



SUMMARY
**Review of
Operations
2019**

From the Chair

Although the overall number of complaints and cases received by Ad Standards declined from 2018, it was a significant year of internal systems development headlined by the launch of the new custom-made Complaint Management System. This significant work in systems and database development strengthens overall capacity including faster turn-around times for complaint handling into 2020.

Sincere thanks to the media industry for supporting the broadcast and publication of the bold new kinder conditions campaign that demonstrated the key role of advertising as a platform for promoting positive social messaging. This assistance contributed to achieving a broad reach across all channels.

With recommendations to develop a harmonised media regulatory framework coming from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) Digital Platforms Inquiry in 2019, Ad Standards continues to advocate

the success of our self-regulatory system. In particular, the way that our system has proven itself adaptable to the changing media landscape and platforms, efficiently and at no cost to the government.

In 2020 our focus is to continue to be recognised as the leading voice for complaints about community standards in advertising, and we will be looking at ways to further engage with regulators and promote our services for the benefit of the Australian community and industry.

My thanks to our hard-working team of staff, and to the Ad Standards Community Panel members, who bring their experiences from a wide variety of backgrounds to our system.



David Scribner
Chairman

From the CEO

At the time of going to print we are all facing the challenges of COVID-19. Unfortunately, this means that we will be temporarily pausing some of the significant strategic work we had planned for 2020 but will continue to provide our complaints handling service to the highest standards possible.

In 2019 we [launched a major awareness raising campaign](#) about the Codes and the role of the advertising complaints adjudication system. Sincere thanks to our campaign partners LOUD and HYLAND. Thank you also to our colleagues across media for their significant campaign support.

We also published [research into community understanding of distinguishable advertising on social media and the internet](#). While this issue is topical in the community and media, the research findings showed that there is actually a high level of consumer awareness of what is advertising on the internet.

Our world first research undertaken by Deloitte Access Economics in 2017 was [internationally recognised](#) in April 2019 when Ad Standards was awarded the inaugural Innovation Award from the International Council for Advertising Self-Regulation (ICAS).

We were also pleased that this year our work and that of other lobby groups resulted in Australian and state and territory governments agreeing to implement consistent legislation to deliver a

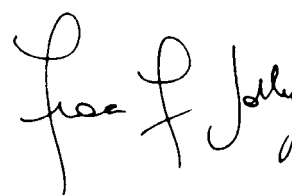
national approach to deal with offensive advertising on vehicles that breach community standards.

Four new members were appointed to the [Ad Standards Community Panel](#) in December with our new members further increasing the Panel's age and overall diversity and thereby strengthening its ability to reflect community standards in advertising.

During 2019 the significant work we undertook internally to design, develop and launch our new Complaint Management System will position us to achieve the major benefit of faster turn-around times for complaint handling in 2020.

We will be expanding our [Copy Advice Service](#) through 2020 to continue to deliver results for industry.

Sincere thanks to our industry colleagues, to our Panel members, and the team at Ad Standards for everything you do to contribute to advertising self-regulation in Australia.

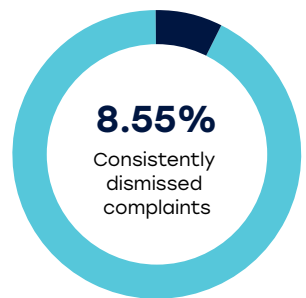
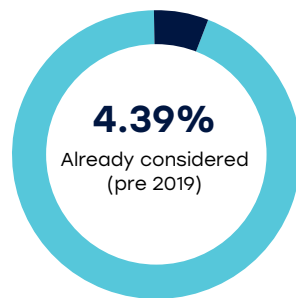
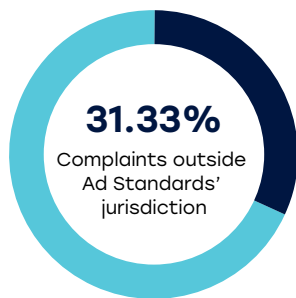
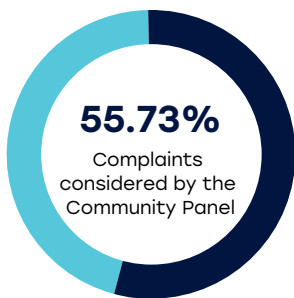


Fiona Jolly
Chief Executive Officer

Total complaints received



Treatment of complaints

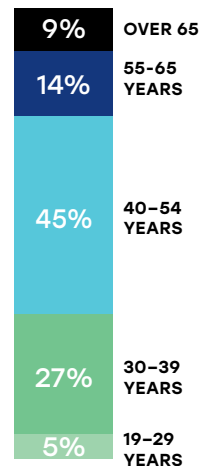
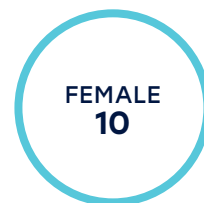


Cases of potential Code issues considered by the Community Panel

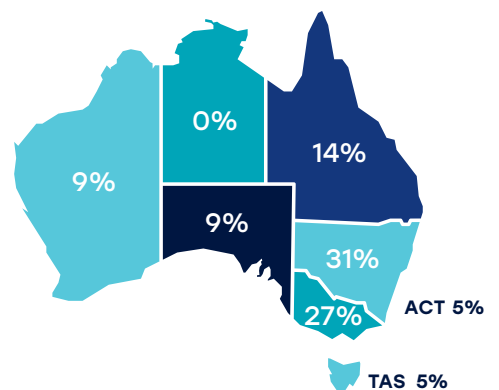


Community Panel meetings in 2019 to consider cases

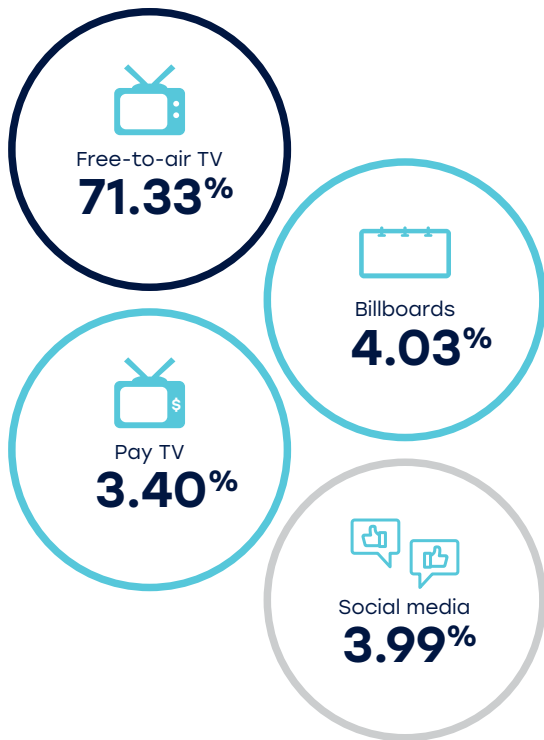
Ad Standards Community Panel profile



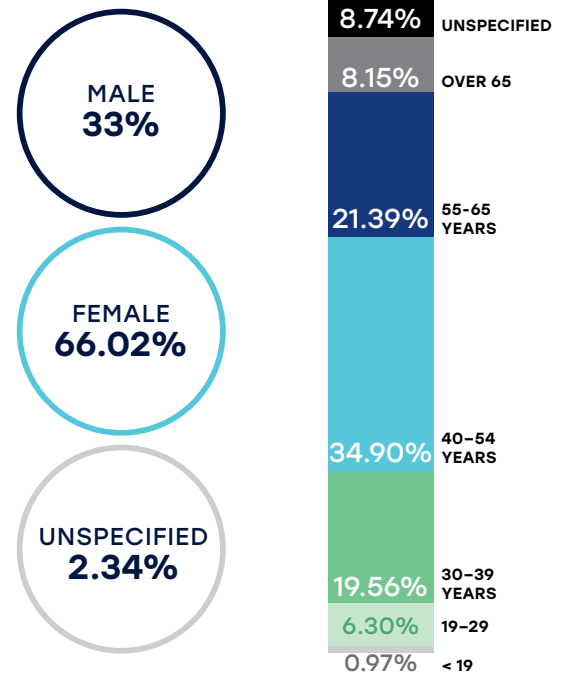
Outcome of cases determined by the Community Panel



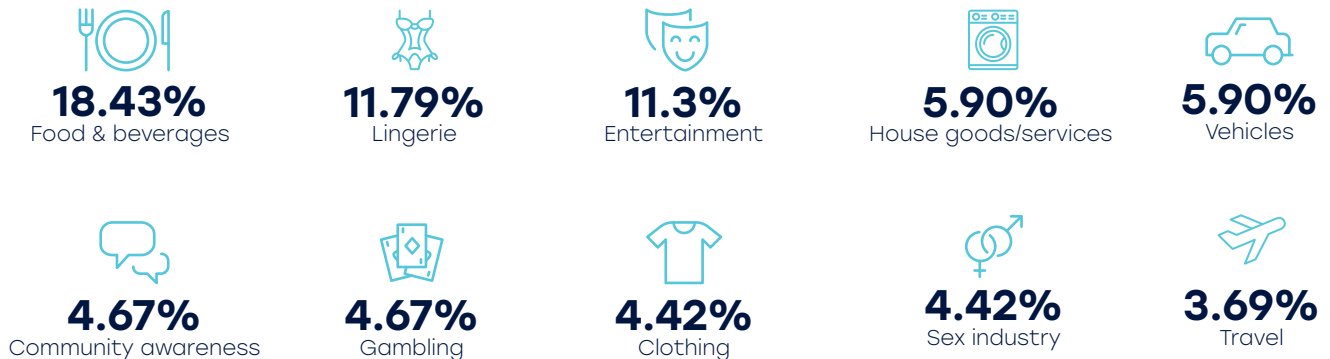
Most complained about media



Who is complaining?



Complaints by product category

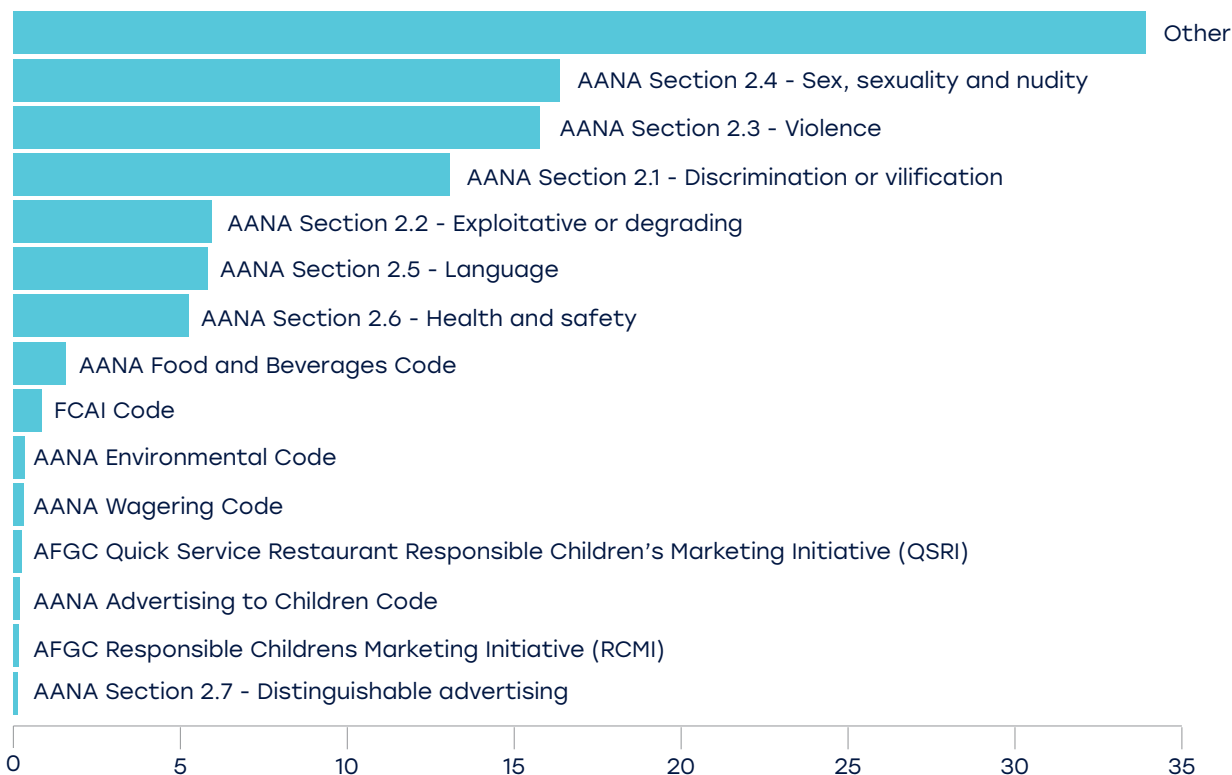


Codes and Initiatives administered by Ad Standards

- Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) Code of Ethics
- AANA Food and Beverages Advertising Code¹
- AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children
- AANA Environmental Claims Code
- AANA Wagering Advertising & Marketing Communication Code
- Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) Responsible Children's Marketing Initiative (RCMI)
- AFGC Quick Service Restaurant Initiative (QSRI) for Responsible Advertising and Marketing to Children
- Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) Voluntary Code of Practice for Motor Vehicle Advertising

¹ In February 2020 the AANA amended the Food and Beverages Code to allow fresh fruit and vegetables to be advertised to children without complying with the RCMI, provided the fruit and vegetables are the only food product in the advertisement.

What do people complain about?



In 2019 the single largest category with 33.91 per cent of total complaints fell into the 'other' category. This category often relates to uncomfortable scenes in advertisements and reflects the community reaction to ads which push the boundaries on social issues. For more information see the full [Ad Standards Review of Operations 2019 online at AdStandards.com.au](https://www.adstandards.com.au).

Most complained about ads of 2019

1. Blood normal

Asaleo Care – Libra – TV – Free-to-air
Complaints: 738 – Dismissed

Issues of concern: 2.1 - Discrimination or vilification, 2.2 - Exploitative or degrading, 2.3 - Violence, 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity, 2.6 - Health and safety.

2. Foolproof iPhone app

Sportsbet – TV – Free-to-air
Complaints: 366 – Dismissed

Issues of concern: 2.1 - Discrimination or vilification, 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity, 2.5 - Language, Wagering Code.

3. Us, the movie

Universal Pictures – TV – Free-to-air
Complaints: 244 – Dismissed

Issues of concern: 2.3 - Violence.

4. Unexpected situation #7

Ultra Tune Australia – TV – Free-to-air
Complaints: 161 – Upheld

Issues of concern: 2.1 - Discrimination or vilification, 2.2 - Exploitative or degrading, 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity, 2.6 - Health and safety.

5. Turn on Australia

Love Honey – TV – Free-to-air
Complaints: 84 – Dismissed

Issues of concern: 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity.

6. Glo-ball warming

Hanes Brands Inc – TV – Free-to-air
Complaints: 69 – Dismissed

Issues of concern: 2.1 - Discrimination or vilification, 2.2 - Exploitative or degrading, 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity, 2.5 - Language.

7. The swim edit

Pretty Little Thing – TV – Free-to-air
Complaints: 69 – Dismissed

Issues of concern: 2.2 - Exploitative or degrading, 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity.

8. IT, the movie

Roadshow Films – Billboard
Complaints: 40 – Upheld

Issues of concern: 2.3 - Violence.

9. Foolproof – pageant

Sportsbet – TV – Free-to-air
Complaints: 31 – Upheld

Issues of concern: 2.1 - Discrimination or vilification, 2.2 - Exploitative or degrading, Wagering Code.

10. A piece of Reece's

Downtown Brooklyn – Internet/Social/Facebook
Complaints: 29 – Dismissed

Issues of concern: 2.1 - Discrimination or vilification, 2.6 - Health and safety.

New Ad Standards Community Panel members strengthen diversity



The [Ad Standards Community Panel](#) (the Community Panel) welcomed four new members in 2019, further strengthening its ability to reflect community standards in advertising.

The Community Panel is responsible for considering complaints made by members of the public about advertisements across all mediums and represents the wide cross-section of community opinion, community standards, and values.

Latest awareness campaign challenges stereotypes in advertising

Launched in July 2019 across all media, Ad Standards' *kinder conditions* campaign raises awareness of the wide range of social issues covered by the advertising Codes in Australia, and the brand value of the Codes to advertisers.

The series of bold ads feature provocative headlines with a twist of clever copy targeted to the community and advertisers to nominate ads they have seen, or made, that go beyond the already high standards in the advertising Codes.

The [first winner of the *kinder conditions* accolade](#) is a television ad for wheelchair accessible holiday accommodation which was awarded by the Ad Standards Community Panel for promoting social inclusion and diversity in advertising.



Campaign compliance with the Codes made easier

Advertisers using the Ad Standards Copy Advice Service in 2019 reported significantly reduced risk of misinterpretation of the advertising Codes as any necessary changes can be made ahead of publication or broadcast which saves time and money as well as any potential risk to reputation.

Ad Standards' advisory service is fast, cost-effective, and available to all advertisers online at AdStandards.com.au.

Thanks, and praise

- In 2019 Ad Standards welcomed a national approach to deal with offensive advertising on vehicles that breach community standards. Sincere thanks to everyone who worked with Ad Standards to push for this change to achieve the same standards across all states and territories in Australia.
- Our thanks also to the International Council for Advertising Self-Regulation (ICAS) for awarding Ad Standards the inaugural Innovation Award for undertaking world first research into the effectiveness of the Australian advertising complaints system, working with Deloitte Access Economics.

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