



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	406/06
2. Advertiser	Reckitt Benckiser Aust Pty Ltd
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Race – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 14 November 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a sweeping shot of fresh fruit on what appears to be a wooden chopping board and a female voiceover stating “Fact. Your chopping board has fifty times more germs than your toilet seat”. As the camera pans back we see the fruit is actually sitting on a wooden toilet seat. The scene switches to a kitchen where we see a dark-skinned child sitting in a dog’s basket and sucking on a toy bone as a female voiceover warns “Fact. There’s twice as much bacteria on your kitchen floor as in your dog’s basket.” A woman is then shown pouring Pine-O-Clean into a bucket of water as the voiceover continues “Pine-O-Clean liquid disinfectant kills 99.9% of germs that can make your family sick”. A mother lifts a fair-skinned baby from a high chair and we see the child crawling and playing on the kitchen floor. The voiceover concludes “So remember – it’s not clean unless it’s Pine-O-Clean”.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This is racist because it gives the impression of the coloured child being unclean and the Caucasian child as clean.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

We do not allow for the communication of racist ideas or messages in any of our advertising.

We take complaints about our advertising seriously, particularly where, as in the present case, the complainant makes a claim of racism. We do not allow for the communication of racist ideas or messages in any of our advertising.

*We had no intention of conveying a racist idea or image in our Pine O Clean Liquid Disinfectant television commercial (**Pine O Clean TVC**) and we do not believe that the television commercial does so.*

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board viewed the advertisement in the light of Section 2.1 of the Code which deals with vilification or discrimination of sections of the community according to race, ethnicity etc.

The Board considered the portrayal of the black child in the dirty kitchen and the white child in the clean room. The Board agreed that in the context of the advertisement (which showed several children featured in very quick shots) the clean or otherwise state of the rooms was the focus rather than the children, and there were no overtly racist elements to the advertisement. The Board determined that the appearance of a black child in a dirty kitchen did not of itself discriminate or vilify a racial group.

The Board also noted other advertisements in the series/campaign which showed a white child in a dirty kitchen.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.