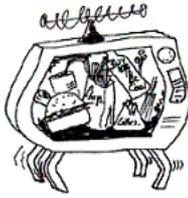


COALITION ON FOOD ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN



PO Box 408. Parkholme. SA 5043.
www.chdf.org.au/foodadstokids

Speaking out against unhealthy food advertising to children

10 June 2004

Assistant Manager
Investigations Section
Australian Broadcasting Authority
PO Box Q500,
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230 Australia

Dear Madam/Sir,

On behalf of the coalition on Food Advertising to Children (CFAC) I wish to bring to your attention a disturbing observation related to marketing of food products directed at the child market..

The advertisement is one for Kellogg's Coco Pops currently being screened on Channel 7. The advertisement features popular pre-school personality Monica Trapaga, promoting Coco Pops for its nutritional content vis a vis "no artificial coloring or preservatives, and 8 vitamins and minerals including calcium for strong bones and teeth". The advertisement fails to mention the high sugar content of Coco Pops which at 40% by weight of the product, makes Coco Pops one of the highest sugar-containing breakfast cereals on the market and **definitely not considered to be a healthy food choice by nutritional standards** (Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, Commonwealth Department of Health & Family Services, 1998)

CFAC considers that this advertisement breaches Children's Television Standard CTS 17) and Draft Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice (Explanatory Note. Review of Commercial Television Industry Code of practice. P5. 2003). CFAC has taken a complaint out with Channel 7 to this regard.

The matter we want to raise with the ABA as the government regulator is the **unethical use of a popular pre-school personality to promote unhealthy food products to young children**. Coco Pops is a breakfast cereal marketed to children as evidenced by its packaging and advertising strategies. This placement of this advertisement at the particular time-slot 7pm, locates it within children's peak TV viewing time which is between 5 - 9pm (ABA, 2002).

While advertisers may argue that the advertisement is directed at parents, nevertheless, (1) Coco Pops is a food product directed at the child market, (2) the advertisement was screened in children's peak viewing time and (3) the advertisement features children and a popular pre-school personality and is therefore likely to appeal to children as well as parents.

Australia is currently experiencing an epidemic of childhood obesity and excessive intakes of energy-dense foods, including high-sugar foods, are contributing to this problem (Cook, Rutishauser, Seelig. 2001). The Commonwealth Government's National Obesity Taskforce in its final report recommended, *"Better protection for young people against the promotion of high-energy, poor nutritional value foods and drinks...through advertising and media that encourage unhealthy eating, inactivity and overweight"* (www.healthyandactive.health.gov.au)

The use of a popular pre-school personality to market an unhealthy food product to children irresponsible should be unconscionable trade practice.

The Coalition on Food Advertising to Children, requests the ABA to work with the national Obesity Taskforce to enact regulations protecting children from the use of popular personalities to market unhealthy foods.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Mehta,
Chairperson

cc. Chairperson, National Obesity Taskforce.