



ABAC Adjudication Panel Determination 158/25

Determination Date	2 December 2025
Brand/Company	Carlton Draught/Carlton & United Breweries
Media	Digital – Instagram
ABAC Code provisions	Part 3 (a)(i), (a)(ii)
Outcome	Dismissed

Part 1 - Determination Overview

Complaint:

The complainant contends that a social media post encourages the excessive and rapid consumption of Carlton Draught (“the product”).

Key findings:

The Panel dismissed the complaint, finding that:

- The theme of the post is that AI can't replace people's enjoyment of social interaction, such as sharing a drink.
- The term ‘couple’ suggests that the level of consumption is moderate, not excessive.
- The video does not show physical consumption, and there are no visual cues that rapid consumption is being encouraged.
- In the context of the video, the more likely interpretation is that ‘crush’ means drink rather than suggesting rapid consumption.

Marketing Communication:

The marketing communication is a video posted to social media showing beer being poured into a glass. The image is superimposed with the words “AI will replace you” followed by “I’d love to see AI crush a couple of Carltons with a mate”. The words accompanying the post read “Which mate is getting the call up?”



Part 2 - The Panel's View

1. This determination considers a social media post for Carlton Draught (the product). The video post shows beer being poured from a jug into a glass, with the words “AI will replace you” followed by “I’d love to see AI crush a couple of Carltons with a mate”. The words accompanying the post read “Which mate is getting the call up?”
2. The complainant argues that the video encourages the excessive and rapid consumption of alcohol. These concerns raise the ABAC standard in Part 3 (a), namely that an alcohol marketing communication must not:
 - show (visibly, audibly or by direct implication), encourage, or treat as amusing, consumption inconsistent with the Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol, such as excessive alcohol consumption (more than 10 standard drinks per week or more than four standard drinks on any one day) – Part 3 (a)(i); or
 - show (visibly, audibly or by direct implication), encourage, or treat as amusing, rapid alcohol consumption - Part 3 (a)(ii).
3. The consistency of a marketing communication with an ABAC standard is assessed from a reasonable person’s probable understanding of the marketing. A “reasonable person” refers to the life experiences, values, and opinions held by most members of the community, serving as the benchmark for what is reasonable. If the marketing can be understood in several ways, the more probable interpretation should be preferred over a possible but less likely interpretation.
4. The Company argues the post is consistent with the ABAC standard, submitting:

- The inclusion of “couple” in the text demonstrates responsible alcohol consumption and cannot be read to mean anything other than its ordinary meaning.
 - In addition to the specific use of “couple”, there is only one jug/pitcher pictured. In that context, the most each individual could be presumed to consume, given there are two glasses, is around two glasses of beer each, which is within the National Health and Medical Research Council’s (NHMRC) drinking guidelines.
 - Nothing in the ordinary meaning of “crush” indicates speed. Crush in this context means to finish or complete. It’s not a reference to speed. Crush may be extended to physically crushing a can, but still, that’s not a reference to the speed of consumption.
5. The likely understanding a reasonable person will take from the post turns on the word “crush” as used within the context of the video as a whole. It is possible in specific contexts that “crush” would likely be understood as conveying excessive and/or rapid drinking. In the current context, however, the Panel believes that the post is consistent with the ABAC standards, noting:
- The theme of the post is that AI can’t replace people’s enjoyment of social interaction, such as sharing a drink.
 - The term “couple” suggests that the level of consumption is moderate, not excessive.
 - The video does not show physical consumption, and there are no visual cues that rapid consumption is being encouraged.
 - In the context of the video, the more likely interpretation is that “crush” means drink rather than suggesting rapid consumption.
6. The complaint is dismissed.

Part 3 - Supporting Information

Panel Process

This complaint was received from Ad Standards (the common entry point for all marketing complaints by members of the Australian community). The Chief Adjudicator referred it to the ABAC Adjudication Panel for consideration against the ABAC Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code. The complaint process is explained [here](#).

The Panel operates in accordance with the [ABAC Rules & Procedures](#) and has regard to the principles of procedural fairness.

The Panel comprised Chief Adjudicator Professor the Hon Michael Lavarch AO, Health Sector Panellist Professor Richard Mattick AM and Panellist Debra Richards.

Applicable ABAC Responsible Marketing Code Standard

Part 3 of the Code requires that an Alcohol Marketing Communication must NOT:

<i>(a)(i)</i>	<i>Show (visibly, audibly or by direct implication), encourage, or treat as amusing, consumption inconsistent with the Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol, such as:</i> <i>(A) excessive Alcohol consumption (more than 10 standard drinks per week or more than 4 standard drinks on any one day); or</i> <i>(B) Alcohol consumption while pregnant or breastfeeding;</i>
<i>(a)(ii)</i>	<i>show (visibly, audibly or by direct implication), encourage, or treat as amusing, rapid Alcohol consumption, misuse or abuse of Alcohol or other irresponsible or offensive behaviour that is related to the consumption or presence of Alcohol;</i>

Company Response:

The Company was allowed to respond to the complaint. Its principal comments were:

- Setting aside the reference to “crush”, which is dealt with below, no, the marketing does not breach the Code standard with reference to excessive alcohol consumption.
- The inclusion of “couple” in the marketing is specifically included to demonstrate responsible alcohol consumption. In the post, “couple” cannot be read to mean anything other than its ordinary meaning.
- In addition to the specific use of “couple”, there is only one jug/pitcher pictured. In that context, the most each individual could be presumed to consume, given there are two glasses, is around two glasses of beer each, which is within the National Health and Medical Research Council’s (NHMRC) drinking guidelines.
- Nothing about one jug/pitcher of beer and two individuals consuming it could be said to be excessive alcohol consumption.
- Nothing in the ordinary meaning of “crush” indicates speed. Crush in this context means to finish or complete. It’s not a reference to speed. Crush may be extended to physically crushing a can, but still, that’s not a reference to the speed of consumption.
- It is reasonable to conclude that the beers in the marketing will be finished/consumed because they will be crushed, but it is not reasonable to assume the speed at which they will be finished/consumed. “Crush” in this context means only to finish, not to finish quickly.

Marketing Best Practice.

The Company was asked how it demonstrates a commitment to alcohol marketing best practices and advised that:

- Asahi Beverages takes responsible alcohol advertising seriously. We are aware of the Code requirements, and our policy and practice ensure compliance with all relevant alcohol and marketing guidelines.
- Asahi Beverages is an ABAC signatory and has committed to meet ABAC Code Standards and comply with Panel determinations.
- Asahi Beverages team members have completed the current ABAC online training course.
- Asahi Beverages has taken other steps to ensure marketing practices and materials meet community expectations for responsible alcohol marketing.
- Asahi Beverages is committed to ensuring that our promotional and marketing materials, as well as those of our associated entities, are in line with the ABAC code. Our goal is for adults to enjoy our products responsibly and in moderation.