



ABAC Adjudication Panel Determination 175/25

Determination Date	31 December 2025
Brands/Company	Lady Killer Cocktail/Inglewood Hotel
Media	Outdoor Billboard
ABAC Code provisions	Part 3 (a)(ii)
Outcome	Dismissed

Part 1 - Determination Overview

Complaint:

That a billboard ad for the Inglewood Hotel's 'Lady Killer' cocktail was highly irresponsible, given that it:

- Was coloured and styled to mirror the branding of the '16 Days in WA' campaign to end violence against women.
- Commercialised and trivialised the serious issue of gender-based violence.

Key findings:

The Panel dismissed the complaint, finding that:

- The cocktail originates from the mid-1980s, and an internet search revealed no discernible association between the cocktail and its portrayal in popular culture with gendered violence.

The predominant background colour of the ad appears to be a shade of mauve rather than orange, and, in any event, the colour of the physical cocktail differs from the orange used in the 16 Days in WA campaign materials.

- A reasonable person would probably understand that bar cocktails sometimes adopt evocative names, e.g. 'Sex on the Beach' or 'Corpse Reviver', and the 'Lady Killer' name would be viewed within this context and not as endorsing actual violence.

Marketing Communication:



Part 2 - The Panel's View

1. 16 Days in WA is an annual campaign sponsored by the Western Australian Government to highlight and build community support for the actions needed to stop violence against women. The 2025 campaign ran from 25 November to 10 December with the theme 'Stopping Family and Domestic Violence: Play your part'. This determination arises from the complainant's concern that a billboard ad for the Inglewood Hotel (the Hotel) promotes a 'Lady Killer' cocktail by alluding to the 16 Days in WA campaign.
2. The advertisement appeared on an electronic billboard located at the Hotel, facing a busy road, and is titled 'November Cocktail'. An image of the cocktail is shown to the left, with the words 'Order a Lady Killer' to the right. The ingredients used to make the drink are shown at the bottom of the billboard. The cocktail typically features a blend of gin, orange and apricot liqueurs, and tropical juices, giving it a bright orange colour.
3. It is the juxtaposition of the cocktail's name, its colour, and the timing of the promotion that forms the basis of the complaint. The cocktail's orange colour is argued to resemble the predominant orange background used in 16 Days in WA materials, and the name 'Lady Killer' invokes gendered violence. Combined, these factors are argued to commercialise and trivialise the serious issue of gender-based violence.
4. At one level, the complainant's concern about the ad leveraging for commercial purposes a public campaign to address gender-based violence falls more directly within the AANA Code of Ethics than it does within the ABAC. The Code of Ethics applies to all marketing, irrespective of the product being promoted, and provides, in part, that advertising shall not depict material that is contrary to prevailing community standards regarding health and safety.

5. The fact that the ad is by a hotel for an alcoholic cocktail, however, is a further dimension, given that alcohol misuse can be a contributing factor in incidents of violence. The most applicable ABAC standard is Part 3 (a)(ii), which provides that an alcohol marketing communication must not show or encourage irresponsible or offensive behaviour that is related to the consumption or presence of an alcohol beverage.
6. In response to the complaint, the Hotel has advised that:
 - We do not believe that the ad encouraged or made light of irresponsible or offensive behaviour related to the presence or consumption of alcohol.
 - The cocktail *Lady Killer* is an established, award-winning classic. Our decision to feature this cocktail was based solely on its standing within the bartending and hospitality community. There was no intention to reference or trivialise violence against women.
 - Our management team understood the term '*lady-killer*' in its traditional, dictionary-defined sense - namely, an old-fashioned expression referring to 'a man who is irresistible to women.' Multiple reputable sources, including Dictionary.com, the Oxford English Dictionary, and the Cambridge Dictionary, support this definition.
 - The cocktail was offered as a monthly special for November, with the ad following our usual monthly template. It was not created with any intention of referencing the '16 Days in WA' campaign.
 - While reiterating that there was no intention to trivialise violence against women, it was acknowledged that in the current social climate, the name may be considered inappropriate, and greater care will be taken moving forward.
7. Assessment of the consistency of a marketing communication with an ABAC standard is from the standpoint of a reasonable person's probable understanding of the marketing. A 'reasonable person' means that the life experiences, values, and opinions held by most of the community are the benchmark. A person who interprets a marketing item in a different way is not 'unreasonable'; however, their interpretation may not be shared by most people.
8. The Panel recognises the critical point raised by the complaint. Violence against women is a serious social issue, and it would be morally repugnant to leverage the WA public campaign to address gendered violence for commercial gain. Given that alcohol misuse is an established risk factor in violence, it would be particularly irresponsible for an alcohol industry participant to use the 16 Days in WA campaign to market alcohol products.
9. The Hotel is at pains to assert that it had no intention of using the 16 Days in WA theme to promote its cocktail of the month. It is more likely than not that the Hotel is being honest in its explanation that it had not associated its promotion with the 16 Days

in WA campaign, and that the juxtaposition of the Lady Killer name with the cocktail's orange colour was an unfortunate coincidence rather than a cynical marketing ploy.

10. That said, the test for the ABAC standards is not whether the marketer intended it, but how a reasonable person would understand the marketing. In essence, would a reasonable person probably know that the billboard ad was encouraging irresponsible or offensive behaviour related to alcohol use by normalising or trivialising gendered violence? On balance, the Panel does not think the ad breaches the Part 3 (a)(ii) standard. In reaching this conclusion, the Panel noted:
 - The cocktail originates from the mid-1980s, and an internet search revealed no discernible association between the cocktail and its portrayal in popular culture with gendered violence.
 - The predominant background colour of the ad appears to be a shade of mauve rather than orange, and, in any event, the colour of the physical cocktail differs from the orange used in the 16 Days in WA campaign materials.
 - A reasonable person would probably understand that bar cocktails sometimes adopt evocative names, e.g. 'Sex on the Beach' or 'Corpse Reviver', and the 'Lady Killer' name would be viewed within this context and not as endorsing actual violence.
11. While dismissing the complaint, the Panel believes the circumstances reinforce that alcohol is not simply another product and the marketing of alcohol must be done carefully and should avoid associations with harm in the community to any demographic group.
12. 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:

(a)(ii)	<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>
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Hotel Response:

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

- We do not believe that the advertising in question, whether visibly, audibly, or by implication, encouraged or made light of rapid alcohol consumption, alcohol misuse, or any irresponsible or offensive behaviour related to the presence or consumption of alcohol.
- The cocktail *Lady Killer* is an established, award-winning classic. Created by Andy Pearson in 1984, it won the International Bartenders Association (IBA) cocktail challenge that year. It also appears in recognised industry resources such as Difford's Guide. Our decision to feature this cocktail was based solely on its standing within the bartending and hospitality community.
- We did not select or promote this cocktail with any intention to reference or trivialise violence against women. However, we acknowledge that, in the current social climate, the name may be considered inappropriate. In hindsight, a more considered approach should have been taken in selecting cocktail names for promotion, and we will exercise greater care going forward.
- When discussing the complaint internally, many members of our management team understood the term "*lady-killer*" in its traditional, dictionary-defined sense—namely, an old-fashioned expression referring to "a man who is irresistible to women." Multiple reputable sources, including Dictionary.com, the Oxford English Dictionary, and the Cambridge Dictionary, support this definition.
- This cocktail was offered only as a monthly special for November and is no longer available. The advertising followed our usual monthly template and was not intended to reference the "16 Days in WA" campaign. In fact, our entire team only became aware of the campaign after receiving this complaint. The external signage in question appeared approximately three days per week as one of 20 rotating slides, each displayed for five seconds. All advertising for this cocktail was removed at the end of November, before receipt of the complaint.

Marketing Best Practice:

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

- Following receipt of this complaint, our General Manager and marketing team have enrolled in the ABAC online course to enhance their understanding of the requirements governing responsible alcohol marketing.
- The Inglewood Hotel is not currently an ABAC signatory; however, our staff are now completing the ABAC online training course. We are also implementing additional measures to ensure that our future marketing and promotional activities meet community expectations and reflect the principles of responsible alcohol marketing.
- Moving forward, the Inglewood Hotel is committed to ensuring that all promotional and marketing materials—both internally produced and those from affiliated entities—fully comply with the ABAC Code.