



## CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 165/08  |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Reckitt Benckiser Australia Pty Ltd                 |
| 3. Product                    | House goods/services                                |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | TV  |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1 |
| 6. Date of determination      | Monday, 19 May 2008                                 |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Dismissed   |

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement opens on a close up of a packet of Finish Power ball on a kitchen bench. A woman's voice is heard: "I think it's a satisfying feeling just putting all your dishes in..." Camera cuts to woman, Diane, in her kitchen, "... put the tablet in and pop it on and you just think, great it's done." Text on screen: 'Diane Morrison, Northmead'. The advertisement cuts to a different woman, Sue, in her kitchen. Text on screen: 'Sue Honeybrook, West Ryde'. Sue speaks to camera: "I just shake into the sink and straight in. Urm... there's no need to rinse." Cut back to Diane, "I can say to my kids 'empty my dishwasher', put them away and know they're clean." Cut back to Sue: "Two of them are teenagers... teenagers are grubby and mothers nag."

Cut to Finish Product Demonstration: Power ball runs over baking tray, plates and glasses inside a dishwasher. Text on screen: 'Comparison between 5 in 1 tablets and leading powder, on dried on protein stains'. Finish tablet and logo front right of screen. A male voice over states: 'Finish Power ball tablets clean two times better than the leading powder'. Cut back to Diane, "First time every time they come out perfectly clean. Tablets are perfect." Cut back to Sue, "Because life's too short to be doing dishes." Cut to 'No. 1 Recommended' stamp, which stays on screen and then moves backwards into Finish Packshot on kitchen bench. Male voice over concludes: 'No wonder Finish is the number 1 recommended'.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*Derogatory to women, they are not the only ones who wash dishes. Sexist towards women and mothers. Paints a picture that a women's place is in the kitchen. Also paints a picture that young women are expected to be in the kitchen washing dishes. THIS IS NOT THEIR FUTURE. Social "grooming" of a future generation.*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*We have carefully reviewed the complaint concerning the Finish Powerball TVCs (Complaint) and make the following comments about the Complaint:*

*1. We take complaints about our advertising seriously, particularly where, as in the present case, the complainant claims that our advertising is "derogatory to women" and "sexist towards women and mothers". We do not allow for the communication of ideas or messages involving discrimination against, or vilification of, a person on account of gender in our advertising.*

*2. We vigorously dispute the claims of the Complainant referred to at 1 and deny that the Finish*

*Powerball TVCs breach the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (Code), including in particular section 2.1.*

*3. Section 2.1 of the Code prohibits portraying people or depicting material "in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of, among other things, "sex". Our Finish Powerball TVCs show 4 women talking to camera about the performance of Finish Powerball tablets, including their labour saving benefits ("I only have to wash everything once", "there's nothing that needs to be rewashed", "there's no need to rinse.") The 4 women present in a matter of fact and/or no nonsense fashion and one makes it clear that she has better things to do than wash dishes ("Because life's too short to be doing dishes.")*

*4. We believe that the Finish Powerball TVCs portray, in a normal fashion, 4 women who want a good job done in respect of a daily task that most people face (dish washing) and value the labour saving benefits of the Finish Powerball tablets. Neither the fact that the people in the Finish Powerball TVC are women, nor the depiction of them, renders the Finish Powerball TVC discriminatory or vilifying, in our view.*

*5. We appreciate that men do domestic work too and we portray men in this role in our advertising. We have even received praise from a viewer about this portrayal in respect of an Easy Off Bam TVC we broadcast in 2005. We attach a copy of a de-identified contact summary of comments made to our staff about this TVC.*

*6. We had no intention of portraying women negatively or in a discriminatory fashion in the Finish Powerball TVC and we deny that we have done so, either overtly or subtly. The overall impact of the advertisement must be assessed in determining whether it breaches section 2 of the Code. Also, the view of average members of the community must be considered. We believe that an average person viewing the Finish Powerball TVCs is more than likely to understand the key message to be that Finish Powerball tablets perform well (two times better than the leading powder) and save the time and effort required by other products in rinsing dishes and re-washing.*

*7. We do not believe that an average person would understand the Finish Powerball TVC as conveying an implied or express insult to women or as otherwise being discriminatory or vilifying, based on gender. We do not accept that this interpretation is reasonable, logical or open on the facts.*

*We request that the Complaint be dismissed.*

## **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 complainants' concerns about the portrayal of women and considered the complaint under Section 2.1 of the Code which deals with discrimination.

The Board viewed the television advertisement and noted that it showed two women, who were real people and not actors, talking about their experiences when using Finish Power balls.

The Board agreed that the situation depicted was representative of reality and did not seek to discriminate against the women in the advertisement or woman generally.

The Board further noted that research supports the premise that the majority of domestic tasks are still undertaken by women.

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