



ABAC Adjudication Panel Determination 168/25

Determination Date	29 December 2025
Brands/Company	Hard Rated/Asahi Beverages
Media	Digital – Stack Team App
ABAC Code provisions	Part 4 (b), (c) and (d)
Outcome	Dismissed

Part 1 - Determination Overview

Complaint:

The complainant was concerned that they saw an advertisement for Hard Rated while using the Stack Team App. They advised that the ad appeared while navigating standard team features used by minors, including fixtures, messaging, and team updates.

Key findings:

The Panel dismissed the complaint, finding that:

- The Company has used available age-restriction controls and filters to direct its advertisements to account holders aged 25 and over.
- Overall data indicate that 80% of Stack Team App users are adults; however, the age profile of users will vary by team, as the app was created for a specific team.
- While it is possible that advertising in the case of an app for a team/group catering to minors is being placed with content primarily aimed at minors, in the current case, the Company's ads are not placed with content primarily aimed at minors, given its use of age filters to users aged over 25.

Marketing Placement:

The complainant was concerned that an advertisement for Hard Rated was placed on the Stack Team App.

Part 2 - The Panel's View

Introduction

1. This determination concerns the placement of ads for Asahi Beverage's (the Company) product Hard Rated with the Stack Team App. The complainant is concerned that the

app is used extensively by minors and that minors saw the advertisement while navigating standard team features, including fixtures, messaging, and team updates.

2. Stack Team App is a platform that enables teams and social groups to improve communication by creating their own customisable smartphone app and a dynamically updating website. The basic concept involves team managers creating a team app, and individuals, such as players, who wish to engage with the team (e.g., receiving information on fixtures, training, and results) opening an account to join the team app. Opening an account requires the submission of information, including a date of birth.
3. Stack Team policies preclude a child under 13 from opening an account; therefore, a child under 13 on a sports team using the app must have a parent or adult guardian open the account, and the account must be in the parent's or guardian's name. A minor aged 13 or older may have their own account.
4. The ABAC contains both content and placement standards that alcohol marketing is to satisfy. The content standards apply to the messaging contained within alcohol marketing. In contrast, the placement standards have the policy aim that alcohol marketing be directed towards adults and, to the extent reasonably possible, away from minors. The complainant did not argue that the content of the Hard Rated ad was inappropriate; instead, the complainant contended that the ad should not be placed on the Stack Team App. This means the issue for determination is whether there has been a breach of the ABAC Placement Standards.

Monetising Stack Team and application of the ABAC Placement Standards

5. Stack Team is free to use; you may create a team app and maintain an account. In reality, the app owners have monetised their app through two pathways. The first way involves a sports team or group that has created an app and has subscribed to Stack Team to purchase advertising space in its team app. The subscription fee enables the team/group to sell ad space by offering sponsorship opportunities to presumably local businesses.
6. The second pathway is initiated when an advertiser adds Team Stack to its suite of digital platforms for programmatic advertising. An advertiser using the programmatic path may customise the demographic characteristics of individuals with a Team Stack account who receive an ad. This means an advertiser doesn't select, for example, the Redcliffe junior soccer team to place ads, but instead selects age, geographic, and other data criteria to target their preferred audience for their product.
7. There does not appear to be any barrier imposed by Stack Team to alcohol companies advertising over the app ecosystem. Accordingly, the responsibility to apply filters and settings to exclude minors from receiving alcohol advertising rests with an alcohol company that uses the app for programmatic advertising. Equally, a team manager who has taken the subscription option must exercise due diligence and discretion in declining to accept the sale of banner spots to an alcohol company.

8. The ABAC Placement Standards establish a series of requirements related to the technical capabilities of various technologies and media for targeted marketing. For placement with the Stack Team App, potentially three standards are applicable:
 - Available age-restriction controls must be applied to exclude minors from viewing an alcohol marketing communication – Part 4(b).
 - If the digital platform does not have age restriction controls that are capable of excluding minors, then the marketing communication may only be placed with content where the audience is reasonably expected to comprise at least 80% adults - Part 4 (c)
 - The marketing communication must not be placed with content primarily aimed at minors - Part 4 (d)
9. The Company's response to the complaint provided the following information:
 - Advertisements made through this campaign were strictly targeted to users aged 25 years and older via an age filter. The Stack Team App requires the user to submit basic demographic information at sign-up (name, date of birth, state), enabling the filtering of advertising and the exclusion of groups of users (e.g., individuals under 25) from receiving content. The Stack Team App confirmed the age filter.
 - Stack Team App is a general sports team management tool and is not designed primarily for minors.
 - An audience breakdown provided by Stack Team App in November 2024 indicates that more than 80% of users are adults (11% under 18 and 20% under 25).
 - The Stack Team App content is primarily aimed at adults.
10. Stack Team is a widely used application that is used by over 250,000 clubs, teams, leagues, and social groups in more than 150 countries. There is no publicly available data on the extent of its use in Australia, but as it originated in Australia, it can reasonably be assumed that it is widely used.
11. By its nature, the demographic profile of account holders for individual team/group apps will vary based on the team/group involved. For instance, an app used by a junior sports team will have more minors as account holders than, for example, an adult choir. Accordingly, the entire ecosystem data on the age of Stack Team users, as supplied by the Company, is only partially instructive.
12. In these circumstances, it is the ABAC standard in Part 4 (b) requiring the use of available age restriction controls that carries most weight in seeking to limit the exposure of minors to alcohol ads placed on the app. The Company advises that it uses available filters to target its advertisements to account holders aged 25 and over.

This should ensure that minors holding a Stack Team account are not sent an advertisement.

13. Sometimes, the effectiveness of requiring minors to enter an accurate date of birth when opening a social media account is questioned. With a team sports app, however, there wouldn't appear to be much incentive to enter an incorrect birth date. The larger weakness would be that alcohol ads could be sent (depending on the other filters being used) to parents with accounts that their children access.
14. Drawing this together, the Panel acknowledges the valid point raised by the complainant regarding the nature of the Stack Team app and its operation in relation to alcohol advertising. That said, the Panel believes the ABAC Placement Standards have not been breached in the current case, given:
 - The Company has used available age-restriction controls and filters to direct its advertisements to account holders aged 25 and over.
 - Overall data indicate that 80% of Stack Team App users are adults; however, the age profile of users will vary by team, as the app was created for a specific team.
 - While it is possible that advertising in the case of an app for a team/group catering to minors is being placed with content primarily aimed at minors, in the current case, the Company's ads are not placed with content primarily aimed at minors, given its use of age filters to users aged over 25.
15. 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 Louisa Jorm and Panellist Debra Richards.

Applicable ABAC Responsible Marketing Code Standard

Part 4 of the Code requires that:

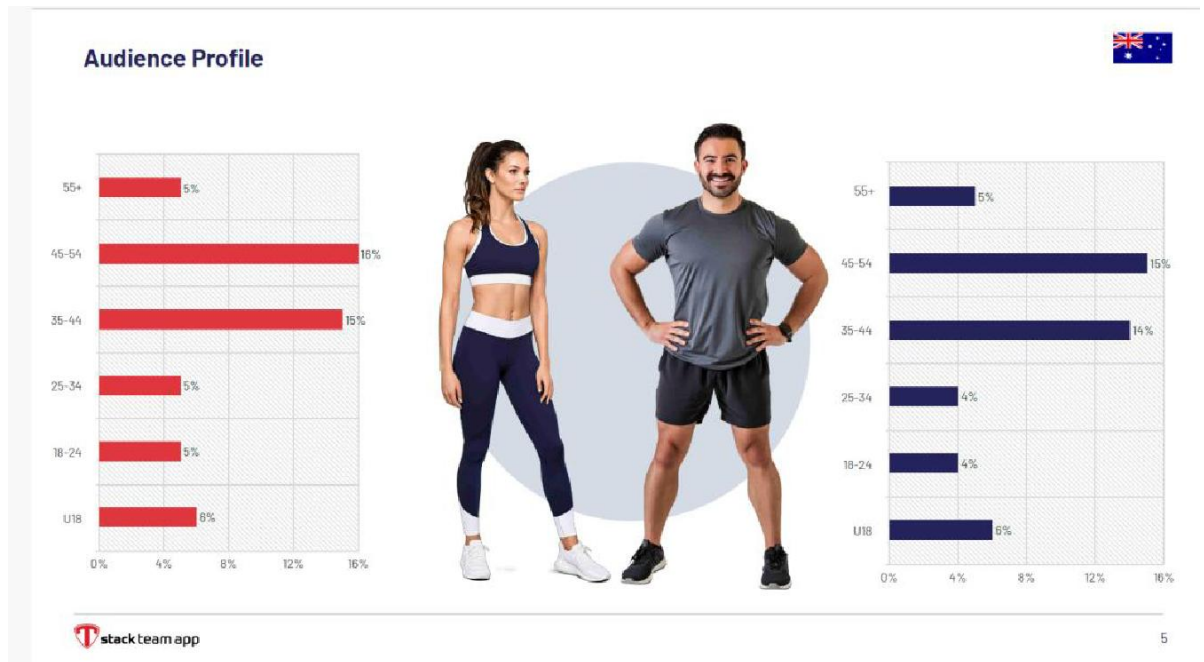
(b)	<i>Available Age Restriction Controls must be applied to exclude Minors from viewing an Alcohol Marketing Communication and an Alcohol Alternative Marketing Communication.</i>
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(c)	<i>If a digital, television, radio, cinema or broadcast print media platform does not have age restriction controls available that are capable of excluding Minors from the audience, an Alcohol Marketing Communication and an Alcohol Alternative Marketing Communication may only be placed where the audience is reasonably expected to comprise at least 80% Adults (based on reliable, up-to-date Australian audience composition or social media follower data, if such data is available).</i>
(d)	<i>An Alcohol Marketing Communication and an Alcohol Alternative Marketing Communication must not be placed with programs or content primarily aimed at Minors.</i>

Company Response:

The Company was provided with an opportunity to respond to the complaint. Its principal comments were:

- Advertisements made through this campaign were strictly targeted to users aged 25 years and older via an age filter. The Stack Team App requires the user to submit basic demographic information at sign-up (name, date of birth, state), enabling the filtering of advertising and the exclusion of groups of users (e.g., individuals under 25) from receiving content. The Stack Team App confirmed the age filter.
- Notwithstanding the application of an age filter to exclude users aged 24 or below, Stack Team App is a general sports team management tool and is not designed primarily for minors. An audience breakdown provided by Stack Team App in November 2024 indicates that more than 80% of users are adults (11% under 18 and 20% under 25) – see below.



- The Stack Team App content is primarily aimed at adults.

Marketing Best Practice:

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

- Asahi Beverages takes the responsible advertising of alcohol seriously. We are aware of the Code requirements, and our policies and practices are designed to 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 additional steps to ensure that its marketing practices and materials comply with community expectations regarding responsible alcohol marketing.
- Asahi Beverages is committed to ensuring that our promotional and marketing materials, and those of our associated entities, comply with the ABAC Code. Our goal is for adults to enjoy our products responsibly and in moderation.