**Australia’s Responsible Alcohol Marketing Scheme**

14 July 2020

**Alcohol marketers to take care with pandemic marketing messages**

The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) has seen increased activity this quarter, with 60 new complaints and 26 determinations.

“Not surprisingly the COVID-19 pandemic and associated government restrictions to control the spread of the virus has been prominent both in marketing references and complaints,” ABAC Chair Harry Jenkins AO noted.

“With businesses impacted, many alcohol producers and retailers have turned to online marketing and home delivery to sustain sales. In this environment, marketers need to be mindful of the ABAC standard in Part 3(c) and ensure that marketing messages don’t:

* suggest alcohol is needed as an aid to relaxation;
* imply alcohol is a prop to get someone through the stresses of coping with the pandemic; or
* suggest that alcohol can significantly change a mood or environment.

“It is acceptable to reference the pandemic in marketing, like its acceptable to reference other significant background events. Current business conditions have seen some industry participants using marketing channels which they may not have used extensively in normal conditions. It is however important that good standards of marketing are maintained.

“Ad Standards have issued a reminder to advertisers as the situation with COVID-19 continues to evolve, to ensure that the content of all ads align with current community standards and [health guidelines](https://adstandards.cmail20.com/t/r-l-jhhiuhhk-huktliiulu-i/). For more information and updates follow Ad Standards on [LinkedIn](https://adstandards.cmail20.com/t/r-l-jhhiuhhk-huktliiulu-d/).

“ABAC has noticed lower pre-vetting levels this quarter. While ABAC understands that companies are looking for ways to cut costs during these challenging times, ABAC urges marketers to continue to use the ABAC pre-vetting service as a valuable independent check that their promotions meet responsible marketing standards before reaching the marketplace.

“ABAC is pleased to see very few placement breaches this quarter, with just one marketer failing to activate age restriction controls on their Facebook account. Alcohol marketers should all familiarise themselves with the “How to” guides on implementing age restrictions on [Facebook](https://vimeo.com/393415842/94a73053de), [Instagram](https://vimeo.com/393416156/3930394021), [Snapchat](https://vimeo.com/393416556/55f1eed370) and [Youtube](https://vimeo.com/393416710/7a79d42509) which are available on the ABAC website.

ABAC’s Second Quarterly Report for 2020 detailing decisions made during the past quarter is available [online](http://www.abac.org.au/publications/quarterly-reports/). More information about the Code is also available at: [www.abac.org.au](http://www.abac.org.au)

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