**Australia’s Responsible Alcohol Marketing Scheme**

27 January 2021

**Focus on Alcohol Packaging to meet ABAC standards**

The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) has continued to see high levels of activity this quarter, but comparatively lower levels of breaches than earlier in the year.

“2020 has set a new record for determination levels, with 208 complaints and 113 determinations, one of which is pending decision,” ABAC Chair Harry Jenkins AO noted.

“This is a large increase in determinations, significantly more than the 68 determinations the Panel made last year and it is a credit to the Chief Adjudicator, the Hon Professor Lavarch AO and everyone that supports and participates in the process, that all were considered within the target 30 business day timeframe.

“During 2020, digital marketing was again the largest source of complaints considered by the Panel, by a significant margin. ABAC regulates all social media activity generated by or within the reasonable control of alcohol marketers, including user generated content. It is important that agencies and staff developing social campaigns for alcohol marketers understand and work within the ABAC standards. The [ABAC Guidance Notes](http://www.abac.org.au/publications/guidance-notes/) and [Best Practice Digital Alcohol Marketing Guide](http://www.abac.org.au/publications/best-practice-guides/) are essential tools in ensuring responsibility and compliance.

“In response to high complaint levels, ABAC undertook a variety of training initiatives late in 2020. In particular, industry tailored training to the craft beer and spirits industries and ABAC’s annual free Industry Webinar which had record levels of participation. The ABAC website also includes a variety of resources to help alcohol marketers understand what they can and can’t do when marketing alcohol ([Guidance Notes](http://www.abac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ABAC-Guidance-Notes-approved-24-9-20.pdf)/[Alcohol Packaging Compliance Guide](http://www.abac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ABAC-Alcohol-Packaging-Guide-approved-24-September-2020.pdf)/[Best Practice Guide for Digital Alcohol Marketing](http://www.abac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Best-Practice-for-Responsible-Digital-Alcohol-Marketing-approved-14-9-18.pdf)).

“ABAC’s pre-vetting service complements ABAC’s training initiatives and resources. A new record level of pre-vetting requests were received in 2020, (2,424pre-vetting requests) up 11% on last year. We were pleased to see the upward trend continue despite the practical and financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the alcohol industry. Pre-vetting is the easiest and most efficient way for marketers to ensure their promotions and packaging are responsible before hitting the marketplace. Pre-vetting may be undertaken by both signatories and non-signatories and we encourage all alcohol producers, distributors and retailers to utilise this valuable service.”

ABAC’s Fourth Quarterly Report for 2020 detailing decisions made during the past quarter is available [online](http://www.abac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ABAC-Q4-2020-Quarterly-Report-January-2021.pdf). More information about the Code is also available at: [www.abac.org.au](http://www.abac.org.au)

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