



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	234/99
2. Advertiser	Reckitt & Colman Australasia (Harpic)
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 July 1999
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement shows a scene of a high technology ‘assault team’ landing ultralight aircraft in a desert and then, dressed in radiation suits, entering an apparent subterranean military base. A voice, as if giving instructions by radio communication, says ‘Harpic Team: ordinary block’s losing power fast. New Harpic Active Cleaner block. Uses advanced technology to guarantee consistently superior performance for no less than 4 weeks.’ The assault team is shown to locate a toilet, instal a cleaner and then leave towards their aircraft. The voiceover says “Send in the experts’ as one of the team, a woman, removes her helmet and smiles towards the camera.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“Are you saying to men that women are supposed to clean toilets all the time? It’s a very sexist ad ...”

“This refers to women as experts on cleaning toilets ... I find this to be overtly sexist.”

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board determined that the portrayal of the woman within the advertisement did not constitute discrimination or vilification. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the Code on this or any other ground and, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.