



# Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0298/14</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Murray Goulburn</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Food and Beverages</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV - Free to air</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>27/08/2014</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The Board noted the advertisement features a woman in a business suit and high heels and she is climbing over a fence on the farm. Two men in suits are seen in the background trying to herd some cattle. The voice over states that “some businesses have no business making your milk.” The text in the final shot shows a bottle of Devondale milk and reads “proudly owned by Aussie Farmers.”

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*The campaign theme is that these types of person should not be involved in your milk supply. The implication I think the ads are trying to get you to draw is that Murray Goulburn is better suited because it only employs male Australian farmers.*

*I object to this campaign because it is sexist. Are Murray Goulburn really trying to suggest they have no women in business suits are employed in their milk company?*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

*The concerns raised by the complainant relate to Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.*

*Section 2*

*2.1 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.*

*With reference to complaints included in ASB reference*

*# 0298/14 2.1 Discrimination or Vilification Gender*

*# 0299/14: 2.1 Discrimination or Vilification Race*

*Devondale is a co-op of over 2,500 Australian farmers, which means profits are distributed to the farmers who produce the milk. To highlight the fact that Devondale milk is owned and produced by farmers, the campaign dramatizes the opposite scenario - corporate executives attempting to run a dairy farm. The juxtaposition of people in suits working on a dairy farm is a creative hook intending to grab the attention of our audience and entertain them.*

*The casting brief called for a group of people who could believably depict corporate executives. We wanted to represent a range of ages, genders and appearances, to reflect the diversity of contemporary corporate Australia. Each character in the ads is equally incompetent at his or her farming tasks - clearly these people's experience lies in an office environment, not on a farm.*

*This TV campaign is made up of six ad durations (1 x 60", 1 x 30", 4 x 15") all of which are edited from the 60" film, to suit the media placements selected by Carat. Carat developed a plan focused on scale and impact, to try and interrupt the habitual milk purchase cycle. The TVCs were launched in Sydney and Melbourne with 60" & 30" durations to start with and then the frequency of the campaign was extended with the use of 15" spots. Based on planned reach at the beginning of the campaign, at least 92% of people who saw one of the 15" ads also saw a 30" ad at least once. Therefore an overwhelming majority of people has been exposed to more than one of the TV executions and in turn, several of the characters in the story.*

*We take very seriously the issues raised in the complaints regarding discrimination and/or vilification based on race or gender. In response:*

- 1. The storyline lightheartedly portrays corporate executives as being less qualified to run a dairy farm and produce milk than dairy farmers.*
- 2. We have consciously included both genders and diversity of appearance within the cast. We feel that the range of ages, genders and appearances is indicative of a typical Australian corporate environment.*
- 3. All of the characters depicted in the campaign are equally incompetent at undertaking tasks around the dairy farm. Nowhere in the storyline, script or sentiment does the ad suggest that a particular race or gender is less capable of undertaking the tasks than other characters in the ad.*

*Therefore, we conclude that the ads do not discriminate against or vilify a particular gender or race.*

*Both the creative advertising agency DDB and the advertiser Devondale are strong supporters of self-regulation and the AANA Codes of Ethics.*

## **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 complainants’ concerns that the advertisement suggests women can’t be farmers and is sexist.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that 'advertisements shall not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted the 15 second advertisement features a woman in a business suit and high heels and she is climbing over a fence on the farm. The voice over states that “some businesses have no business making your milk.” The text in the final shot shows a bottle of Devondale milk and reads “proudly owned by Aussie Farmers.”

The Board noted that as part of the campaign there is a 60 second advertisement that depicts a range of characters from diverse groups including men and women and people of different ages and appearances.

The Board noted that in the full version of the advertisement each of the characters are seen performing tasks with the same level of incompetence. All of the characters are dressed in business suits and the voiceover remains the same.

The Board noted that this particular advertisement focuses just on a woman climbing over a fence. The Board noted that the advertisement is intended to show corporate executives in a comedic light, struggling with the farming task at hand (herding cattle).

A majority of the Board considered that the main theme of the advertisement was clearly showing a “city versus country” battle drawing on the old adage that city people focus on business and cannot perform tasks such as farming as well as people from the country.

A minority of the Board, held the view that the focus is on the woman and the suggestion that the woman is incapable and hopeless and that this is a negative stereotype of women in business.

The minority noted that there are two men seen on the other side of the fence who are struggling to herd the cattle and keep them in the right place.

The Board noted that as part of the same campaign, they had upheld an advertisement for the same advertiser (0299/14) where an Asian man is shown struggling with herding the cattle on the farm. The Board noted that in that case “the advertisement delivers a negative suggestion that people of Asian background are not capable of farming and that the portrayal of the man in this way is demeaning.”

The majority of the Board considered that in contrast, the current advertisement shows the woman climbing a fence and she is dressed inappropriately for this activity. The Board considered that the overall impression was not negatively suggesting that the woman wasn’t capable of farming but clearly identified that the outfit she was wearing was completely inappropriate for the environment she was in and that the comical nature of the advertisement was evident.

The Board noted that the depiction of the woman struggling to climb the fence did not amount to material that discriminates against a section of the community on account of their gender and 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 complaints.

