



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	329/08
2. Advertiser	Primus Telecommunications
3. Product	Telecommunications
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1 Discrimination or vilification Nationality – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 16 September 2008
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on James, a teenage boy sitting at his computer, and as he presses the "enter" key, the doorbell rings. His sister Katie, opens the door to another boy who claims "I'm James' friend." A short time later she opens the door to two Swedish female backpackers claiming "We're James' favourites." Getting the idea, Katie gets on the computer, and the next time the doorbell rings, James opens it to be surprised by a group of young people who claim "We're Katie's favourites' list!"

THE COMPLAINT

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

I believe that this advertisement breaches the code of ethics regarding the portrayal of people as it implies that a) non-australian people, and b) young women are objects that can be ordered / purchased on the internet. While it relies on the viewer reading the ad in the context of social networking sites, I believe it vilifies young women and people whose first language is not English by presenting them as material ("whatever") that Australian internet users can purchase.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

This ad was part a marketing campaign that has recently been aired on television. The theme of the ads is using iPrimus broadband to get what you want quickly. Members of the family interact with the internet. This is brought to life in a humorous fashion, through the people that the family are interacting with actually arriving at the house.

Some examples of this are:

- Boy (James) interacts with the internet and his friends appear at the door.*
- Sister (Katie) interacts with the internet and her friends appear at the door.*

It is submitted that the advertisement complained of clearly does not breach the Code in the manner complained of.

It is submitted that the ad does not discriminate or vilify on grounds of gender or nationality. The first sequence is of a male friend of James and the second sequence is of 2 female "Swedish BackPackers". They appear to be about the same age as James and are not provocatively dressed. The Swedish flag and accented English is an inoffensive, light-hearted caricature.

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 on the basis of nationality or gender.

The Board considered that the tone of the advertisement was light-hearted and that, while using a backpacker stereotype, there was nothing in the portrayal of the two Swedish backpackers that would be regarded as discrimination on the basis of nationality or gender. Rather, the Board accepted the advertiser's response that this was an inoffensive and light-hearted caricature. The Board therefore determined there was no breach of Section 2.1.

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