



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 206/08 |
| 2. Advertiser | Fisher & Paykel |
| 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 | Wednesday, 9 July 2008 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement begins with a scene in a household laundry. A woman is removing clothes from the machine whilst a man stands next to her, arms crossed, watching. The woman is sighing and groaning indicating that it is hard work.

Woman: I know these front loaders save water... but there's got to be an easier way.

Man: Yeah

He leans over and kisses the woman on the cheek as he leaves the laundry.

The next scene takes place in a science lab. The man from earlier is talking to a man and woman about his invention.

Man: It just ... came to me ... in the shower ...

Close up of Aquasmart washing machine and voice over: All the good things from front and top loaders combined. Aquasmart. Save water, save money. It's not that hard.

THE COMPLAINT

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

It depicts a male, arms folded looking on as a woman, obviously dishevelled, unloads the machine. He seems to be the one with the brains while she has the brawn. The days of males leaving domestic duties to women is hopefully over.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The first point to note is that these particular television advertisements were not actually Fisher & Paykel's – they were planned, placed, paid for and created by the Retravisation store and run on the local television channel Win TV. A portion of our AquaSmart advertisement was utilised in amongst a retail message for this particular washing machine.

The second point to note is that those Retravisation ads have long since finished running – they ran tactically for a short period.

The third point is that the ad creative utilised is part of a larger Fisher & Paykel television campaign which has recently finished (as of start July 2008). This campaign is in the process of being replaced.

The advertisement in question is a wry observation on a stereotype – where a male (in this case a Fisher & Paykel product designer) observes the hardships endured by his wife (in this case unloading a front-loader washing machine) as inspiration to develop a top loading washing machine that benefits from the easier loading and unloading (ergonomics) but has the water

efficiency of a front loader.

The viewer unfortunately misses the point – one partner is inspired by another partner’s struggle. The sexes could quite easily have been swapped the other way around. The ad uses an insightful observation as the basis for inspired product design.

Finally I note that one of the complainant’s grievances is when the ad was aired – during a televised AFL game. Naturally Fisher & Paykel cannot control when a retailer chooses to run an advertisement and frankly one would not have thought that this issue had any relevance or bearing for complaint.

In summary, the ad has been screened for over a year now. It has finished its screening rotation and is no longer being used.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board viewed the television advertisement and agreed it depicted a reality that exists in many Australian households, however unfortunate that reality may be.

The Board noted that the man appeared sheepish when he was explaining how the idea for the new washing machine had come to him - highlighting that he realised he was not entirely responsible for the concept.

The Board considered that image of the man inventing a new washing machine was a positive thing to do to help his partner as it indicated that he had listened to her concerns and wanted to make her life easier.

The Board further noted the advertiser's response which stated the advertisement is no longer being aired.

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