

# 2023

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## ABAC - AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL MARKETING SCHEME

### FROM THE CHAIR

In 2023 Harry Jenkins AO retired after 5 years at the helm of ABAC as its independent Chair. Harry provided strong independent leadership and was instrumental in assisting the organisation to evolve over the previous five years to keep pace with community expectations and a rapidly changing media and industry landscape. I am pleased to follow in Harry's footsteps and since September I have enjoyed working with ABAC and building on his important work.

The heart of the ABAC Scheme is the ABAC Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code and a comprehensive review and update of the Code was completed in 2023.

The Code review highlighted the importance of keeping across the complex and rapidly evolving digital marketing trends and in December 2023 ABAC released a revised Best Practice Guide for Digital Marketing. The Guide outlines the application of ABAC Code standards to digital marketing and also explores best practice to assist companies in the responsible implementation and management of their digital marketing.

A significant milestone was reached in the middle of 2023 as ABAC celebrated 25 years of regulation of alcohol marketing in Australia. The data speaks for itself, and I highlight the 344 ads and packaging that were ordered out of market by the ABAC Adjudication Panel and the 4,742 marketing communications that were rejected by ABAC pre-vetters before they reached the market. These outcomes demonstrate that ABAC is an active and effective regulator of alcohol marketing in Australia, raising industry standards over that period.



**Hon Tony Smith**  
Chair, ABAC Management  
Committee



THE  
ABAC  
SCHEME  
LIMITED

### KEY ABAC INITIATIVES

#### ABAC Code Review

Periodically ABAC undertakes a comprehensive review of its entire Code to ensure it remains aligned with community expectations and changes in the industry and marketing landscape. After an extensive 15 month public consultation process, consideration of a wide range of submissions and independent community opinion research a new ABAC Code was launched in April 2023 and fully implemented from 1 January 2024.

The strengthened Code includes changes in key areas to further protect minors from exposure to alcohol advertising and keep pace with changing marketing and advertising methods on social and digital media.

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; and
- Clearer restrictions preventing alcohol being positioned as a coping mechanism or negatively portraying the choice to abstain.

#### ABAC Education & Awareness

ABAC Education & Awareness is a key driver of industry compliance. In 2023 ABAC:

- concluded a comprehensive review and update of its Digital Best Practice Guide;
- updated its series of compliance training videos and free ABAC online training course and held an industry webinar to coincide with the launch of the revised ABAC Code;
- delivered tailored in-house training sessions on ABAC compliance for companies and agencies; and
- communicated with the regulated community in relation to ABAC developments and issues both directly and via circulars, upheld determination alerts and quarterly reports released publicly and available on the ABAC website.

## 3167

**Requests to  
pre-vet marketing**

*406 rejected prior  
to entering market*

## 207

**Complaints**

*Resulting in  
93 determinations*

## 40

**Determinations upheld**

[Access via the ABAC Website >](#)

## 23

**Business Day Turnaround**

*The average number of business  
days advertising determinations were  
completed within (30 day target)*