



YEARS OF AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL MARKETING CODE

For 20 years the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) has been providing an effective framework setting standards for responsible alcohol marketing and packaging in Australia managed by industry and governments.



The ABAC Scheme provides an effective but flexible framework within which standards for alcohol marketing in Australia are set by the ABAC Management Committee which includes representation by the alcohol and advertising industries and Australian governments.

Established in 1998 by key industry associations, ABAC and the associated pre-vetting and complaints adjudication services have expanded after extensive review and evaluation in 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2017. These changes ensure the Code continues to meet community and government expectations.

The Alcohol Advertising Pre-vetting Service (AAPS) is highly effective in preventing material that breaches the ABAC standards from ever reaching the marketplace. In the last 20 years AAPS has considered more than 17,721 requests for advice on alcohol marketing and rejected more than 2,573 marketing communications.

ABAC has been fortunate to have Professor the Hon. Michael Lavarch AO head the ABAC Adjudication Panel since the Code's inception. In ABAC's 20 years, Chief Adjudicator Professor Lavarch and his Panel of independent adjudicators have made 453 decisions - 118 of which found that at least some of the marketing complained of did not meet Code standards and were ordered out of market.

Following is a snapshot of the Code's development and operations over the last two decades together with a small selection of breaches that demonstrate the ABAC standards in operation.



Harry Jenkins AO
Chair, ABAC Management
Committee

In 20 years

>17721
marketing pre-vetted

>2573
rejected marketing requests

453
panel determinations

118
determinations upheld

1998 - 2003

The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code and ABAC Adjudication Panel (the Panel) commenced on 1 July 1998. The Panel received alcohol-related complaints from Ad Standards and made a variety of decisions in the early years of the scheme. An Alcohol Advertising Pre-vetting Service was operated by the founding associations separately to ABAC during this period.

2004

Following an extensive review process that included industry and government stakeholders, significant changes were made to ABAC in 2004. Of particular note:

- a Government representative joined the Management Committee for the first time
- industry coverage was expanded to allow alcohol producers who were not members of one of the three industry associations to become signatories
- Ad Standards committed to sending every complaint it received to the ABAC Chief Adjudicator to make a determination in relation to the applicability of the Code
- the importance of the public health debate was recognised with a specialist in the field a permanent addition to the Panel
- the Management Committee members committed to publish an Annual Report and make the Code available via their websites
- the ABAC Code was amended to include:
 - a formal commitment by the industry associations to adhere to the intent of the Code, not just a technical reading of its content
 - a requirement to advertise consistently with the Australian Alcohol Guidelines and not promote excessive alcohol consumption
 - internet and “new media” advertising
 - recognition of the role of alcohol companies in community events/promotions.
- education was provided to the alcohol industry and other stakeholders on the new Code requirements and Scheme

2005

To ensure full integration of the entire pre-vetting and adjudication process, the Alcohol Advertising Pre-vetting Service (AAPS) was brought within the ABAC Scheme.

2006

The measures adopted in 2004 to allow non-members of alcohol industry associations to become signatories to the Code were used for the first time, ensuring ABAC maintained coverage of nearly all alcohol advertising undertaken by producers in Australia.

The Management Committee's commitment to education continued, with workshops held in Sydney and Melbourne to help the industry gain a better understanding of the provisions of the Code and the associated pre-vetting and complaints procedures. The workshops continued to be held every 1-2 years.

2007

Transparency and procedural timeliness were the focus in 2007. The ABAC website was established and three additional appointments were made – an alternate public health representative on the Adjudication Panel, an additional pre-vetter, and a new administrator to improve the efficiency of the complaints system.

The Management Committee also published guidelines to help producers and advertising agencies put the ABAC standards into practice.

The Scheme's coverage expanded to include the adjudication of complaints about advertisements in trade magazines and an additional clause was inserted into the Code prohibiting advertising that refers to the ABAC Scheme in a manner that may bring the Scheme into disrepute.

2008

AAPS expanded in 2008, with Winemakers' Federation of Australia members agreeing to pre-vet all outdoor advertising. The Outdoor Media Association (OMA) supported this announcement, confirming that its members will only accept advertisements that have been approved by ABAC.

In a move that highlighted the advertising industry's responsiveness to community expectation, OMA also announced new advertising guidelines restricting alcohol billboard advertising within 150 metres of schools.

2009

The ABAC Scheme was incorporated and a corporate governance framework established to ensure best practice. Administrative services were centralised and expanded and the appointment of an Executive Officer led to improved timelines for complaint resolution.

The scheme was expanded to include the naming and packaging of alcohol beverages.

2010

The Code was amended to reflect current NHMRC alcohol guidelines and its scope was expanded to cover producer-generated point-of-sale material.

The OMA, Free TV Australia and the Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association formally supported the Alcohol Advertising Pre-Vetting Service by announcing they will not place advertisements that have not been pre-vetted by the service. The Publishers' Advertising Advisory Bureau and Commercial Radio Australia also amended their requirements in support of the Service.

The Panel responded to emerging social media trends, finding on two occasions that a Facebook fan site was subject to the Code.

ABAC procedures and operations were reviewed, updated and documented. AAPS was substantially reformed, with the centralised allocation and recording of applications and approvals, introduction of performance reviews for pre-vetters and the codification of expectations of pre-vetters.

2011

The Panel made its first substantive decisions on naming and packaging in relation to three separate alcohol beverages.

Combined annual training sessions for pre-vetters and panelists led by the Chief Adjudicator of the Panel commenced.

2012

A new health sector panelist was appointed to the Panel.

AAPS achieved a result of no pre-vetted advertisements resulting in an upheld complaint by the ABAC Adjudication Panel.

2013

Colmar Brunton Social Research undertook market research evaluating ABAC Adjudication Panel decisions compared with community expectations. Overwhelmingly, decisions of the Panel were found to be consistent, if not slightly conservative, in relation to community standards.

Woolworths Liquor and Coles Liquor both joined ABAC as signatories, extending coverage of the Code.

A guide for alcohol marketers and their agencies on best practice in the management of digital alcohol marketing was published to encourage consistency and a high level of social responsibility in this emerging media.

The ABAC website received a major upgrade in both function and form, making it a more useful online resource for stakeholders.

A new system for the review of AAPS decisions was implemented and a system for online lodgement of AAPS applications was developed and commenced.

2014

Following a significant consultation and review commencing in 2013, an updated ABAC Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code was implemented on 1 July 2014. The new Code extended coverage to marketing collateral and provided greater clarity to the standards, in particular the provisions relating to minors and the extent of ABAC's coverage.

Campari Australia joined the scheme as a signatory extending coverage of the Code.

An ABAC awareness television advertisement was broadcast as a community service announcement across most free-to-air and pay television networks.

2015

An Independent Chair was appointed to the ABAC Management Committee, former President of the Senate, the Hon Alan Ferguson.

The ABAC Rules and Procedures were amended following a review of the governance and operations of the scheme, including:

- greater consistency in pre-vetting requirements across industry categories
- appointment of a Deputy Chair of the ABAC Adjudication Panel
- specific requirements surrounding removal of material found to breach the Code were implemented
- specific provisions surrounding skills and experience requirements and terms for panelists and pre-vetters

A communications strategy was developed for ABAC to raise awareness and understanding both within the alcohol industry and the wider community. ABAC developed a strategic plan for the scheme.

Lion Cider joined the scheme as a signatory extending coverage of the scheme.

2016

The ABAC Digital Alcohol Marketing Best Practice Guide was reviewed and updated.

A year in review summary that publicised all Scheme changes and breaches of the Code in the previous year was developed for public release to educate and improve awareness of the scheme.

Training materials and a quarterly update for alcohol marketers were developed and a database of industry participants created to improve industry knowledge of the scheme.

2017

A second round of community standards research was completed by Colmar Brunton Social Research that, again, demonstrated that ABAC is meeting community standards.

A significant review of the Code resulted in the inclusion of restrictions on the placement of alcohol marketing. The Code previously focused on setting standards for the content of alcohol marketing.

Coca Cola Amatil and Asahi Premium Beverages joined ABAC as signatories.

2018

ABAC undertook to make its quarterly reports publicly available to provide a more timely and transparent update of its considerations and decisions, in addition to its Annual Report.

With the impending retirement of inaugural Independent Chair the Hon Alan Ferguson, and following a six-month recruitment process, ABAC appointed former Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr Harry Jenkins AO as its new Independent Chair, effective 1 July 2018.

Attracted most complaints

35 Complaints

Brand Jim Beam
Year 2008
Channels Television

Complaint

Alcohol related offensive behaviour (i.e. stalking).



Brand St Agnes Brandy

Year 2004

Channels Print

Complaint

Alcohol as a contributor to sexual success.



Interested?
Give it your best shot

The attraction is there alright. You felt it straight away didn't you? How long has it been since you felt such anticipation? Be honest, it's what you want isn't it? Well then, why don't you just come right out and ask for it? **St. Agnes Brandy. Go on, give it your best shot!**

ST. AGNES
AUSTRALIA'S NO. 1 BRANDY
www.stagnesbrandy.com.au



Brand Jim Beam

Year 2005

Channels Television

Complaint

Challenging/daring a person to drink alcohol.



Banned Advertisements

Brand Black Douglas
Year 2008
Channels Outdoor

Complaint

Alcohol related offensive behaviour.



Brand Three Kings
Year 2010
Channels Outdoor & Print

Complaint

Images of under 25s, and strong appeal to under 18s.



Banned Advertisements

Brand Liquorland
Year 2013
Channels Television

Complaint

Consumption of alcohol while playing sport.



Brand VB
Year 2013
Channels Television

Complaint

Consumption of alcohol while working on a construction site.



Banned Advertisements

Brand Bavarian Beer Cafe
Year 2015
Channels Outdoor

Complaint

Excessive consumption and alcohol as a cause of change in mood.

— GET —
Oktoberfested
SEE TIM FROM INDOOR
CRICKET IN ACTION

18 SEPTEMBER - 31 OCTOBER

BOOK A TABLE NOW AT BAVARIANBIERCAFE.COM



Brand Little Fat Lamb
Year 2015
Channels Packaging

Complaint

Strong appeal to under 18s and confusion with soft drink.



Banned Advertisements

Brand VB Blue
Year 2016
Channels Packaging, Print & Digital
Complaint
Strong appeal to under 18s.



Brand Spirit Bar & Lounge
Year 2018
Channels Social Media
Complaint
Alcohol described as healthy and hydrating.



ABAC's statistics over the last 20 years

	1998 - 2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<i>Marketing pre-vetted</i>		754	761	936	1267	1110	1369	1050	1059	1229	1394	1571	1589	1416	1453
<i>Rejected</i>		84	86	182	293	232	238	77	82	192	211	212	204	186	198
<i>Complaints</i>		212	105	53	87	162	117	87	119	98	182	94	133	139	130
<i>Percentage of all complaints</i>		8.1%	3.6%	1.3%	3.3%	4.5%	3.1%	2.5%	3.5%	2.7%	6.6%	1.6%	3%	2.5%	2%
<i>Campaigns complained about</i>		23	29	26	38	44	42	38	74	63	78	42	71	78	67
<i>Panel determinations</i>	21	5	12	10	22	36	39	31	45	36	36	27	29	34	43
<i>Determinations upheld</i>	6	3	2	2	8	7	10	11	15	7	4	8	7	10	7
<i>Avg. business days for a determination</i>		35.1	33	78.6	29.3	19.8	22.5	26.5	25	20	26.3	19.7	21.6	19.7	14.6