



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	491/06
2. Advertiser	Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Special Economiser loan)
3. Product	Finance/Investment
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 12 December 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement shows a man working in what appears to be a home office, until we hear a baby cry, and realise his "office" is actually a makeshift space in his child's nursery. He reaches over and takes the baby from the cot to soothe it, then takes up a phone to make a call. A male voiceover asks "Is today the day you decide to buy a bigger home? Buy a bigger home sooner with a Special Economiser home loan and one of the most attractive rates around."

THE COMPLAINT

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

This advertisement vilifies working males in a way that they appear unable to work and look after a small child. Surely a working male in this situation would have his child there by choice rather than through necessity. By showing the opposite, working males are shown in a way that they do not care about their family. This reinforces the negative stereotyping of males as workers and providers and not carers. The baby therefore is portrayed as a nuisance to a male working at home, rather than a pleasure to have in the (home) office.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In defence of this concept it was not the bank's intention to offend anyone, or to in any way vilify working fathers.

The scenario was simply intended to portray an often true to life situation where a family has grown to the point where they have outgrown their home and what was the home office is now having to double as a nursery.

It shows a man who is working in the office and as the baby cries we pull back to reveal that the office has in fact become nursery and the father reaches over to care for his child, placing the child on his knee he then goes about his work. Quite clearly in the execution we can see that the father is responsive and is the carer for the child.

In making this ad we elected to select a male to the role over a female. This was to avoid a typical stereotype of Mum staying at home while the husband goes out to work. Instead we chose to depict a man who is working from home and balancing the role of worker and father.

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 and considered the complainant's comments that the advertisement vilifies working males. The Board strongly disagreed with the complainant's interpretation of the advertisement and considered that the advertisement showed a man successfully working while looking after his baby. The Board could find no evidence that the advertisement portrayed the father character (or fathers or males in general) in a negative light.

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