

## Australia's Responsible Alcohol Marketing Scheme

8 April 2020

### **New User Guides to assist industry restrict social marketing to adults**

The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) has seen a reduction in new complaints this quarter, with a lower number of determinations (23), and breaches (13).

“In each case of breach this quarter the marketing materials were removed or modified in accordance with ABAC’s rulings. However, it is important that agencies and staff developing marketing communications for alcohol producers, distributors and retailers are familiar with ABAC standards and understand the need to market alcohol responsibly, particularly as we see panic buying and challenges of self-isolation impact both the industry and the wider community.

“Notably, the first quarter of 2020 has seen a further reduction in packaging complaints and breaches, but it is important for alcohol producers not to be complacent,” ABAC Chair Harry Jenkins AO warned.

“In December 2019 ABAC published an [Alcohol Packaging Compliance Guide](#) that focuses on educating the alcohol industry on how to ensure alcohol packaging doesn’t strongly appeal to minors or use imagery that creates confusion with soft drinks or confectionary. Alcohol manufacturers have welcomed the guide, in particular the use of clear visual examples of the types of packaging that meet or contravene the Code standard. I encourage all alcohol manufacturers to familiarise themselves with this useful guide.

“Placement breaches this quarter highlight the importance of understanding which age restriction controls are available and checking that age gates are operating correctly. In one case an alcohol producer’s website age gate had malfunctioned and in another case a retailer had not realised that age gates on one platform did not operate when the video was embedded within a different platform. Further, a retailer had not been aware that Facebook enables individual posts to be age restricted, which means that when using a third party Facebook account to place an alcohol promotion the post including the alcohol promotion must activate this available age restriction control. The availability of age restriction controls varies across different social media platforms and it can be very confusing to understand what is available on a platform and how to implement the available controls. It is important that companies, or their digital media agencies regularly enquire with platforms about the availability of age restriction controls, as the platforms are constantly evolving and implementing new controls and procedures.

“The global organisation, International Alliance for Responsible Drinking has been working with digital platforms to improve safeguards to prevent minors seeing alcohol advertising online and has developed, together with the World Federation of Advertisers a set of user guides for alcohol marketers on implementing age restrictions via [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Snapchat](#) and [Youtube](#). ABAC encourages all alcohol marketers that use social platforms to familiarise themselves with these user friendly guides

“I have been pleased to see high levels of pre-vetting activity continue for most of this quarter. Pre-vetting remains the easiest and most efficient way for marketers to ensure their promotions are responsible before hitting the marketplace and I encourage alcohol producers, distributors and retailers to utilise this valuable service.

“Finally, Ad Standards have issued a reminder to advertisers as the situation with COVID-19 continues to evolve, to ensure that the content of all ads align with current community standards and [health guidelines](#). For more information and updates follow Ad Standards on [LinkedIn](#).

ABAC’s First Quarterly Report for 2020 detailing these and other decisions is available [online](#). More information about the Code is also available at: [www.abac.org.au](http://www.abac.org.au)

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