



## **CASE REPORT**

1. Complaint reference number	308/09
2. Advertiser	Hoyts Foods
3. Product	Food & Beverages
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 8 July 2009
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

This TVC for Hoyts Foods promotes their range of spices. The commercial features 3 women dressed in “50’s style” clothes being flaired skirt, shirt and scarf.

The women dance around the kitchen to the beat of a 50’s style music track. They are shown to decant the spices from the packaging into empty spice containers.

Ad concludes with details of the supermarket chains where the product is sold.

## **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*The stereotype of women in the 1950s belonging in the kitchen is strongly present. This clearly discriminates women, contradicting Section 2.1 of the AANA code of ethics. The style of dancing and the clothing of the women adds to the degrading, sexist message of the advertisement. It shamefully portrays women as being restricted to the domestic sphere.*

## **THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE**

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

*It's an ad which happens to be set in the 50's (just like movies etc are) - with appropriate accompanying music and costumes which are used as a creative (mnemonic) device to help demonstrate the core benefits of the product and help the ad stand out from its competitors. Hoyts Food is leading herbs and spices manufacturer with an impeccable 45-year-old reputation. This TVC is a representation of old fashioned values and price points and in no way discriminates against women or their role in society. Nor does it have a deeper message about women being restricted to kitchens. The viewer is choosing to read far more into it than was ever intended.*

*I (as a female) wrote and produced the TV commercial for Hoyts Herbs and Spices and am very surprised that someone could take offense to what is simply an ad that represents a long standing company with old fashioned values. In no way does it depict females as inferior to, less competent, or less valuable than males (i.e. sexism), nor imply that women are restricted to the kitchen. And I completely fail to see how the ad is degrading to woman in way, shape or form.*

## **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 the application of Section 2.1 of the Code, relating to discrimination and vilification. The Board considered the depiction of the three women showing excitement over reusable spice jars, and wearing gloves and an apron was a "retro" representation of stereotypical housewives from a particular era. The Board considered that reasonable people in the community would see the advertisement as a humorous way of encouraging enthusiasm about the product. The Board considered the image was not suggestive that all women belonged in the kitchen or that only women would be interested in the products. The Board therefore found no breach of Section 2.1.

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