

Australia's Responsible Alcohol Marketing Scheme

18 July 2023

New Code will be implemented from 1 August 2023

The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) has recently been reviewed and strengthened and the new Code will begin to apply from 1 August 2023. Key changes include:

- Stronger placement restrictions, including a higher adult audience requirement (80%) before an alcohol ad can be placed with a programme, and greater restrictions around direct marketing to protect the vulnerable;
- Extension of the Code to no and very low alcohol styled beverages;
- Clearer restrictions preventing alcohol being positioned as a coping mechanism or negatively portraying the choice to abstain.

Alcohol marketers can familiarise themselves with the new Code through ABAC's free one hour online training course available [here](#).

"The new Code will equip the Scheme to address emerging concerns raised by the public through the complaints system," ABAC Chair Harry Jenkins AO said

"Packaging with soft drink and confectionery themes is an area that attracts public complaints as seen in recent determinations and the new Code provides greater clarity and updates around the meaning of 'strong or evident'.

"Showing excess or rapid consumption of alcohol caused the majority of breaches last quarter and I urge marketers to move away from using these themes and images in their social media posts. The new Code clarifies that excessive consumption is consumption inconsistent with the Australian Alcohol Guidelines set by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council. Often these themes are shown humourously, and the new Code makes it very clear that treating excessive or rapid consumption as amusing is a clear breach of responsible alcohol marketing standards.

"The ABAC Panel continue to receive complaints about ads showing alcohol use before or during swimming. The community is concerned about this issue due to the increased risk associated with these activities after alcohol has been consumed and this continues as a key provision in the new Code.

"ABAC complaints and determinations have seen a large increase while pre-vetting requests have seen a 10% decrease when compared with the same quarter last year." ABAC Chair Harry Jenkins AO noted

"ABAC Panel determinations provide helpful guidance to alcohol companies when developing ads and packaging, and I encourage marketers to make use of the wide range of free resources and checklists on the ABAC website and to use the ABAC pre-vetting service as an independent check that their ads and packaging are meeting responsible alcohol marketing standards.

ABAC's Second Quarterly Report for 2023 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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