

20/04/26

Dear ACMA,

My name is Robert Davie and I am an Australian resident and community member who is deeply concerned about the normalisation of alcohol consumption through constant advertising on free-to-air television. What matters most to me is the health, safety, and wellbeing of Australian families—particularly children—who are being exposed to alcohol promotion as a routine and seemingly harmless part of everyday life.

The rules governing alcohol advertising on commercial free-to-air TV do not meet the standard expected by the community. They do not provide appropriate safeguards, particularly for young people.

Alcohol is not an ordinary product. It is responsible for significant and well-documented harm across Australian society. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, alcohol contributes to more than **5,000 deaths annually** and over **150,000 hospitalisations each year**. It is a major factor in **family and domestic violence**, being involved in around **one in three incidents**, and is strongly linked to **sexual violence and assault**.

Beyond this, alcohol imposes an enormous economic burden. Estimates place the social cost of alcohol-related harm in Australia at **over \$60 billion per year**, including healthcare, policing, lost productivity, and social services.

Despite this, alcohol advertising remains widespread and highly visible, including during times when children are watching television. I have personally observed alcohol advertisements being broadcast during prime-time viewing and during major sporting events, where they are often presented in a way that associates alcohol with success, celebration, and national identity. This is particularly concerning given that research shows early exposure to alcohol advertising is linked to **earlier initiation of drinking and higher consumption levels among young people**.

It is not acceptable that a product responsible for such harm is promoted so freely in environments where children and vulnerable individuals are present.

I do not support the industry continuing to regulate itself. Self-regulation has clearly failed to reflect community expectations or adequately protect the public.

I believe ACMA should create a new program standard to govern alcohol advertising that prioritises public health and reduces harm.

However, I would go further than the current proposals.

I believe alcohol advertising should not be permitted on free-to-air television at any time of day.

At a minimum, I strongly support reforms that:

- Significantly reduce the hours during which alcohol advertising is allowed, restricting it to late-night time slots only
- Remove the exemption allowing alcohol advertising during sports programs
- Broaden the rules to ensure all forms of alcohol marketing are covered
- Ensure broadcast video on demand services such as 7Plus, 9Now and 10Play are subject to the same restrictions

But ultimately, the most effective way to protect the community—especially children—is to remove alcohol advertising from television altogether.

We do not allow unrestricted advertising of other harmful products where there is clear evidence of social harm. Alcohol should be treated with the same seriousness.

Australia has an opportunity to take a leadership position in protecting public health and reducing preventable harm. I urge ACMA to act in the interests of the community, not the industry.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards,

Robert Davie