



## Media Release

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For immediate release

# Queensland Outdoor media inquiry: Been there, done that, problem solved

The Outdoor Media Association (OMA) welcomes the interest of the Queensland State Government in the importance and reach of the Outdoor Industry, but is disappointed in the announcement of a Parliamentary Inquiry into the classification of billboards.

Following concerns raised over the last decade, these matters have been extensively reviewed in the Federal Parliament and though there were no findings against the Outdoor Industry, OMA took community concerns seriously and stepped in to address them. A move to impose new government regulation and bureaucracy is just red tape and goes against the Newman Government's principles .

Queensland Attorney-General, Jarrod Bleijie, indicated that the Newman Government's concerns lie with sexual content and the protection of children. However, the facts speak for themselves – “There was no nation-wide complaints, in the area of sex, sexuality and nudity upheld against OMA Members in 2012,” said Charmaine Moldrich, CEO for OMA.

To illustrate the success of self-regulation in the Out-of-Home (OOH) industry: out of the 3,640 complaints submitted across all media to the Advertising Standards Board (ASB) in 2012, a mere 1.38% related to outdoor advertising.

ASB CEO, Ms Fiona Jolly said “Community Perceptions 2012 research showed that the community were supportive of the Codes in place and that this support is borne out by the low number of complaints received about billboards in 2012.”

“Our research also shows that determinations made by the Advertising Standards Board are in line with general community standards.

“We are constantly updating and streamlining our complaints handling processes to ensure we continue to uphold an international best practice model for complaints resolution,” Ms Jolly said.

The positive results of OOH self-regulation follow specific measures that were introduced by the OMA in 2011, include:

- Content training for OMA members in conjunction with the Australian Association of National Advertiser (AANA) and the ASB, offering clear guidance about industry codes and how to best comply.
- Content Review Policy under which members will refer contentious advertisements to the OMA prior to display and if the OMA considers that the advertisement is likely to breach the AANA Code of Ethics, it will not be displayed.

- A Concept Advisory Service which is available to advertisers and their creative agencies, enabling them to seek advice about an idea for an advertisement in the early stages of development.

“As an organisation, we are taking active and regular measures to educate, inform and regulate the OOH industry. It is clear we are doing a good job of it with only 4.8% of all advertising complaints nation-wide relating to billboards in 2012,” Ms Moldrich said.

In light of these impressive results and the industry’s commitment to self-regulation, the move by the Queensland Government is redundant.

Acting CEO of the AANA, Ms Alina Bain said “There have been two recent parliamentary inquiries into self-regulation and outdoor media and there is no evidence that the current self-regulatory system is not working.

“Advertising works on a national level so to expect an advertiser to have one billboard for Queensland and another for the rest of the country is plainly absurd. There is a high level of compliance of outdoor advertisements with our code of ethics and the number of complaints does not indicate a broader community concern or need for another inquiry,” added Ms Bain.

“Unnecessary regulations and possible ratings of billboards would be a hindrance to both the community and the industry through slower management and resolution of complaints: self-regulatory schemes are quickly improved and amended whereas legislative frameworks can take longer to amend.

It is important to consider that public funds would be required to establish and enforce legislative codes. The industry is currently self-funded, freeing up public money for other needs,” said Ms Moldrich.

## **ENDS**

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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### **Editor’s Notes:**

The OMA is the peak industry body which represents most of Australia's Outdoor Media Display companies and production facilities, and some Media Display asset owners.

The OMA operates nationally and prior to July 2005 traded as the Outdoor Advertising Association of Australia (OAAA). It was first incorporated in 1939.

The OMA's charter is to serve its members by promoting the OOH industry and developing constructive relations with its primary stakeholders. Its core functions are Marketing and Research (including audience measurement), Government Relations and Regulatory Affairs, Media Relations, and Member Services.

The OMA is governed by a Board of Directors which is elected by the membership.

Members of the OMA adhere to a Code of Ethics and abide by the regulatory frameworks in which they operate.