

Australia's Responsible Alcohol Marketing Scheme

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A busy quarter at ABAC highlights watch outs for alcohol marketers

The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) has had a busy quarter with the release of JWS Research insights on age restriction compliance monitoring together with an increase in complaints and determinations toward the end of this year.

“The [JWS Research insights](#) released in November highlight the impediments to alcohol companies applying age restrictions to their social media accounts. Feedback was provided to social media platforms and ABAC has developed checklists to assist alcohol companies ensure that age restrictions are in place for [organic](#) and [paid](#) marketing. It is strongly recommended that companies use these checklists to periodically undertake their own internal audit of their social media assets (in particular Instagram, Facebook and YouTube accounts). The checklists include helpful links to instructions. It is also important to brief influencers to age restrict individual posts in which they are promoting an alcohol brand. ABAC is committed to further periodic monitoring in this area.” ABAC Chair Harry Jenkins AO noted

“The ABAC Adjudication Panel determinations this quarter also highlight some important areas where care is needed when developing alcohol marketing.

“Showing or encouraging rapid alcohol consumption is a breach of ABAC standards, and is inconsistent with State & Territory Liquor Authority alcohol promotion guidelines. Two decisions this quarter breach this standard, and we remind companies that rapid consumption is not consistent with the responsible and moderate portrayal of alcohol. Likewise, memes that make fun of choosing to drink in moderation, breach the ABAC standards around the responsible and moderate portrayal of alcohol. Care needs to be taken to avoid humour around excessive or irresponsible alcohol consumption.

“ABAC standards prevent suggestions that an alcohol product offers a positive health benefit. For example, a recent determination found that the phrase ‘Australia’s healthiest...premix’ was found to be a health claim in breach of the ABAC Code. Factual comparisons are permitted, but they cannot suggest the product is beneficial for health.

“It is important to be aware that showing or directly implying alcohol consumption before or during activities that require a high degree of alertness or physical co-ordination is a breach of the ABAC Code. This quarter the Panel breached ads showing or directly implying alcohol consumption before cliff diving and while sitting on a sack trolley being towed by a motor cycle. Showing alcohol consumption before or during risky behaviour is clearly not responsible and we urge alcohol marketers to carefully pre-check proposed social media content for consistency with ABAC standards.”

ABAC’s Fourth Quarterly Report for 2022 detailing decisions made during the past quarter is available [online](#).

More information about the Code is also available at: <http://www.abac.org.au/>

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