



Nostalgia rules in TV cookie commercial

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A TV commercial shown during a children's show, which depicts youngsters sharing Oreo cookies, was not aimed at children, the Advertising Standards Board ruled, because it was appealing to adults' sense of nostalgia.

And a complaint about advertisements for Snickers bars, shown during *Junior MasterChef* and *The Simpsons*, was not acted on because although both shows were popular with children under 12 they were aimed at an "older and broader audience".

Jane Martin, of the Obesity Policy Coalition, said not one complaint made to the Advertising Standards Board was upheld on the grounds that the ad was aimed at children. "Self-regulation is a charade," she said. "The loopholes in the codes are bigger than the safety net they are meant to provide, and when industry is caught flouting its own rules, there are no sanctions.

"Government agencies must stop passing the buck and start taking action to protect children from junk-food advertising."

In the Oreo complaint, the board noted that depictions of children did not, by themselves, necessarily amount to an advertisement being attractive to or directed at children.

"The board considered that the advertisement was more likely to be taken as being directed to adults who can look back with amusement at



The good old days? The Oreo commercial.

school behaviour from young boys and girls," it said. A review of industry self-regulation by the broadcast watchdog, the Australian Communications and

Media Authority, found that of the 32 complaints made to the Advertising Standards Board between January 2009 and May this year, only six decisions went against food companies.

Four were reprimanded for accidentally showing ads during children's shows and two for using popular characters. In no case was there a financial penalty.

The authority concluded that it was "unclear" whether industry measures to limit children's exposure to junk and fast-food ads worked.