



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	172/06
2. Advertiser	Stihl Pty Ltd (Chainsaw)
3. Product	Hardware/machinery
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 9 May 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is set in a Stihl hardware store, where an attractive and well-dressed 40-ish woman approaches a salesman and tells him “I caught my husband frolicking on the mahogany table with his secretary...and I do mean frolicking”, and emphasising the last word. The salesman advises “Excuse me madam, but we’re a *Specialist Dealer Network* store. Selling and servicing outdoor power equipment, like chainsaws....” The woman replies “Exactly!” Details of current specials are then announced.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The inference is that the Man is the transgressor. This is plainly pandering to a conventional stereotype of male behaviour and highly prejudicial.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

It is our view that the ad is not discriminatory in any way.

It is a humorous tongue-in-cheek commercial. The ad was researched with consumers before being put to air and in no case did any consumer suggest the ad was discriminatory.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”). In particular, the Board considered whether this advertisement breached section 2.1 of the Code in discriminating against men.

The Board noted that humour had been effectively used in the commercial both as a result of the dramatic text of the commercial, the dramatic tone used by the female actor and her facial expressions. The Board considered that a viewer watching this advertisement should take it in a tongue in cheek manner and that the advertisement did not discriminate on the basis of sex.

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