

Australia's Responsible Alcohol Marketing Scheme

19 April 2023

Panel determinations provide valuable guidance for alcohol marketers

The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) has had a busy start to the year with an increase in complaints and determinations when compared with the same quarter last year.

“After a return to pre-Covid patterns in 2022, an increase in ABAC Adjudication Panel determinations this quarter has provided valuable guidance for the alcohol and advertising industry on responsible alcohol marketing.” ABAC Chair Harry Jenkins AO noted

“Alcohol marketers need to continue to be aware that references to excess consumption of alcohol are not permitted and will not be saved by the use of humour. Likewise suggestions of alcohol causing or contributing to health benefits or sexual success cannot be used.

“Several determinations this quarter examined ranges of packaging against the important standard that prevents alcohol marketing from having strong or evident appeal to minors. The determinations provide helpful guidance to alcohol companies when developing packaging, and are a reminder to companies to take care when using confectionery and soft drink themes that hold nostalgia for adults to ensure those themes do not continue to hold strong appeal to minors currently. A decision about alcohol brand promotion via a licensed T-shirt, also breached this ABAC standard, using themes that are strongly relatable and appealing to minors.

Reflecting on ABAC's recently published Annual report, Harry Jenkins added, “Independent pro-active compliance monitoring conducted by JWS Research was an important new measure commissioned by ABAC for the first time in 2022. The findings prompted a range of actions, including strengthened educational resources for industry to complement the ABAC Pre-vetting Service which pro-actively checks alcohol marketing for ABAC compliance before it reaches the market. After reaching the market, a second process, the independent ABAC Adjudication Panel reviews and adjudicates on any complaints received from the public about alcohol marketing. I am encouraged that all breaches arising from complaints received in 2022 resulted in the voluntary removal, discontinuation or a commitment to modify the material. This combination of effective proactive and reactive measures ensures a strong regulatory system. ”

ABAC's First Quarterly Report for 2022 detailing decisions made during the past quarter, and its recently published Annual report are available [online](#).

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

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