



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 518/06 |
| 2. Advertiser | Sanitarium Health Food Co (Weetbix - Pom) |
| 3. Product | Food & Beverages |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Nationality – section 2.1 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 16 January 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

In this television advertisement, three young boys are eating Weetbix. They grab cricket gear and head out to the backyard to play. One boy throws a red tennis ball and as the camera follows its path we see it becomes a red cricket ball, caught by a man's hand. As the camera pans back we see the boys have transformed into cricket heroes Ricky Ponting, Brett Lee and Mike Hussey, who throw the ball between them. The Aussie team is seen in match action as a male voiceover announces "Look out Poms. We've all grown up on the long lasting goodness and real energy of 97% wholegrain Weetbix." Three grown up cricket heroes are then seen seated at a table eating Weetbix.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The specific nature of BPARD's complaint is in relation to HIGHLY VISIBLE advertising campaigns that use POM in relation to ENGLISH PEOPLE AND THE ENGLISH CRICKET TEAM (complainant's capitalisation).

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Our view was that the term "Pom" in Australian usage is an abbreviation like "Kiwi" for New Zealanders and is a term of endearment, not a slur.

We do not feel the use of "Pom" in Australia is viewed as derogatory by the vast majority of the population. However Sanitarium takes pride in being socially responsible. Therefore if it can be shown that a significant number of people in Australia view it as derogatory, we would happily remove it from our ad.

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 advertisements in question and considered whether the advertisements breaches Section 2.1 of the Code dealing with discrimination and vilification.

The Board considered carefully the complainant's comments that the use of the work 'Pom' is racially offensive.

The Board considered the nature and usual intention of the word "Pom" when used in Australia and agreed that the term is used largely with non-hostile, playful and often affectionate intentions. The Board took account of the advertisement's context - namely cricket - and noted that there has been an historical, affectionate rivalry between the two countries and no recent history of racial antagonism.

The Board felt that in Australia the term 'Pom' is used in a manner that is not meant to be hostile or vilifying, but rather is consistent with Australian humour, particularly in the context of cricket.

On balance, with regard to prevailing community standards, the Board concluded that the use of the word "Pom" was not regarded by the wider Australian community as discriminatory or vilifying of persons of British extraction. Hence the Board found that the advertisements in question did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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