

Alcohol Advertising Review Board

Determination Report

Reference number: 735/18
Product: Coopers
Advertiser: Coopers Brewery

The complaint is **upheld in part**.

5 December 2018

This determination by the Alcohol Advertising Review Board Panel (“the Panel”) concerns an advertisement for Coopers by Coopers Brewery which was the subject of a complaint received on 2 November 2018.

The Advertisement

The advertisement was seen in Newcastle, NSW. The advertisement featured an image of a race track with at least three race cars on it. There was a Coopers logo at the top of the advertisement and a “Supercars Official Beer” logo in the top right. Large text in the middle of the advertisement stated “WIN 3 DAY PASS TO COATES HIRE NEWCASTLE 500 WHEN YOU PURCHASE ANY COOPERS SCHOONER”. There was an image of a glass of Coopers beer in the bottom right corner. Large text across the bottom of the advertisement stated “\$7.50 SCHOONER”.

The Complaint

The complainant believes the advertisement contravenes the Code. The complainant stated:

“A number of inner city Newcastle residents have expressed to me concern about the attached Coopers Beer promotion appearing on the walls of some inner city licensed premises.

They are concerned about the discounting process, the real potential to encourage irresponsible drinking patterns and patrons consuming excessive alcohol via discount schooners (large volume drinks) to win free tickets that are of course, in very high demand to attend this popular and heavily promoted V8 supercar race.

The deadly association between excessive alcohol consumption and the operation of motor vehicles (and other equipment) immediately apparent on the promotion. Warnings etc in comparison are relatively minute have not been found in any independent research to be effective in these particular circumstances.”

The Code

The advertisement was reviewed against the Code, and in particular:

Section (3)(a)(1) of the Content Code:

3. General provisions:

a. Compliance

- i. Alcohol Advertisements must be prepared with a sense of responsibility to the audience and to society and must reflect the spirit, not merely the letter, of the Code.

Section (4)(b)(ii) of the Content Code:

4. Alcohol-specific provisions:

b. Consumption

- ii. Alcohol Advertisements must not feature, condone or encourage, directly or by implication, irresponsible or immoderate drinking. That applies to both the amount of alcohol presented and the way drinking is portrayed.

Section (4)(h) of the Content Code:

4. Alcohol-specific provisions:

h. Operation of vehicles, skilled activity, sport

Alcohol Advertisements may not portray Alcoholic Beverages in such a way as to associate the product with the operation of any vehicle or with any activity requiring a significant degree of skill, care or mental alertness, including sporting and physical activities.

The Advertiser's Comments

The Advertiser was contacted for comment on 8 November 2017. No response was received.

Panel's determination

The complaint was referred to three Panel members for review. The Panel determined:

1. The advertisement did not contravene section (3)(a)(i) of the Content Code, on the basis that the majority of the Panel believed the advertisement was prepared with a sense of responsibility to the audience. However, one Panel member commented that promoting beer by creating incentives to purchase and consume it that are linked to a drinker's interest in motor racing, and focusing those incentives on larger-sized volumes of beer is not consistent with the spirit of the Code, which needs to reflect concern for the harm caused by alcohol as well as its pleasures.
2. The advertisement did not contravene section (4)(b)(ii) of the Content Code, on the basis that the Panel believed the advertisement does not contain any encouragement of irresponsible or immoderate drinking.
3. The advertisement contravened section (4)(h) of the Content Code, on the basis that the advertisement, through both the use of text and images, associates alcohol with precision driving and the sport of motor racing.

A Panel member expressed further concern about the connection between drinking beer and motor sports, noting that the community pays a terrible price each year because of drink driving and while the

advertisement does not encourage drink driving, society needs to maintain a clear separation between drinking and driving.

The complaint is **upheld in part**.

Further action

The Alcohol Advertising Review Board requests the Advertiser cease the promotion of alcohol in connection with motor racing, in line with the Panel's concerns.