

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/323
ADVERTISER	Hell Pizza
ADVERTISEMENT	Hell Pizza, Facebook
DATE OF MEETING	28 June 2021
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The Hell Pizza Facebook advertisement promotes their latest pizza - the Smokey Brisket Pizza. The caption reads: "We've got your new found obsession and it'll be quite the habit for some of you. So, we've set up a 24/7 support line to help you stay hooked for when you start thinking of giving it up. Just call 0800 DONT QUIT to take the first step to not quitting. Our NEW Smokey Brisket Pizza is loaded with smoked brisket, smoked cheddar, smokey BBQ base, crispy beer battered onion rings, roasted red peppers, topped with dirty American style cheese sauce. This is a habit worth keeping.

*But yeah nah, if you are struggling with smoking, please call 0800 QUITLINE."

The short video/clip attached to the post includes three slides - with smoke floating in and out of the screen from the top and bottom. The first slide reads "Need Help with your smokey cravings?" The second slide says: "Call 0800 DONT QUIT"

The third slide says: "Smokey Brisket Pizza - A habit worth keeping" The advertisement includes the 'Hell' logo below the text.

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

Complaint 1: I would like to lodge a complaint about Hell Pizza and their arguable breaches of the ASA's Advertising Standards Code, Rule 1(e); 1(g); and 1(f).

This advertisement seems to be encouraging unsafe behaviours and targeting a vulnerable community (smokers) with messaging directly related to addiction. The addition of fine print saying "just kidding, call QUITLINE" is not part of the advertised video and only features in the text attached to the post.

As a smoker who continues to struggle to quit, the marketing techniques in this advertisement were heavily impactful and caused cravings. The co-opting of a government health scheme to curb smoking for Aotearoa New Zealand is insidious and cannot be considered parody or satire as it brings about harm to real groups of people suffering from tobacco use.

This advertisement was viewed on Facebook, as a sponsored ad, twice on 20/06/21, once around midday, and again at approx. 19:50.

Complaint 2: The following is posted on the Hell Pizza facebook page: We've got your newfound obsession and it'll be quite the habit for some of you. So, we've set up a 24/7 support line to help you stay hooked for when you start thinking of giving it up Just call 0800 DONT QUIT to take the first step to not quitting. Our NEW Smokey Brisket Pizza is loaded with smoked brisket, smoked cheddar, smokey BBQ base, crispy beer battered onion rings, roasted red peppers, topped with dirty American style cheese sauce. This is a habit worth keeping. *But yeah nah, if you are struggling with smoking, please call 0800 QUITLINE. I think this is a breach of PRINCIPLE 1: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - Rule 1 (e) Safety It

makes light of an incredibly serious issue (smoking) and parodies an important service (0800 QUITLINE). It is a very poor taste joke that I can see being triggering to people struggling to quit smoking.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(h);

Principle 1: Social Responsibility: Advertisements must be prepared and placed with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

Rule 1(h) Health and well-being: Advertisements must not undermine the health and well-being of individuals.

The Chair noted the Complainants were concerned the advertisement undermines addiction issues by parodying the important work Quitline in helping people quit smoking.

The Chair carefully reviewed the advertisement and said the likely consumer takeout would be that the Advertiser considers its product to be so good that consumers are likely to become obsessed with it.

The Chair acknowledged the genuine concerns of the Complainants, and the serious issue of dealing with an addiction to tobacco. In her view, the approach taken by the Advertiser, was unlikely to undermine the positive work undertaken by Quitline. The Chair noted a representative of the official Quitline organisation had entered in the joke by commenting on the Facebook page, suggesting they were not concerned about any mixed messaging.

The Chair said the context of the advertisement was also important. She noted the advertisement appeared on the Hell Facebook page, meaning the likely audience would already be familiar with the tongue-in-cheek, edgy style often employed by the Advertiser.

The Chair said the advertisement did not meet the threshold to breach Principle 1 or Rule 1(h) of the Advertising Standards Code.

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

Chair's Ruling: Complaints **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 calendar days of receipt of this decision.