



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	214/08
2. Advertiser	Inghams Enterprises Pty Ltd
3. Product	Food & Beverages
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 9 July 2008
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Ingham has a set of three advertisements all using the same idea. The advertisements use a parody of a scientific presenter releasing the outcomes of studies to assist people who don't eat chicken. The tagline 'there's something wrong with you if you don't like chicken' is used in all three of the advertisements.

The advertisement begins with the presenter in the Ingham kitchen as she speaks to camera in an over sincere and tongue in cheek way.

PRESENTER: Ingham Chicken Nuggets. Made with 100% succulent breast. And no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives.

The advertisement cuts to a tray with a bowl of Ingham Nuggets in a bowl.

PRESENTER: However, if you're one of the 0.001% of Australians who don't like chicken, then there is something wrong with you.

A board is held up with a pie chart on it displaying the 0.001%.

In the next scene the presenter is walking into the Ingham call centre.

PRESENTER: Ingham can help you keep this abnormality a secret.

She picks up a flat pack box of Ingham Breast Nuggets.

PRESENTER: Simply call the Ingham Helpline and we'll send you these flat pack boxes.

The advertisement cuts to a woman in her kitchen. She casually opens wide the freezer door to reveal it stocked full of Ingham boxes.

PRESENTER: Just fold together, stick them in your freezer. Bingo!

The woman's two friends look on in admiration.

PRESENTER: Your friends think you love chicken...and are normal.

The advertisement cuts back to the presenter in the Ingham Call Centre.

PRESENTER: Because if you don't like chicken, there's something very wrong with you.

A phone number and website are displayed on screen CALL 1300 661 456 chookme.com.au.

The second advertisement opens as Ingham chicken Kiev's are being removed from an oven.

In the next scene the presenter is in the Ingham kitchen. She she speaks to camera in an over sincere and tongue in cheek way.

PRESENTER: Ingham's tasty Chicken Kiev's.

Cut to some Kiev's on an oven tray as a knife cuts through one.

PRESENTER: Made with 100% Australian breast. Perfect.

Cut back to our presenter in the kitchen.

PRESENTER: But what if you're one of those people who don't like chicken? You do have a very real and strange problem and people will know that.

Cut to her walking into the Ingham Call Centre.

PRESENTER: We can help you hide your embarrassing disorder. For instance, try this highly effective water-cooler conversation tip.

Cut to two female office workers standing by a water-cooler.

OFFICE GIRL 1: I like your shoes.

OFFICE GIRL 2: Of course I love chicken!

Cut back to the presenter in the Ingham Call Centre.

PRESENTER: Because if you don't like chicken, there's something very wrong with you.

A phone number and website are displayed on screen CALL 1300 661 456 chookme.com.au.

The third advertisement in the series again opens our presenter in the Ingham kitchen as she speaks to camera in an over sincere and tongue in cheek way.

PRESENTER: Ingham's Chicken. Beautiful, juicy, tasty tenders. Made with 100% Australian chicken breast.

Cut to an oven tray of Ingham Chicken Tenders and then back to the presenter.

PRESENTER: But what if you're one of the fourteen Australians who don't like chicken? Then there is something wrong with you.

She holds up an Ingham chicken tender.

PRESENTER: And if these don't win you over...

She walks into the Ingham call centre and picks up a spray from a desk.

PRESENTER: ...we can help you by keeping your sad affliction a secret.

Cut to guy using the spray in his car and then in his house.

PRESENTER: Take this chicken fragrance for instance. Use it in your car or home...

A delivery man appears at his door.

DELIVERY MAN: Have you been eating chicken?

The guy who'd been spraying nods to camera.

Cut back to the girl in the Ingham call centre.

PRESENTER: Because if you don't like chicken, there is something very wrong with you.

A phone number and website are displayed on screen CALL 1300 661 456 chookme.com.au.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The use of the strategy of saying that there is something very wrong with anyone for not liking chicken is a very tacky and immature way to advertise a product. Products should be advertised as to their merits and not by belittling the targeted clientele. This type of advertising strategy has a potential to challenge a person's self esteem or feelings of self worth if they are already vulnerable and in no way elicits a positive impression of the advertising company. This is the strategy bullies use to get their way in the school yard, or that peer group pressure ends up causing people to do things that they do not feel is right.

I find this ad incredibly offensive, not everyone likes chicken and actually, the thought of even eating the steroid-filled, tasteless meat makes me feel queasy. Every time I see this ad and get told that if you don't like chicken then there is something wrong with you I am outraged that this ad was even allowed to be made.

Children, particularly those of a pre-school age, (who at the hour I viewed the ad are most likely to be the group of children viewing the ad at home with Mum at lunchtime) as we all know are extremely vulnerable to suggestion, let alone such an authoritative direction. The ad is dangerous to children and insulting to everybody else. The ad does not say 'Chicken is good for you.' Rather, it exploits the desire of youngsters to 'belong', to not be the odd one out. Parents desiring to avoid chicken in their children's diet are being undermined by this below-the-belt suggestion. Reasons that one might not eat chicken - environmental, religious, moral, health - are ridiculed by implication. The ad implies directly that, for example, if you are a vegetarian for religious reasons 'there's something wrong with you'. The ad acts as an intensifier for all the further 'eat chicken' ads in the day, many of which are undoubtedly chickens supplied by Inghams. It flies in the face of the stated position of both the State and Federal Governments on children and the advertising of food to them.

As a vegetarian, I find the comments in this advertisement, (directed at non-chicken eaters), extremely offensive, and discriminatory towards vegetarians. I do not appreciate being referred to as having an "embarrassing disorder", nor do I appreciate being labelled as having "something wrong with you (me)", simply because I do not eat chicken.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

included the following:

I am writing with reference to the complaint/s regarding the current Ingham television advertising campaign, and the concern as to whether the advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics.

Through the application of an obvious and simple comedic approach, the advertisements in question communicate the thought that "if you don't like chicken there is something wrong with you".

To assist the board in their review process we would like to provide the following background information:

First and foremost, to check the validity and appropriateness of the idea at concept stage, we presented draft scripts to consumers in qualitative research. This campaign idea was 'tested' against two other ideas, with the campaign in question deemed to be the strongest, receiving unanimous endorsement from a cross section of consumers.

The elements that consumers responded so positively to were:

- the obvious comedy value... that this was genuinely funny and definitely not to be taken seriously; it literally made them laugh out loud*
- that it was great to see a brand not take itself too seriously... that this showed a confident brand with a willingness to have some fun at its own expense (the decrepit nature of the Ingham call centre was a clear example of this)*
- the overall impression was of something very different in terms of regular advertising... something they felt was fresh and interesting, and thus worth watching.*

Secondly, to further ensure there was no potential misunderstanding of the comedic nature of the communication, we chose genuinely silly examples of techniques to 'help' consumers: Water cooler conversation tips; Chicken room fragrance; Ordering empty boxes from Ingham to put in your freezer.

It is also important to note that these obviously silly scenarios make up the bulk of the communication in each commercial, so in terms of emphasis, the focus remains very much on the humorous / non serious nature of our message.

The final point we took into account as we progressed was that the type of humour involved in the advertising be consistent with the type of humour Australian consumers are regularly exposed to in mainstream television based comedy.

Many of those programs regularly touch on potentially sensitive subject matter, but consumers understand that there is no malice involved, and simply enjoy it for what it is... a bit of fun.

If we were to apply the same strict measure of political correctness expressed in the complaints, to comedy on television, a large proportion of the content would be ineligible for broadcast.

Australians enjoy their humour, and are historically very good at appreciating a lighter perspective on life... a point these commercials were obviously designed to appeal to.

In summary, the advertising was not designed nor intended to cause any offence or vilify any person (or group). We believe the very clear use of humour in the commercials, both literally and tonally, strongly demonstrates this case.

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 series of three television advertisements and noted that, while they all differed slightly and featured a unique Ingham's product, they all had the same tagline of 'there's something wrong with you if you don't like chicken'.

The Board considered that the style of the advertisement was meant to be humorous and push the boundaries of what is considered acceptable to the community in relation to the use of humour in advertising.

The Board further considered the premise of 'there's something wrong with you if you don't like chicken' was so silly that it could not be taken seriously.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement would be offensive to vegetarians, vegans or people who do not like chicken.

The Board agreed that most vegetarians would find this advertisement amusing as it pokes fun at itself and chicken eaters generally. As an example of this they pointed to the use of a chicken flavoured spray, which is of course, ludicrous.

The Board agreed that the style of the advertisement was self-referential.

The Board also considered that even if members of the community did not find the advertisements humorous, the use of the tagline did not discriminate against or vilify particular sectors of the community.

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