



Every



ad



a



responsible



ad



From the Chair and Chief Executive

Statement from Hon. Heather Roy, ASA Chair

The 2020 annual report provides a snapshot of the ASA's breadth and standard of work in an exceptional year to support our vision of every ad a responsible ad.

The ASA is the expert in advertising standards and quickly responds to change in a dynamic advertising world. This experience was a key factor in meeting the disruption presented by the pandemic, including increased complaints and a drop in funding.

As a platform-neutral regulator, the ASA standards apply to all ads in all media. In 2020 digital advertising revenue made up

55% of advertising industry turnover and digital marketing was the second-most complained about medium.

The Governance Board endorsed a transformation strategy to a digital-first regulator to ensure we have the tools to support responsible advertising in the future. This process will drive changes to complaints and compliance, funding, education, research and relevance.

The Board recognises the Chairs and members of the Complaints and Appeal Boards and the ASA staff for their excellent work in a very challenging year.

Statement from Hilary Souter, Chief Executive

Like many businesses, technology played a significant role in our response to the pandemic and we moved quickly to meetings via Zoom and webinars for code compliance. Our work increased with COVID-19 related complaints, influencer advertising and election and referendum ads. We published the new Alcohol Advertising and Promotion Code and AdHelp resources for advertising in a COVID-19 environment.

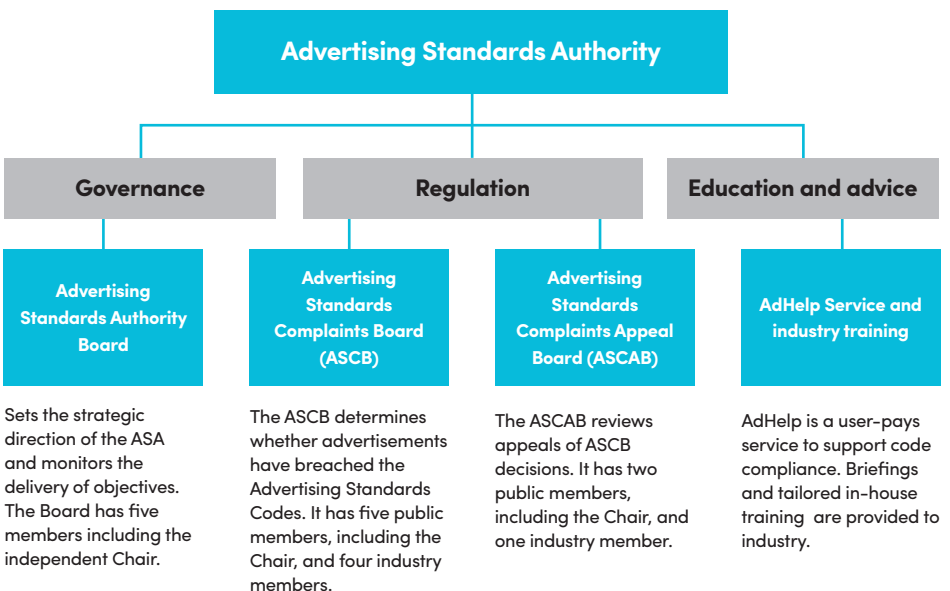
Given the level of media coverage our work receives, people are often surprised at our size. We have seven staff and our budget is just over \$1 million. We are funded through levies

on advertising revenue and member contributions.

Our workload is demand-driven and hard to plan for. The 2020 Election highlighted this challenge with 101 advertisements reviewed in 2020, 48 of which were dealt with via our fast-track process, compared to 16 advertisements in 2017.

Setting standards, education on code compliance and adjudicating complaints are at the core of the ASA's role. Our awareness campaign says it best: "You should be able to trust the ads you see. If an ad is wrong, the ASA is here to help put it right".

Who we are

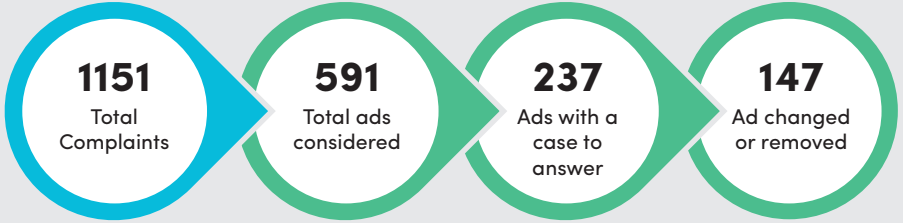


Our Impact

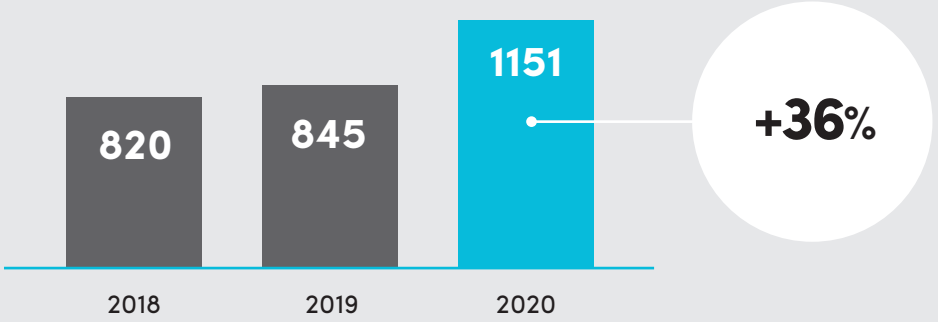
Complaints

In 2020 we received 1151 complaints about 591 ads, a 36% increase on 2019.

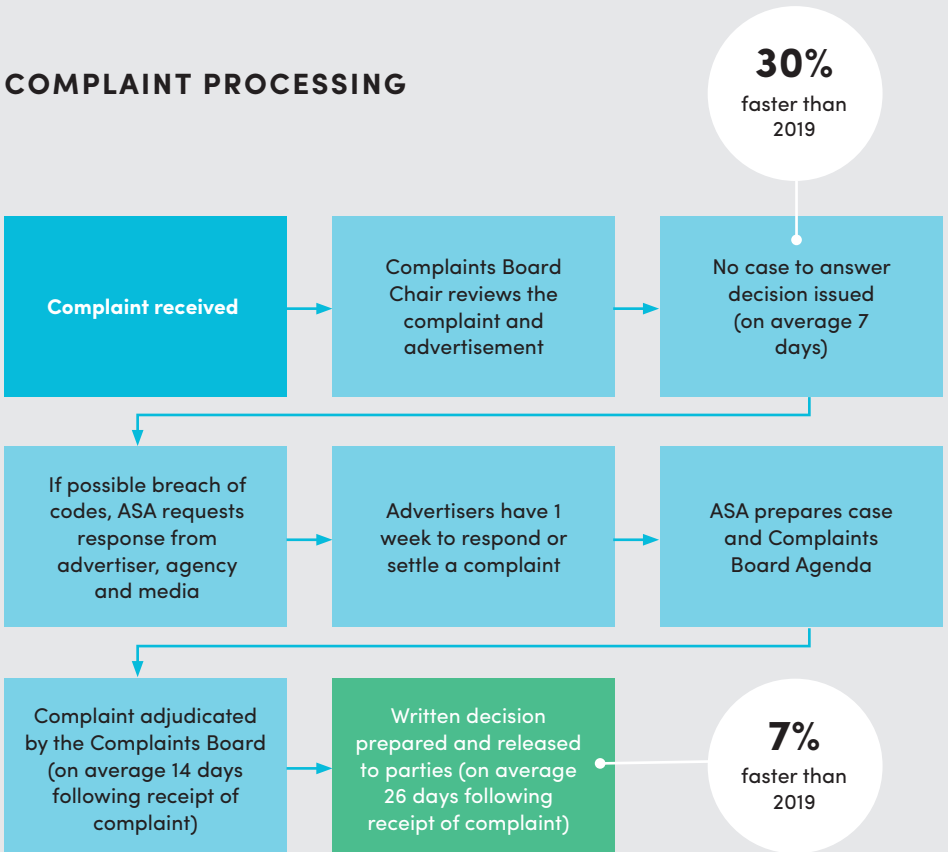
The ASCB Chair reviewed 591 ads, 237 were deemed to have a case to answer and 63% of these were Upheld or Settled.



TOTAL COMPLAINTS

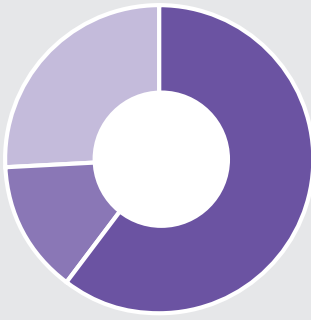


COMPLAINT PROCESSING



Our Priorities

Election and Referendums



- Political Party Advertising
- Legalisation and Control of Cannabis Referendum
- End of Life Choice Referendum



Total Election and Referendum Complaints Received
1 January – 16 October 2020

Fast track period:
13 September – 14 October 2020

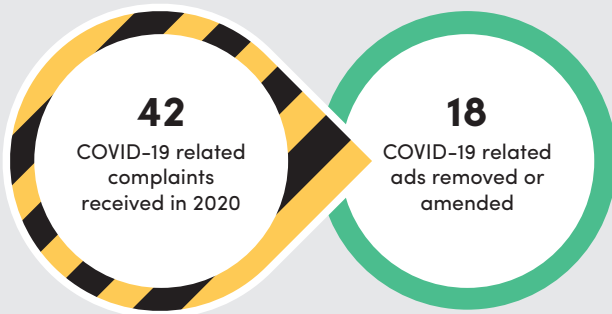


Decision released on average 1-4 days after receipt of complaint

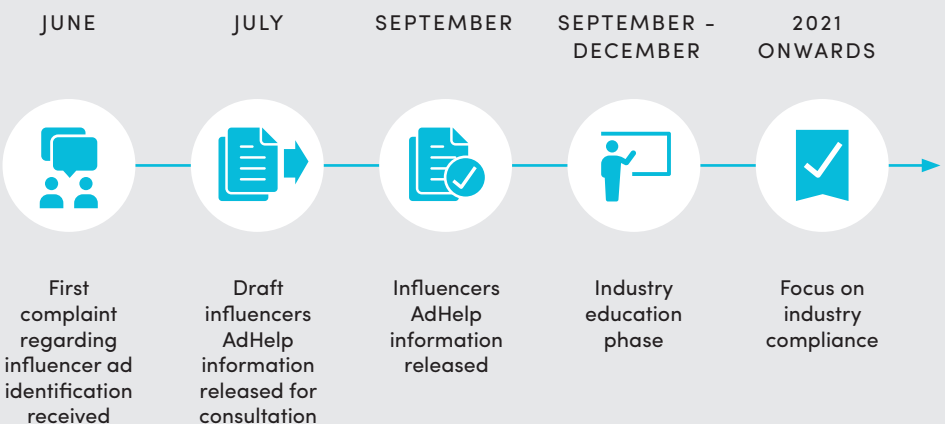
COVID-19 ads

We dealt with complaints about advertising related to COVID-19, and implemented a fast-track process to ensure misleading and potentially harmful advertisements were removed or amended.

We supported industry compliance through AdHelp Guidance on alcohol advertising and therapeutic and health advertising in relation to COVID-19 claims.



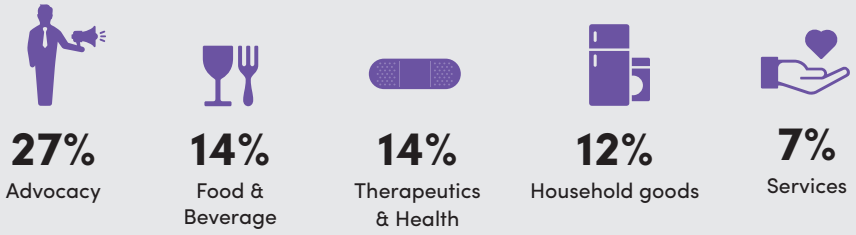
Influencer advertising



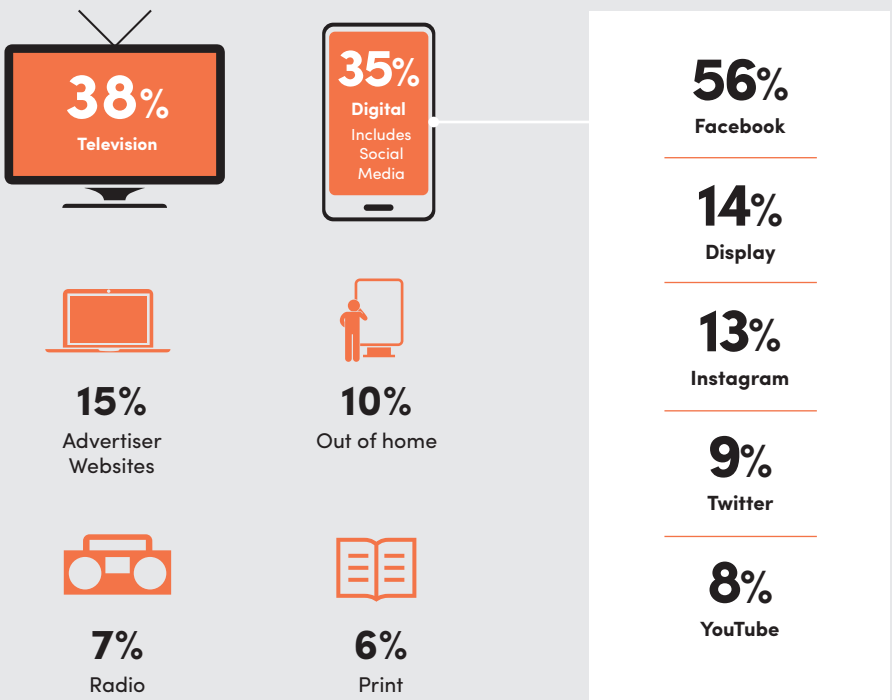
Our Impact

Complaints

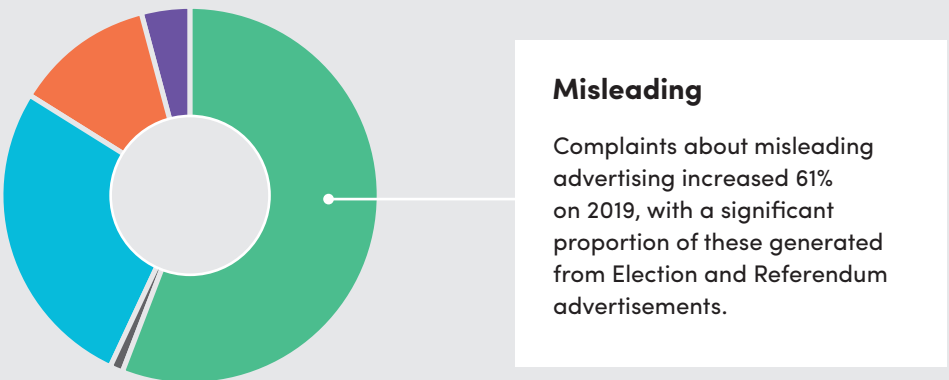
BY CATEGORY








BY MEDIUM



BY ISSUE



-  Misleading
-  Social Responsibility
-  Placement
-  Children's issues
-  Taste and Decency

Most complained about ads

1.

New Zealand Drug Foundation

TELEVISION

60 COMPLAINTS: UPHELD IN PART (ADVERTISEMENT CHANGED)

Two television advertisements for the New Zealand Drug Foundation promoted a Yes vote in the upcoming Cannabis Control Referendum. The complaints were upheld because the identity of the Advertiser was not sufficiently clear. The information identifying the Advertiser appeared very briefly at the end of the advertisements.

2.

Azerbaijan Diaspora

BILLBOARD

58 COMPLAINTS: SETTLED (ADVERTISEMENT REMOVED)

The billboard advertisement made a statement about stopping “the Armenian occupation and aggression”. Complainants said the advertisement was misleading and offensive. Upon receipt of the complaints, the Media removed the advertisement and agreed to not use it again in its current form. The Chair ruled the complaints were settled.

3.

New Zealand Government (Keep It Real Online)

TELEVISION

44 COMPLAINTS: NOT UPHELD

The complaints about the Keep it Real Online advertisement about children accessing inappropriate online content were not upheld. The advertisement showed a man with a gun shooting the cake at a fantasy rabbit’s birthday party. The Complaints Board said the content and placement of the advertisement from the New Zealand Government was justifiable on educational grounds, to address the concern that many children are currently able to access inappropriate content online.

4.

New Zealand National Party

DIGITAL MARKETING

33 COMPLAINTS: NOT UPHELD

Complaints about Facebook advertisements from the NZ National Party about the Green Party’s water-only policy statement were not upheld. The advertisements were the National Party’s interpretation of an unqualified policy statement by the Green Party and the source of the statement was included.

5.

Smart Approaches To Marijuana NZ Coalition (SAM) Say Nope To Dope

PRINT

31 COMPLAINTS: NO GROUNDS TO PROCEED

Complaints about the “Say Nope to Dope” newspaper advertisement were ruled no grounds to proceed. The advertisement showed an image of a “Dope Shop” with children passing by on the footpath in front and statistics included about a predicted increase in drug use. Complainants said the advertisement was misleading and offensive. The Chair said the scenario depicted in the advertisement was a subjective interpretation of how a possible future could look and came under the category of opinion. The threshold for a possible breach of the Code had not been reached.