



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 349/99 |
| 2. Advertiser | Procter & Gamble Aust Pty Ltd (Febreze) |
| 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, 9 November 1999 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement features a number of scenes of a man and woman doing various cleaning tasks as the woman says “When you run a bed & breakfast, you want it to smell as clean as it looks. That’s where Febreze comes in – it cleans odours out of fabrics”. A family of African American appearance are then shown checking in as guests as the woman continues “See, folks come here from all over the world and our job is to help them relax. So we use Febreze just about everywhere we clean because it’s safe on all kinds of fabrics. No matter who checks in. And once it’s dry, nothing’s left but the smell of clean”. Voiceover then says “Febreze cleans bad smells out of fabrics for good”.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“To me, this clearly implies that black people smell and that while they have the right to stay in the B&B they are still undesirable.”

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 family within the advertisement did not constitute discrimination or vilification, did not breach the Code on this or any other ground and, accordingly, dismissed the complaint. The Board noted that the B&B proprietors were shown using the product to make the premises smell fresh before the guests’ arrival, rather than being required as a result of the guests’ occupancy. It was felt that the complainants may have misinterpreted this aspect of the advertisement.