark shorts and the woman is in white bra and underpants. The carpet cleaner is cleaning the carpet around the couple who appear to be oblivious to his presence. Everyone in the Control Room starts clapping. The voice over continues 'We match independent businesses to your needs and have them call you...' The Service Central contact details are shown on the large screen. The voice over concludes: '... so start finding services the intelligent way. Call 1800 Service, that's 1800 737 842'.

## **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*This is blatantly sexual and shows the couple in a lustful pose groping each other. There is nothing good about the ad it is obviously aiming to shock and get attention. I don't want to see such an ad even if it is in a PG time slot - I want to see the loopholes removed that allow the advertisers to get away with inappropriate ads!*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

*As per our previous correspondence regarding complaint 56/08, we are meticulous in our processes, and in this case, of ensuring our advertising is reflective of the general standard acceptable to the Australian public. As part of the approval process, all our TV advertising material is submitted to Commercials Advice Pty Ltd (CAD) by our advertising agency Spinach. We accept the rating given to us as part of this process. Note we received a PG rating.*

*We also note the time slots where this revised version has appeared is totally in keeping with this rating.*

*The revisions made from the original version were totally in keeping with the Advertising Standards Board Draft Case Report in the previous complaint 56/08. Specifically selecting another 'take' for the opening sequence of the ad where the female member of the couple is clearly seen to be wearing a bikini, and there is now no shot of his hand on her breast. Given the references made by the complainant in this new case, we conclude it is likely that it is a repeat complainer. Obviously the inclusion of the fun loving couple in the ad is at the heart of their objections, and we would argue the views expressed are far more extreme than those held by the general population. Accordingly the board should dismiss this new complaint.*

## **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 complaints' concerns about the level of sexual interaction between the couple in this advertisement and reviewed the complaint under section 2.3 of the Code which deals with the portrayal of sex, sexuality and nudity.

The Board viewed the television advertisement and considered the content of which a small part focuses on a couple coating each other in chocolate syrup and engaging in a passionate embrace.

The Board noted that the advertisement spent more time on the scenes containing the mission control centre and the carpet cleaning team.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement portrayed sex or sexuality with insensitivity to the relevant audience and relevant programme time zone. The Board noted that the advertisement had been given a PG rating.

The Board also considered the advertiser's response and the changes which had been made to the advertisement in light of the Board's previous determination in which a complaint had been upheld.

The Board noted that in the revised version the woman was clearly wearing underwear and that the advertisement's main focus was on the carpet cleaning service.

The Board considered the advertisement to be humorous and not inappropriate in its portrayal of sex and nudity.

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