

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	17/341
<b>COMPLAINANT</b>	N. Klomp
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Planet Fun
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Planet Fun, Television
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	25 October 2017
<b>OUTCOME</b>	Not Upheld

## **SUMMARY**

The television advertisement for the Silly Sausage game shows children and families playing the game which has participants reacting to commands from the sausage within a given time.

The Complaints Board said the general consumer takeout of the advertisement would be of a family enjoying playing a reaction-test based game.

The Complaints Board confirmed its jurisdiction related to the content and placement of the advertisement. The Complaints Board agreed it was not the intention of the advertisement to insinuate anything other than the fun offered by the game and it saw no hint of any sexual innuendo in the advertisement.

The Complaints Board said the advertisement had been prepared with a high standard of social responsibility to consumers and society and had not presented anything the Complaints Board considered would cause offence against generally prevailing community standards. Therefore, the advertisement was not in breach of the Code of Ethics or the Children and Young People's Advertising Code.

The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Not Upheld.

### **[No further action required]**

Please note this headnote does not form part of the Decision.

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## **COMPLAINTS BOARD DECISION**

The Chair directed the Complaints Board to consider the complaint with reference to Basic Principle 4 and Rule 4 of the Code of Ethics and Principle 1 and Rule 1(f) of the Children and Young People's Advertising Code. This required the Board to consider whether the advertisement contained anything which clearly offended against generally prevailing community standards.

The Complaints Board confirmed the advertisement was directed at children and it also considered whether it contained anything that was likely to result in their physical, mental or moral harm or employed sexual appeal or imagery.

**The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Not Upheld.**

**The Complaint**

The Complainant was disturbed by the sexual connotation of the advertisement and believed it could be viewed as a grooming tool for the sexual abuse of children.

**The Advertiser's Response**

The Advertiser said the Silly Sausage game was similar to the Bop It game. It said the advertisement should be seen through the eyes of child given that this is who the advertisement was aimed at.

**The Media Response**

The Commercial Approval Bureau said the Complainant's interpretation of the advertisement lay at the farthest bounds of expectation and did not believe it would be the takeout of the general consumer.

**The Complaints Board Discussion**

The Complaints Board began by discussing the general consumer takeout of the advertisement. It agreed the general impression would be the advertisement promoted a children's game, during children's programme times and a child would be unlikely to see the interpretation referred to by the Complainant.

The Complaints Board said its interpretation of the advertisement was a family enjoying a reaction-test based game. It also noted the name of the game was a play on the 'Silly Sausage' term of endearment which added to the innocence of the game. The Complaints Board agreed it was not the intention of the advertisement to insinuate anything other than the fun offered by the game and the Complaints Board saw no hint of any sexual innuendo in the advertisement.

The Complaints Board acknowledged the genuine concerns of the Complainant, but agreed this did not represent the average consumer takeout and the Complainant was interpreting the advertisement from a specific perspective as a social worker.

The Complaints Board also noted the Complainant's concern was aimed more at the product and its potential misuse than at the advertisement itself and said the Advertising Standards Authority's jurisdiction related to the content and placement of the advertisement.

The Complaints Board agreed the advertisement had no intended sexual innuendo and therefore was not in breach of Principle 1 or Rule 1(f) of the Children and Young People's Advertising Code.

The Complaints Board said the advertisement had been prepared with a high standard of social responsibility to consumers and society as required by the Code of Ethics. They said the advertisement did not contain anything which in the light of generally prevailing community standards would be likely to cause serious or widespread offence, taking into account the context medium, audience and product.

Accordingly, the Complaints Board ruled to Not Uphold the complaint.

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**DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT**

The television advertisement for the silly sausage game shows children and families playing the game which has participants reacting to commands from the sausage within a given time.

## COMPLAINT FROM N KLOMP

Morena, I had the TV on this morning for my 3 year old daughter and I was very disturbed to see the ad for the 'Silly Sausage' game advertised. I have added the link above but I am sure you know the one I mean. I am disturbed about the sexualised connotations in this game/ad. I am very concerned that this game will provide a easy lead in for possible sexual abusers to groom young children. I am actually horrified that this has made it onto TV. The actions and the wording of the ad will make grooming a simple process for child sexual abusers.

Can you please advise me of what will happen in this situation as this advertising needs to be cut immediately. I am writing as both a mother concerned for my own children, but also as a social worker... - I am concerned for all children.

## CODE OF ETHICS

**Basic Principle 4:** All advertisements should be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

**Rule 4: Decency** - Advertisements should not contain anything which clearly offends against generally prevailing community standards taking into account the context, medium, audience and product (including services).

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ADVERTISING CODE

**Principle 1:** Advertisements targeted at children or young people must not contain anything that is likely to result in their physical, mental or moral harm and must observe a high standard of social responsibility.

**Rule 1 (f):** Advertising must not employ sexual appeal nor include sexual imagery.

## RESPONSE FROM ADVERTISER, PLANET FUN

... Planet Fun are the largest toy distributor in NZ with many of the biggest brands in the marketplace, and we are the largest children's advertiser – we are a reputable company who would never do anything to harm our business and we are particularly conscious of child safety. Silly Sausage is a fun silly game that is similar to a well known Hasbro game called Bop-It. Sausages are commonplace, as is the term Silly Sausage. Children find the game fun and challenging.

The TV ad has been aired extensively all over the world. Whilst I can work out the origins of the complainant's view, she has let her mind wander far too far into an extraordinarily strange place. We support the role of the ASA and you vetting this ad, but encourage you to do so through the eyes of a regular fun loving kid, not one of an adult.

Many thanks for the opportunity to respond.

## RESPONSE FROM MEDIA, CAB

**COMPLAINT: 17/341                      KEY: SILS03001                      RATING:           G**

We have been asked to respond to this complaint under the following codes:  
Code of Ethics – Basic Principle 4, Rule 4;  
Children and Young People Advertising Code – Principle 1, Rule 1(f)

CAB approved this Planet Fun commercial on 07/09/17 with a G classification. Under CAB's internal procedures, the commercial is categorised as Retail - Toys advertisement.

This commercial advertises a family game called 'Silly Sausage'. Within the game, a cartoon-like sausage is passed around.

A complainant believes that this product represents a paedophilic threat. This interpretation lies at the farthest bounds of expectation – and no other viewer in the majority or minority is likely to share the complainant's belief.

The advertiser has clearly met a due sense of social responsibility in advertising this perfectly benign product, and CAB sees no grounds for the complaint to be upheld.