

Australia's Responsible Alcohol Marketing Scheme

20 July 2018

ABAC's Second Quarterly Report for 2018

THE Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) has released its Second Quarterly Report for the year, shortly after reaching the milestone of 20 years of operation as Australia's national alcohol marketing regulator on 1 July.

This quarter saw a higher than usual number of breaches of the ABAC standards. In all but one case both signatories and non-signatories to the Code acted promptly to remedy the breach and in all cases none of the breaches had been pre-vetted by ABAC.

"It is pleasing to see that the vast majority of alcohol marketers are acting swiftly to remedy breaches of Code, though it does underscore the benefit to advertisers of pre-vetting their ads through ABAC before going live," Mr Harry Jenkins AO, the Independent Chair of ABAC, said.

"When a breach is explained to an alcohol marketer they typically understand the concern, fix or remove the offending ad and the process becomes a learning experience for the company.

"So it is disappointing that retailer Premix King Ascot Vale has not fully complied with a determination finding two posts on its Facebook page, and the failure to age restrict its page, breached the ABAC standards.

"One post has been removed and the page has been age restricted, however, the other offending post remains on the Premix King Facebook page. ABAC has referred this matter to Victorian Commission for Gaming and Liquor Regulation for investigation.

"This quarter, Placement breaches related to a failure to age restrict company Facebook pages, a billboard being located within 150m of a high school, placement outside Commercial Television Industry guidelines, and a minor receiving an alcohol ad due to an error by the social media platform. Importantly the social media platform has worked to improve its age restriction technologies to prevent further errors of this type.

"The majority of the Content breaches this quarter related to digital and social media activity. Namely, depicting under 25-year-olds, having strong or evident appeal to under 18s, promoting excess consumption, promoting consumption of alcohol during long car drives, and suggesting alcohol can create a change in mood and promoting a particular cocktail as 'healthy'.

"It is clear from this quarter's results that advertisers will need to exercise greater care when recruiting talent, including engaging social media influencers, to ensure their age and appearance comply with the Code. It is also incumbent on advertisers to engage appropriate age-gating controls across all of their social media activity."

ABAC's Second Quarterly Report for 2018 detailing these and other decisions is available online at: <http://www.abac.org.au/publications/quarterly-reports/>. More information about the Code is also available at: www.abac.org.au

[ENDS]

Media Contact: For an interview with Harry Jenkins, please contact Jayne Taylor on 0411 700 225.