



## CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	488/09
2. Advertiser	Rheem Hot Water
3. Product	Household goods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 28 October 2009
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This TVC depicts different scenes of individual family members enjoying a hot shower and the thoughts that run through their mind.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*My complaint is when the boy, about 16 years old, is portrayed, humorously, as having his mother finding his 'magazine' collection. It's obvious it's not his car or sports magazines, it's his pornographic magazine's is it not? The guilty little smirk on his face says it all.*

*I'm not surprised by it as advertising in general is so full of sex and innuendo, but Rheem hot water?? I'm so disappointed, pornography is not humorous nor harmless. It is addictive and destructive and for a young boy to be used is sending out the message that mother's are just old fashioned and it's ok to be looking at porn. Why not go onto the internet to look at it while you're at it and maybe you might just come across child porn as well!  
It really is appalling.*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*Specifically, this complaint seems to reference Section 2.3 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant programme time zone". We do not believe that the advertisement in question breaches Section 2.3 or indeed any other section of the Code and are dismayed by the suggestion.*

*The advertisement in question does not specifically mention sex, sexuality or nudity. The advertisement portrays realistic situations and commonplace interactions within a family who use our product and features a number of family members enjoying hot showers. The clear intent of this advertisement is to show that a Rheem hot water shower will make you happy no matter what happens in your day, and does this through each of the family members depicted with each of their own situations. The predicament of the family member in this situation is that he's in trouble from his mum. While the viewer will know that the magazine collection is not one his mum approves of, there is no mention whatsoever of what the magazine collection is, thus leaving it to the viewers own interpretation. We fail to see how this could contravene section 2 (specifically 2.3) of the AANA Code of Ethics. The portrayal of smiling family members in this advertisement is light hearted and is part of a campaign internally titled "The smiles campaign". There is no intention in*

*this advertisement to promote anything like the complainant has described nor do we believe that the advertisement does this.*

*In summary, we are disappointed that the advertisement was viewed in a negative manner but we do not believe that Rheem has contravened any section whatsoever of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics, nor would we ever do so given Rheem is a family brand that has been around for over 70 years and prides itself on its family values.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

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

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the magazines that the advertisement suggested that the boy was referring to his mother finding may be a reference to pornography.

The Board considered that some people may make the assumption that the magazines are sexual in nature, however the Board considered that there are many other types of magazine that could be inferred. The Board considered that any sexual suggestion was very mild and that the advertisement was not inappropriate.

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