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For immediate release

Media Release

OMA speaks out for industry at Inquiry hearing

The Outdoor Media Association (OMA) has maintained that the success of the industry's self-regulatory system speaks for itself when the peak body gave evidence today at public hearings for the Queensland Government's Inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising.

CEO of the OMA, Charmaine Moldrich, spoke on behalf of Queensland's outdoor advertising industry at the hearings and while she welcomed the Inquiry, she was quick to respond to any misperceptions about the industry.

"The name of the Inquiry alone is suggestive, insinuating there is an issue with sexualised content – a perception the industry has worked hard to bust and continues to address on a regular basis," Ms Moldrich said.

"Quite often, when people think about sexually explicit outdoor advertising, they immediately think of advertisements that appeared as long as 10 years ago.

"We don't disagree that protecting the interests of the community is important, but you have to base the debate on what's happening today across the entire state.

"We've been balancing community and economic responsibilities under a self-regulatory system for a number of years, working closely with the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) and the Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) to identify and implement improvements, and we're proud of our current record.

"In 2012, we had just three breaches of the Code – none of which fell into the category of sex, sexuality, or nudity – and there have been no breaches resulting from the 12,000 advertisements that have been displayed this year.

"This proven track record demonstrates that claims that outdoor advertising is dominated by sexual imagery are unfounded and the industry can in fact be relied upon to comply with self-regulatory systems."

The outdoor advertising industry operates under 12 self-regulatory Codes developed in line with community standards, including standards on sexuality, nudity, violence, and health and safety.

In addition, the OMA has its own stringent internal processes, including a Content Review Policy and content training, as well as a concept advice service available to advertisers and creative agencies to guide them in the early stages of advertisement development.

As part of the evidence presented at the hearing, the OMA detailed the impact a shift to a classification system under a legislative framework would have on Queensland's \$115 million outdoor advertising industry.

"A classification system seems excessive given the majority of outdoor advertising displayed in Queensland promotes everyday products and services such as schools, supermarkets, garden centres, movies and politicians, many of them advertising local Queensland businesses," Ms Moldrich said.

"Queensland has the highest proportion of local outdoor advertising than any other state in Australia – almost triple the amount of local advertisers in other states.



“New government regulations would cost the industry in excess of \$3.5 million per year, not taking into account the costs incurred by the State Government to run a legislative system, which could run into the millions.

“This would have a direct impact on the many local Queensland businesses that utilise outdoor advertising as a means of promoting their business and ultimately impact on the \$42.6 million in added value the industry injects into the Queensland economy.

“We’d like to see the Government maintain the current self-regulatory system so the industry can remain flexible in responding to community attitudes or changes in circumstance, and spend taxpayer dollars on addressing broader media influences by introducing media literacy education programs.”

The public hearings held today, Wednesday 21 August, form part of the State Government’s review of the effectiveness of the outdoor advertising industry’s current self-regulatory system.

The Queensland Government Inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising will report on whether reform, including legislative reform, is necessary.

The outdoor advertising industry saves Local Governments \$10.43 million per year in capital expenditure, including upgrades and maintenance on outdoor advertising sites including bus shelters, bench seats, and bicycle stations.

The OMA is the peak national industry body that represents most of Australia’s Out-of-Home (OOH) media display companies and production facilities, as well as some media display asset owners.

ENDS

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Charmaine Moldrich, CEO, Outdoor Media Association – T: 02 9357 9999 M: 0407 418 273

Melissa Lemberg, Manager, Rowland – T: 07 3229 4499

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.