



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	346/00
2. Advertiser	Sanitarium Health Food Co. (Weet-Bix)
3. Product	Food
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 12 December 2000
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement portrays a small boy playing with a toy vehicle and sitting on the floor of a garage in front of a truck which reverses, stops and disgorges sugar. A voiceover says, ‘During the important growing years between two and eighteen, the average Aussie kid will consume over a quarter of a tonne of added sugar.’ An older boy replaces the younger and sugar continues to flow from the truck onto the boy. The voiceover continues, ‘Treats are OK, but surely breakfast is when we should all eat a meal that’s low in sugar.’ A shot follows of a young man seated at a table taking the product from its packet, a close-up of the product with milk poured over and the young man eating it. The voiceover resumes, ‘With less than a quarter of a gram of sugar in each Weet-Bix, Aussie kids get more of their energy from whole wheat, not sugar.’ The action returns to the first, small boy in the garage who scoops sugar into his toy, and the advertisement concludes with the advertiser’s logo, text and voiceover, ‘And it’s 100% Australian owned’.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainants made regarding this advertisement included the following:

‘We feel that this advert encourages children to believe it is safe to sit behind vehicles, whether they be moving or not, and we strongly believe this is a bad message to convey.’

‘This brings me great concern as it is allowing small children to think that it is alright to be behind a truck whilst they can hear the reversing alarm and also that it is alright to have a load dumped on top of them.’

‘.....there is the issue of road safety (and the safe operation of the vehicle) as the driver of the vehicle could not possibly see the child in his mirrors, nor do we see him check behind his vehicle at any stage.’

‘.....I would prefer my grandchildren to eat sugar than have them ignore the danger signal of a reversing truck.’

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (‘the Board’) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (‘the Code’).

The Board was of the view, given that the advertisement was clearly photographed in a controlled studio environment, that the material within it did not contravene prevailing community standards of health and safety. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the Code on this or any other ground and, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.