

Australia's Responsible Alcohol Marketing Scheme

24 October 2024

Alcohol marketers reminded to confirm their social media accounts are age restricted

The ABAC Scheme will shortly be undertaking a major audit of the alcohol industry's compliance with the regulatory obligation to age restrict social media accounts.

Alcohol and alcohol alternative (zero alcohol products) marketers are required to apply available age restriction controls to their social media accounts to exclude minors from being served with paid and organic marketing posts. The requirement is a core obligation in limiting the exposure of minors to alcohol marketing.

As part of ABAC's proactive regulatory strategy, the audit to be conducted by an independent research firm will focus on the prime social media platforms of Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. The randomised audit will review the social media accounts of producers and retailers and include both signatories and non-signatories to the ABAC Scheme.

"In 2022, the first ABAC audit of compliance with age restriction controls showed good overall compliance levels but identified room for improvement, including better resources for industry in navigating the different systems of the social media platforms. In response, ABAC developed a set of industry [checklists](#) that provide helpful links on how to apply age restrictions. We strongly encourage all alcohol and alcohol alternative marketers throughout the industry to self-audit all of their brand social media accounts now." ABAC Chair Hon Tony Smith said

"Last quarter a range of concerns resulted in breaches of Code standards, highlighting where care is needed when developing marketing:

- Suggesting alcohol offers a health benefit or overcomes problems attracted the most Code breaches. Complaints were upheld for claims such as 'good wine is cheaper than therapy', 'Australia's new boozy coconut water is a party starter and hangover cure in one', 'feeling like a healthy sip this weekend' and describing a product as providing 'energy' and 'calming'.
- There was one example of minors shown in an alcohol ad and two examples of visually prominent under 25 year olds promoting alcohol brands.
- Associations with iceblocks, grape bubblegum, green apple and snickers bars caused breaches of the 'strong or evident appeal to minors' standard.
- The Code prevents the promotion of alcohol consumption beyond Australia's recommended guidelines. The Panel found that promoting a competition to win a pallet of alcohol did not meet this standard.
- Placement of ads needs care to ensure time of day restrictions are observed for product placement.

ABAC offers a wide range of resources including a free one hour online training course, interactive in-house training workshops and pre-vetting advice which remains the most effective means of reducing the risk of a Panel breach." ABAC Chair Hon Tony Smith emphasised

ABAC's Third Quarterly Report for 2024 detailing decisions made during the past quarter is available [online](#).

More information about the ABAC is available at: <http://www.abac.org.au/>

[ENDS]

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