

The Compliant Health Advertising Checklist

What you can and can't say in your advertising, and where to check for breaches.

CURRENT AS OF JULY 2026

AHPRA sets the rules for how every regulated health practice advertises. Testimonials, guarantees, unsubstantiated claims, and misleading images have long been prohibited. Cosmetic and aesthetic procedures carry extra requirements on top.

This checklist puts those rules in one place so you can check a campaign before it goes live. Save it somewhere you'll find it, and run through it each time you brief a new campaign or refresh your creative.

Fifteen minutes here protects you from penalties that reach \$60,000 a breach for a practitioner and \$120,000 for a company, and from spend wasted on copy you'll later have to pull.

One note before you start: this is a practical guide, not legal advice. For a ruling specific to your practice, consult a healthcare compliance specialist.

WHO THIS APPLIES TO

AHPRA's advertising rules cover every registered health practitioner in Australia, all 16 regulated professions. If your practice advertises any of these services, the rules apply to you:

Dentistry	Medicine & general practice	Nursing	Midwifery
Psychology	Physiotherapy	Chiropractic	Osteopathy
Optometry	Podiatry	Pharmacy	Chinese medicine
Occupational therapy	Paramedicine	Medical radiation practice	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander health

What You Can and Can't Say

Your best-performing copy is often the copy most likely to breach. Each row shows a common line, why AHPRA flags it, and a version you can run instead.

APPLIES TO ALL HEALTHCARE ADVERTISING

Category	Avoid	Why it's flagged	Run this instead
Patient testimonials or reviews	"Best clinic in Perth, changed my life."	Testimonials are prohibited in all regulated health advertising.	"Experienced, caring team" or "See our Google reviews"
Social-proof & patient-volume claims	"Trusted by 2,000+ Perth patients"	Volume claims function as testimonials under the guidelines.	"Established 1990" or "Caring for Perth families since 1999"
Unsubstantiated outcome or superlative claims	"World-renowned, painless, safe"	Outcome and superlative claims can't be substantiated.	"Gentle care, focused on your comfort"
Emotional-outcome promises	"A happier, more confident you"	Promises a psychological outcome the treatment can't guarantee.	Describe the service: "Cosmetic consultations available"
Guarantees	"Guaranteed results"	Guarantees of outcome are prohibited.	"Treatment options to suit your needs"
Edited or enhanced images	Filtered or airbrushed smile photos	Enhanced images misrepresent likely results.	Real, unedited images only
Promotions without terms	"20% off this month"	Promotions must carry full terms in the ad itself.	"New patient offer available, contact us for full terms"

EXTRA RULES FOR COSMETIC PROCEDURES

Category	Avoid	Why it's flagged	Run this instead
Before-and-after content	<i>Before-and-after with no warning</i>	Allowed only with strict conditions attached.	Only with consent, disclosure, and a "results may vary" warning
Predictive or simulation tools	<i>"See your new [smile/skin]" AI preview</i>	Predictive tools overstate outcomes for higher-risk work.	Remove predictive tools for higher-risk procedures
Missing mandatory information	<i>Cosmetic ad with no risk or practitioner detail</i>	Cosmetic ads must state risks and practitioner registration.	Include practitioner registration, risks, and recovery time
Advertising to under-18s	<i>Cosmetic ads targeted to under-18 audiences</i>	Cosmetic advertising to minors is restricted.	No targeting, plus a seven-day cooling-off and "adult content" label on social

WORKED EXAMPLE

BEFORE · BREACHING ON THREE COUNTS

"Perth's #1 clinic. Painless, guaranteed results. See why 2,000+ patients trust us. 20% off this month."

That's a volume claim, an unsubstantiated guarantee, and a promotion with no terms.

AFTER · COMPLIANT

"Cosmetic clinic in Perth. Now accepting new patients. New patient offer available, contact us for full terms."

The Healthcare Advertising Checklist

With the rules clear, here's where breaches tend to hide. Go through every channel you advertise on and check each item against the rules above. A single line, image, or automatic setting is enough to put a campaign at risk, and the rules apply to digital and traditional advertising equally.

Google Ads

- ☐ The wording of every ad, headline and text beneath it
- ☐ The extra links and text Google shows under your ad, which often pull in wording you didn't write
- ☐ Any discount or offer shown in the ad
- ☐ Any star ratings or review snippets Google adds on its own, switched off or checked
- ☐ The pages on your website the ads send people to

Facebook & Instagram

- ☐ The wording of every ad
- ☐ Before-and-after photos, the area most likely to breach for cosmetic work
- ☐ Anything influencers, ambassadors, or partners post on your behalf
- ☐ Comments and tags that repeat patient praise or reviews you didn't write
- ☐ The pages and profiles the ads send people to

Other Online Ads

Video and banner ads across websites and YouTube.

- ☐ What's said and shown in any video ad, including the voiceover and on-screen text
- ☐ The wording and images in banner ads

Radio

- ☐ What the script and voiceover claim
- ☐ Any offer read on air includes its full terms

Print

Newspapers, magazines, flyers, letterbox drops.

- ☐ All text on the design, from headlines to body copy and captions
- ☐ Every photo checked for editing or touch-ups

Signage & Outdoor

Bus ads, billboards, shopfront and window signs.

- ☐ All text on the design, not only the headline
- ☐ Every image, plus your practice signage and window graphics

Your Website

- ☐ Reviews, testimonials, and before-and-after galleries, held to the same standard as your ads
- ☐ The service and pricing pages your ads link to

Any Discount or Offer

Wherever it appears.

- ☐ The full terms sit in the ad itself, not only on the page it links to

Your Photos & Videos

Wherever they appear.

- ☐ Real, unedited images only, with no filters or touch-ups
- ☐ No before-and-after photos without patient consent, a disclosure, and a "results may vary" note
- ☐ No "see your new smile" preview tools for higher-risk treatments
- ☐ No banned words or guarantees in any caption or text over the image

Who You're Targeting

On social media.

- ☐ No cosmetic ads aimed at under-18s
- ☐ A seven-day cooling-off period and an "adult content" label applied where required

Before You Publish

- ☐ Someone owns compliance across every channel and can show the ads have been checked against AHPRA's current guidelines

Turn compliance into performance

The practices that perform best treat the AHPRA guidelines as the brief. Strip out the endorsements, the guarantees, and the vague offers, and the copy that remains is sharper, wastes less spend, and speaks to the patients most likely to book.

If you'd like our team to review your advertising and find you more performance, start a conversation at bonfire.com.au/contact-us.

This guide is based on AHPRA's published advertising guidelines. For legal advice specific to your practice, consult a healthcare compliance specialist.

