# Statement on the alcohol industry’s review of its Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC)

# Statement on the alcohol industry’s review of its Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC)

Advertising for products that cause substantial harm should be required to follow Government-led rules that protect our children, families and broader community.

For over 20 years, the alcohol industry has largely set its own rules for advertising through the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) Scheme. The rules the industry has developed for itself are weak and littered with loopholes.¹ Community complaints are often dismissed, and even when breaches are upheld, there are no consequences.

The result is an environment where our community is inadequately protected from the harm of alcohol advertising, including children and young people who are regularly exposed to messages for harmful products.² This is highly problematic because children’s exposure to alcohol marketing increases their risk of starting drinking at a younger age and more harmful patterns of drinking later in life.³

Last year, Dan Murphy’s parked a mobile billboard near Byron Bay High School encouraging people to “go for a skate while you wait for your Dan Murphy’s order to arrive.”⁴ Even more recently, BoozeBud painted a cartoon mural advertising their alcohol delivery service on the same street as Bondi Public (primary) School, which is passed by hundreds of children daily.⁵ According to the alcohol industry’s scheme, both of these ads weren’t a problem.

Now the alcohol industry who designed this weak oversight scheme is conducting a “review” of their rules in an attempt to quell growing community concern about harmful alcohol advertising.

We, the undersigned, refuse to participate in this process of reviewing a scheme which is inherently flawed. No amount of tinkering with the ABAC, which is designed and run by alcohol lobbyists, will ever put the health and wellbeing of our community above the profits of these multinational corporations.

We need strong Government-led regulation of alcohol marketing in Australia that is independent of the alcohol industry — a comprehensive legislative framework with enforcement measures that effectively stop harmful alcohol marketing. Many community and health organisations have long recognised and advocated for such an approach.

The only role alcohol companies can and should have in the regulation of alcohol marketing is to adhere to Government-led rules developed independent of the alcohol industry to meet community standards.

Sincerely,

**Ms Louise Gray**   
CEO, NOFASD Australia

**Dr Erin Lalor**  
CEO, Alcohol and Drug Foundation

**Ms Jane Martin**  
Co-Chair, National Alliance for Action on Alcohol

**Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin**  
CEO, Public Health Association of Australia

**Dr Sandro Demaio**  
CEO, VicHealth (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation)

**Dr Gemma Crawford**  
President, Australian Health Promotion Association

**Mr Andy Moore**  
CEO, Hello Sunday Morning

**Ms Caterina Giorgi**  
CEO, Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education

**Professor Simone Pettigrew**  
Director, Health Promotion and Behaviour Change, The George Institute for Global Health

**Professor Jacqueline Bowden**  
Director, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction

**Mrs Lauren Bais**  
Partnerships & Campaigns Manager, Parents’ Voice

**Mr Michael White**  
Executive Officer, South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services

**Associate Professor Christina Pollard**  
Director, Public Health Advocacy Institute

**Dr Tanya Buchanan**  
CEO, Cancer Council Australia

**Dr Devin Bowles**  
CEO, Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT

**Professor Dan Lubman AM**  
Director, Monash Addiction Research Centre, Executive Clinical Director, Turning Point

**Ms Jill Rundle**  
CEO, WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies

**Ms Sandy Lukjanowski**  
Chief Executive, Injury Matters

**Dr Ben Beck**  
President, Australasian Injury Prevention Network

**Mrs Jennifer O’Mullane**  
CEO, Local Drug Action Groups Inc.

**Professor Simon Lenton**  
Director, National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University

**Mr Robert Hunt**  
CEO, Dietitians Australia

**Ms Sharon McGowan**  
CEO, Stroke Foundation

**Mr Alan Kirkland**  
CEO, CHOICE

**Ms Jennifer Duncan**  
CEO, Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council

**Ms Julia Stafford**  
Alcohol Program Manager, Cancer Council WA

**Dr Clare Skinner**  
President, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine

**Dr Michelle I Jongenelis**  
Senior Research Fellow and Deputy Director, Melbourne Centre for Behaviour Change

**Professor Paul Dietze**  
Co-Program Director, Disease Elimination, Burnet Institute

**Dr James Fitzpatrick PhD, FRACP, MBBD, B.Sc**  
CEO, Patches Australia & Adjunct Professor, School of Psychological Sciences, University of Western Australia

**Professor Elizabeth Handsley FAAL**  
President, Australian Council on Children and the Media

**Professor Nancy Baxter**  
Head of School, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health

**Professor Garry Jennings**  
Group CEO, National Heart Foundation

**Dr John Crozier**  
Chair, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (National Trauma Committee) & Co-Chair, National Alliance for Action on Alcohol

**Professor Mark Frydenberg AM**  
Chair, Health Policy and Advocacy, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

**Professor Elizabeth Elliott AM FAHMS FRSN**  
Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health, Univeristy of Sydney

**Dr Florentine Martino**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Deakin University, GLOBE

**Dr Tina Lam**  
Research Fellow at the Monash Addiction Research Centre, Adjunct Research Fellow at the National Drug Research Institute

**Dr Stewart McDougall**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Fetal Alcohol Advisory Support & Training Team, The University of Edinburgh

**Professor Rob Moodie**  
Professor of Public Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health

**Dr Belinda Reeve**  
Senior Lecturer, The University of Sydney Law School

**Professor Roger Magnusson**  
Professor of Health Law & Governance, Sydney Law School, The University of Sydney

**Associate Professor Nicholas Carah**  
Director Digital Cultures and Societies Hub, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, The University of Queensland

**Professor Samantha Thomas**  
Professor of Public Health, Deakin University

**Professor Billie Bonevski**  
Professor and Lead of Public Health, College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University

**Professor James Smith**  
Deputy Dean, Rural and Remote Health – NT, Matthew Flinders Professor (Health and Social Equity), College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University

**Professor Sharon Friel**  
Director, Menzies Centre for Health Governance, Australian National University

1. Pierce H, Stafford J, Pettigrew S, Kameron C, Keric D, Pratt IS. Regulation of alcohol marketing in Australia: A critical review of the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code Scheme’s new Placement Rules. Drug and Alcohol Review. 2019;38(1):16-24.
2. Aiken A, Lam T, Gilmore W, Burns L, Chikritzhs T, Lenton S, Lloyd B, Lubman D, Ogeil R, Allsop S. Youth perceptions of alcohol advertising: Are current advertising regulations working? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 2018;42(3):234-9.
3. Jernigan D, Noel J, Landon J, Thornton N, Lobstein T. Alcohol marketing and youth alcohol consumption: A systematic review of longitudinal studies published since 2008. Addiction. 2017;112:7-20.
4. Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code Scheme Limited. ABAC Adjudication Panel Determination No 129/21 2021 Jun 21. Available from: <http://www.abac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/129-21-Determination-Dan-Murphys-21-June-2021.pdf>.
5. Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code Scheme Limited. ABAC Adjudication Panel Determination No 273/21 2021 Dec 23. Available from: <http://www.abac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/273-21-FINAL-Determination.pdf>.

## Join our community

Will you join the community taking action on alcohol?