

Media Release
For Immediate Release

AANA UPDATES GENDER STEREOTYPE GUIDANCE

12 July 2018 - The AANA today launched an updated Code of Ethics Practice Note, which will assist advertisers to understand how the Code of Ethics applies gender stereotyping and be applied by the Ad Standards Community Panel in making its determinations.

The new guidance applies to Section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code) which prohibits advertising which “discriminates against or vilifies a person on the basis of gender”, as well as a range of other bases, including ethnicity, age and sexual preference.

“The AANA’s new guidance aims to reinforce responsible advertising and to provide greater guidance to advertisers and agencies so that they don’t unwittingly reinforce negative stereotypes,” the AANA’s Director of Policy & Regulatory Affairs, Simone Brandon, said.

The new guidance features examples of gender stereotyping that would be in breach of the Code, such as depicting family members creating a mess while a woman is the only one tasked with cleaning it up. An advertisement that features a man trying and failing at a simple parental or household task may also be in breach of the Code.

The AANA said that the Code does not prohibit advertisers from featuring women or men performing tasks commonly associated with their gender, such as a woman doing the washing or a man doing DIY tasks.

“However, advertisers should take care to avoid suggesting that a particular role is exclusively performed by men or women,” Ms Brandon said.

The evolution of gender stereotype guidance by the AANA reflects brand owners’ intent to continue to meet the community’s expectations for responsible advertising, helping to ensure that advertising has a positive impact in terms of representing and promoting gender equality in society. It is the codes and the self-regulatory system which both promote and deliver trust between advertisers and consumers.

Ad Standards said it welcomed the additional guidance.

“Complaints about discrimination on the basis of gender, including gender stereotyping, can continue to be made to Ad Standards. Consumer complaints are determined by the Ad Standards Community Panel, which is comprised of members of the Australian public,” said Ad Standards’ CEO, Fiona Jolly.

Unilever also welcomed the update.

“We want to eliminate outdated gender stereotypes in our advertising to ensure that we continue to accurately represent the diversity of the communities in which we operate. Through our membership of the AANA and our own #Unstereotype Alliance, Unilever is committed to ensuring advertising moves away from unhelpful stereotypical portrayals of gender, delivering positive campaigns that are more relevant to today’s consumer,” said Unilever Australia and New Zealand’s Head of Media and PR, Anneliese Douglass.

The updated Practice Note also provides guidance on the Code of Ethics requirement that advertising or marketing communication must 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.



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About the AANA: For 90 years the AANA has represented Australia's largest and well-known brands across all major sectors, including FMCG, automotive, banking, finance and insurance, travel, health and beauty, media and communications. The AANA works to protect the interests of those businesses that contribute to an estimated advertising spend of more than \$15 billion a year. On behalf of our members, the AANA's mandate is to maintain and evolve the advertising codes which underpin the system of self-regulation in Australia, safeguard the rights of its members to commercial free speech and protect consumers by ensuring marketing communication is conducted responsibly.