

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/064
COMPLAINANT	C. O'Neil
ADVERTISER	George Weston Foods
ADVERTISEMENT	George Weston Foods, Out of Home
DATE OF MEETING	5 March 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The advertisement on the side of a vehicle for George Weston Foods Burgen Bread featured a picture of a woman in pyjamas eating Burgen toast in bed. The advertisement wording said “Are you a Burgen virgin?”

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, C. O'Neil, said: There was a picture of an attractive girl positioned on a truck with the caption: "Are you a Burgen Virgin?"

The girl was only clothed in what looked like a white sheet and she was obviously meant to be a symbol for sex but also women virginity/purity. I see no connection between sex/virginity and bread. I felt uncomfortable seeing it on a vehicle in public because it perpetuates a stereotype about how women should be virgins or are more pure or better when they are virgins.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 5; Code for People in Advertising - Basic Principle 4, Basic Principle 5;

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern the “girl” was dressed only in a sheet and was depicted as a symbol for sex and virginity or purity, which was not appropriate for a bread advertisement.

In considering the issue raised by the Complainant, the Chair referred to precedent decisions based on the Advertiser's campaign of “Are you a Burgen virgin?” and ‘Are you still a Burgen virgin?’ which used the same image. Decision 14/064 was not upheld by the Complaints Board, Decision 14/094 was ruled no grounds to proceed and Decision 16/340 was not upheld by the Complaints Board.

The Chair confirmed the young woman in the advertisement was not only wrapped in a white duvet, but was also wearing long pyjama bottoms, a white string vest top and a bra. When it had previously considered the same image, the majority of the Complaints Board said the woman sitting in her pyjamas in bed was not sexual, nor was it exploitative and noted that eating toast in bed was an everyday activity for some.

The Chair noted it was possible to use the word virgin in a non-sexual context and said the likely consumer takeout of the word “virgin” in this context would be promoting Burgen bread to people who had yet to try it.

As such, the Chair ruled the advertisement did not reach the threshold to objectify the woman or portray her in a manner that used sexual appeal simply to draw attention to an unrelated product. It did not contain anything which was likely to cause serious or widespread offence in the light of generally prevailing community standards. Therefore the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility.

The Chair said there was no apparent breach of Basic Principle 4 and Rule 5 of the Code of Ethics or Basic Principles 4 and 5 of the Code for People in Advertising and ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed.**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.