

CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	208/01
2. Advertiser	Plumbers' Supplies Co-operative Ltd
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Sunday, 14 October 2001
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This print advertisement comprises text superimposed over a photograph of a native woman pumping water from a well. The text reads: “Get your water works up to scratch. We have everything, including the kitchen sink. For all your bathroom and kitchen supplies.” The remainder of the advertisement is devoted to the advertiser’s name, slogan [“Best Value Buying Experience”] and contact details.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“I do not know what the photo of a poorly Third World person in the background has to do with plumbing supplies. I also wonder about the connotation of the catch phrase ‘Get Your Water Works Up to Scratch.’ I find it very distasteful and inappropriate at best. I think it is exploiting the misfortune of a race suffering hard times as a means of drawing attention.”

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board noted advice from the advertiser that, while believing the advertisement did not breach the Code, following notification of the complaint it had ordered the removal of the advertisement from publication.

The Board agreed that the advertisement did not contravene the Code’s provisions relating to discrimination/vilification, and did not breach the Code on any other grounds. Accordingly, the complaint was dismissed.