



## **CASE REPORT**

1. Complaint reference number	164/05
2. Advertiser	Procter & Gamble Australia Pty Ltd (Vicks Cough Medicine)
3. Product	Health Products
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Sunday, 12 June 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

The first scene in this television advertisement depicts a young man and a middle-aged woman in a beach setting. The young man walks over to the middle-aged woman standing on the beach and suggestively removes her shawl. As the young man moves in to kiss the woman, the sound of a man coughing (off-screen) interrupts them. The couple moves apart and looks off-screen to see where the noise has come from. The middle-aged woman grabs the young man's face so as to direct his attention back to her. The couple are then shown to lie down on the sand and the young man kisses the woman's neck. Suddenly the coughing resumes and the television advertisement cuts to a different scene to show the woman wake from what is now revealed to be a dream. Her husband who lies sleeping next to her continues to cough. She walks to the medicine cabinet to grab a dose of Vicks which she then hands to her husband. The woman is then shown to roll over and fall back to sleep. The music that plays in the background indicates that she has returned to her dream.

## **THE COMPLAINT**

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

*"... Are men so lazy and conceited that they are unable to take care of themselves?... Do women still have no place in the home, except to run around after everyone else?... Would it hurt to show a man looking after his better half for a change????... How long will it take before advertisers give women their rightful place and treat them with the respect and admiration they rightly deserve and have fought for."*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*"We consider that any fair minded viewing of the Vicks advertisement would not see a portrayal of "a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief" but, in fact, humour."*

*"The advertisement in question is clearly not meant to be taken literally and a fair minded viewer would not take it literally."*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

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

The Board was of the view that the actions of the woman depicted in the advertisement were motivated by the woman's determination to return to her dream and were not promoted by any notion of subservience.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not promote stereotypical gender roles nor did it treat the female character in a derogative or demeaning way.

The Board was of the view that in the context of prevailing community standards the majority of people would find this advertisement humorous rather than offensive.

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to the portrayal of people (sex).

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.