



Case Report

1	Case Number	0140/10
2	Advertiser	Ferrero Australia Pty Ltd (Ferrero Rocher)
3	Product	Food and Beverages
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	14/04/2010
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Gods from Olympus celebrating Easter with Ferrero chocolates.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Being of a Christian belief and speaking for all Christians I find this add extremely offensive in that pagan false gods are being associated with the holiness of Easter and the true meaning of Christs death and resurrection.

As a Christian I find it offensive that a religious festival which has deep personal meaning for me has been so trivialised as to be associated with pagan gods. For me Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I feel sure if the ad had used an Islamic religious festival in a similar way there would have been a huge outcry and it would have been immediately removed. Why is the media less sensitive to the beliefs of Christians?

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Easter is a key advertising period for Ferrero, with 16% of the sales of our boxed chocolates occurring at this time - second only to Christmas (at 42%). These numbers are pretty much in line with the overall boxed chocolate sales for the confectionery sector - with 11% of total sales at Easter and 40% at Christmas.

For the confectionery industry, Easter represents a key time for the purchase and consumption of chocolate gifts.

"The Food of the Gods" campaign, as this TVC is known, has been running in Australia and various markets around the world since 2007. It has been screened at both Christmas and Easter times - which correlate with the major gifting occasions for our products. The markets it has screened in include Canada, Europe, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Here in Australia, the Easter TVC version of this campaign has been running for the past two years - and we have received no formal complaints about the campaign during that time. As part of our ongoing tracking of all TVCs, we have conducted both pre-campaign and post-campaign analysis of the ad in Australia - and again have not received any negative feedback in regards to the nature of these complaints. To illustrate this point further, we have spoken to over 600 consumers in the past two years about the campaign - and none of them have made negative comments on this matter. Furthermore, we have received feedback from more than 900 consumers in relation to our broader Hoher chocolate portfolio since November 2006 - and again no negative feedback has been received in relation to this TVC. "The Foods of the Gods" ad echoes the sentiment that Ferrero products can be enjoyed to celebrate special occasions, The creative theming behind the campaign features Ferrero Hoher chocolates as playing a central role in the divine parties of the Olympus gods; similarly when discovered by man, the products can also play a central role in their celebrations on earth. Clearly it is not our intention to promote paganism or to cause offence through this TVC - as suggested by the complaint, Quite the contrary, our intention is to help highlight and celebrate special occasions in life - such as Easter.

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 depicted pagan gods celebrating Easter which is inappropriate for those of Christian belief who celebrate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter.

The Board reviewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.1 of the Code. Section 2.1 states:

"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, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief".

The Board noted that the “Foods of the Gods” advertisement echoes the sentiment that Ferrero products can be enjoyed to celebrate special occasions in life such as Easter. The Board noted the advertisement depicted the bringing together of a number of concepts like Christianity, paganism, Easter and eggs in such a way that there was no particular disparagement of it. The Board considered the significance of Easter to Christians and recognised that not everyone has the same beliefs and values in this multicultural country in which we live.

The Board considered that some people might find the advertisement offensive but considered that most people would not consider it inappropriate. The Board agreed that the advertisement did not promote paganism and that the advertisement was not in breach of section 2.1 of the Code.

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