



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	78/06
2. Advertiser	Unilever Australasia (Lipton Iced Green Tea - guru)
3. Product	Food & Beverages
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Religion – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 14 March 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts a new age-style health retreat where a group of people are sitting at the feet of a male guru, who offers a male newcomer a cup of Lipton green tea. The newcomer says “Thanks, this is meant to be really healthy, right?” The guru gestures to the collection of crystals around him and replies “Unlike this old pile of rocks.”

When the guru invites the people to tell everyone why each of them is present, a woman tells the guru “I’m actually gullible enough to believe crystals will make me a stronger person”. The guru picks up a rock and raises and lowers his arm, explaining with a smile “If you do a few hundred of these”. A male tells the guru “I find pretending to care about this new age stuff is a great way to meet women”. The guru nods and says “Precisely why I dreamed up this overpriced scam”. A voiceover is heard “Now that’s refreshing. And naturally rich in antioxidants. Lipton. Tea can do that”.

THE COMPLAINT

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

How dare they criticise people about their beliefs – no matter what it is.

It implies that the Hindu religion and its relevant religious masters are also suspicious and corrupt. The depiction of a religious Hindu leader implies that Hindu leaders are con men.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

The advertisements were devised to contrast (a) genuine “change for the better” with some fictional lifestyle choices which may not have genuine benefits, and which may even involve pain, great expense, or perhaps even humiliating rituals.

...the benefits of these practices were considered to be a little doubtful to many consumers.

...the characters say exactly what is in their mind in various commonly experienced awkward situations – in other words, showing people behaving with “refreshing” honesty in a humorous way.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board considered that this advertisement makes light hearted fun of a number of beliefs that people have or reasons why they undertake particular activities.

The Board considered that Australia 's society does tolerate light hearted humour of many religions, beliefs and behaviours. The Board did not consider that the comments made in the advertisement amounted to vilification of any person's beliefs or any particular religious beliefs.

The Board did not consider that the advertisement depicted material in a way that vilified a section of the community on account of their religious beliefs.

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