



## **CASE REPORT**

1. Complaint reference number	176/04
2. Advertiser	Procter & Gamble Australia Pty Ltd (Vicks Vapour Rub)
3. Product	Health Products
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 July 2004
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

The advertisement features a female office worker reaching over her workstation and hitting her male co-worker, who has been constantly coughing, over the head with a vase. The voiceover states “A dry persistent cough can be irritating, but not just to you.”

## **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*“This advert depicts violence in the workplace. Violence in the workplace is in breach of current state and federal legislation. All violence is, in legal terms, a criminal act.”*

*“I raise two objections to this advertisement –*

*1. It promotes violence as a means of settling conflict (section 2.2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics – the Code). This is presented as a deliberate and very aggressive act and cannot be dismissed as having an underlying humorous element. The violence in this advertisement cannot be justified in the context of the product advertised.*

*2. It promotes violence by women against men which is a growing trend in advertising ... this I believe is in breach of section 2.1 of the Code on counts of discrimination and vilification on the basis of sex (gender).”*

## **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 “violence” 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 gender of the actors in the advertisement is, in a sense, irrelevant; it is not an advertisement that relies upon the gender of the participants for its humour. The advertisement would have been equally as entertaining and humorous if the male and female roles had been reversed.”*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

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

The Board considered that in the context of prevailing community standards, the majority of people would not find this advertisement offensive.

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to violence.

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