

NFTHD #85 - Product-Specific Social Media: Adapting to Edition 20

It can be appropriate for companies to issue non-promotional, product-specific media statements for the Australian public in certain circumstances. However, referencing a product—particularly on social media—carries higher risks. With its broad reach and rapid content amplification, social media requires careful compliance management. Edition 20 of the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct provides clear guidelines on product-related statements, extending to social media posts as well.

Code Edition 20, Section 10.1 speaks to the relationship between consumer media and product-specific media statements. This section reinstates key principles from Edition 18, addressing previous ambiguity about which parts of the Code apply to product-specific media statements. It offers clearer guidance for companies managing this higher-risk activity and provides the Code Committees with greater certainty when adjudicating related complaints.

Aligned with the ‘system-neutral’ approach of Edition 20, Section 10.1 applies uniformly across all media channels. Regardless of platform-specific constraints—such as character limits or restrictions on links—companies must ensure that all product-specific media statements, including those on social media, comply with Section 10.1 (Edition 20).

Key differences

Companies should note that product-specific social media posts that were acceptable under Edition 19 may not necessarily comply with Edition 20. The key change is that posts must now include the requirements outlined in Section 10.1(e) i–vii (below):

- e) The product-specific media statement must contain all of the following:
- i. the product’s brand name;
 - ii. the Australian Approved Name of the active ingredients in the product;
 - iii. its approved indications, relevant to the product-specific media statement;
 - iv. therapeutic class;
 - v. public funding status and restrictions, or a notation if the product is not publicly funded;
 - vi. a summary of the side effect profile, product’s precautions, adverse effects, warnings, contraindications, and interactions; and
 - vii. a copy of, or a link to the product’s Consumer Medicine Information.

Transitioning from Edition 19 to 20

Companies do not need to revise materials published prior to Edition 20 across any media, including social media, even if the content remains online. However, if any material is re-issued or re-published, it should be reviewed to ensure alignment with Edition 20. This includes social media content. From March 30 2025, all new or reshared social media content must comply with Edition 20.

For examples of product-specific social media posts, please view the following pages.

1 - Product Registration Announcement LinkedIn

MyPharmaCompany
900 followers

MyPharmaCompany is pleased to announce the registration of Brand Name (active ingredient 1) as a therapy for Type 2 diabetes in Australia.

The medicine treats adult patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus for whom <active ingredient 2> is otherwise indicated but was not tolerated. It is not yet included on the PBS.

All medicines have side effects. The most frequently observed adverse events in patients receiving Brand Name were constipation, decreased appetite, rash and hypertension. For more information about the medicine, see the [Consumer Medicine Information \(CMI\) here](#).

MyPharmaCompany
TYPE 2 DIABETES TREATMENT NOW REGISTERED FOR USE IN AUSTRALIA
FOR CERTAIN PATIENTS WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES MELLITUS
MYPHARMACOMPANY.COM.AU

MyPharmaCompany
mypharmacompany.com.au/mediarelease-0217 [Learn More](#)

Like Comment Repost Send

Comments have been turned off on this post. You can still react or share it.

10.1 e) i. The product's brand name

10.1 e) ii. The Australian Approved Name of the active ingredients in the product

10.1 e) iii. Its approved indications, relevant to the product-specific media statement

10.1 e) iv. Therapeutic class

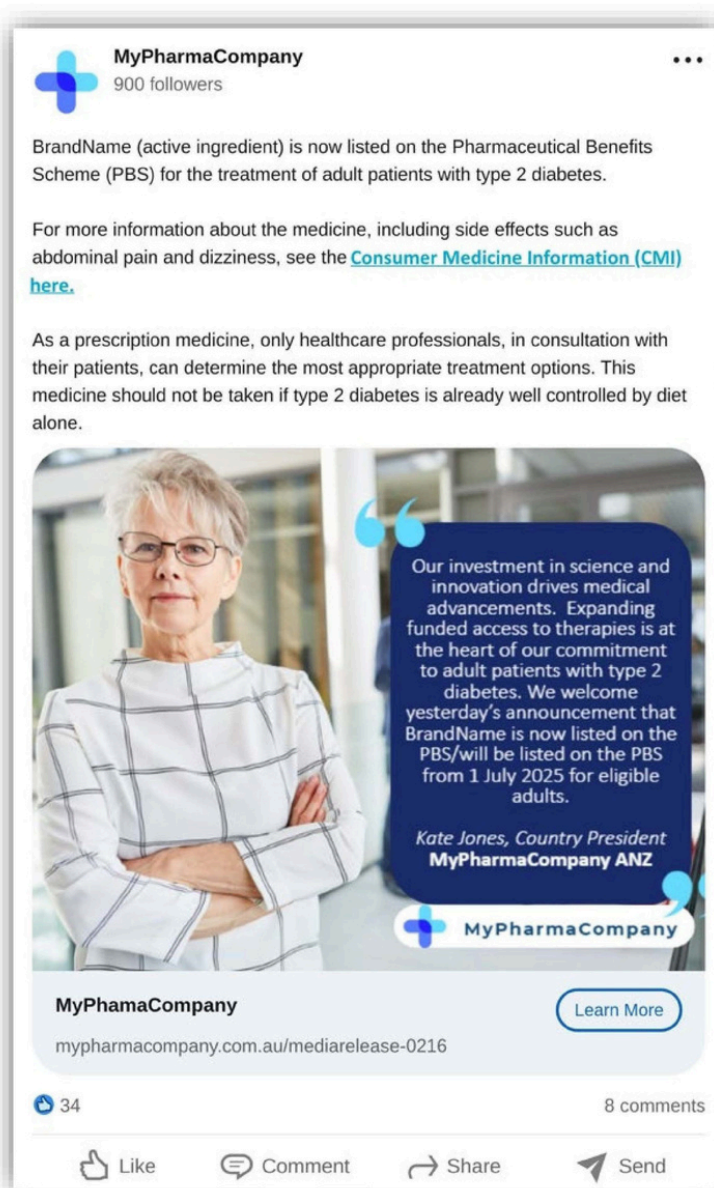
10.1 e) v. Public funding status and restrictions, or a notation if the product is not publicly funded

10.1 e) vi. A summary of the side effect profile, product's precautions, adverse effects, warnings, contraindications, and interactions

10.1 e) vii. A copy of, or a link to the product's Consumer Medicine Information

Companies are to make their own decision on whether it is appropriate to enable or disable comments. Disabling comments and limiting engagement to a short, predefined period can help mitigate the risk of (potentially) being perceived as promotional. It also alleviates responsibilities to monitor comments.

2 - Product PBS Announcement LinkedIn



- 10.1 e)
- ✓ i. The product's brand name
 - ✓ ii. The Australian Approved Name of the active ingredients in the product
 - ✓ iii. Its approved indications, relevant to the product-specific media statement
 - ✓ iv. Therapeutic class
 - ✓ v. Public funding status and restrictions, or a notation if the product is not publicly funded
 - ✓ vi. A summary of the side effect profile, product's precautions, adverse effects, warnings, contraindications, and interactions
 - ✓ vii. A copy of, or a link to the product's Consumer Medicine Information

Companies are to decide on what and how much information to provide that satisfies vi.

Expectations will be proportionate to the social media context. For example, these are simplified for a consumer-facing audience and proportionate to the information provided in the LinkedIn post. More information would be expected in the product-specific media statement.

- ✓ 10.1 & 10.2: Does not advertise or include promotional claims for a prescription product to the public
- ✓ 10.1 a) Content is consistent with the Code
- ✓ 10.1 b) Appropriate because the information is relevant to the Australian public, such as the announcement of new public funding such as a PBS listing
- ✓ 10.1c) Issued once. This example post is part of a coordinated announcement, and posted once in coordination with other channels, such as the media statement it links to.
- ✓ 10.1g) It does not include claims, promotional statements, comparisons to other products, quotes that promote the product, an image of the packaging, reference to an access program, not accompanied by any material that encourages the use of the product.

When posting on social media, companies must ensure links do not promote prescription medicines to consumers. Linking to the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) is mandatory. However, linking to a consumer media statement may not be appropriate, as it is intended for media, not a direct consumer audience. Companies must make this decision responsibly, ensuring any content shared is not promotional in nature.

3 - Calling for PBAC comments on Facebook

Whilst the intent of this content is to amplify the PBAC opportunity afforded to stakeholders, it remains a product-specific statement to consumers and therefore should comply also with Section 10.1.

MyPharmaCompany

Have your say on government funding for BrandName (active ingredient), for adult patients diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. BrandName is being considered for reimbursement at the upcoming Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) meeting.

The PBAC is seeking public comments on all upcoming medicine submissions; this is valuable opportunity for patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and industry stakeholders to provide input on medicines being considered for PBS listing. This input helps PBAC make more informed, patient-centered recommendations about whether a medicine should be subsidised under the PBS.

Comments are due by May 22. Learn more about how to have your say here: bit.ly/4dQ8NeZ

All medicines have risks. See Brand Name's [Consumer Medicine Information \(CMI\)](#) for full safety information on risks, side effects and precautions including the risk of hypoglycaemia.

Have your say on government funding for BrandName (active ingredient), for adult patients diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes

Submission deadline: **May 22**

Public comments provide real-world insights into how a medicine impacts people's lives.

MyPharmaCompany

[HTTPS://PBAC.PBS.GOV.AU/](https://PBAC.PBS.GOV.AU/)

PBAC Submission October 2025 [Learn More](#)

Like Comment Repost Send

Comments have been turned off on this post. You can still react or share it.

10.1 e)

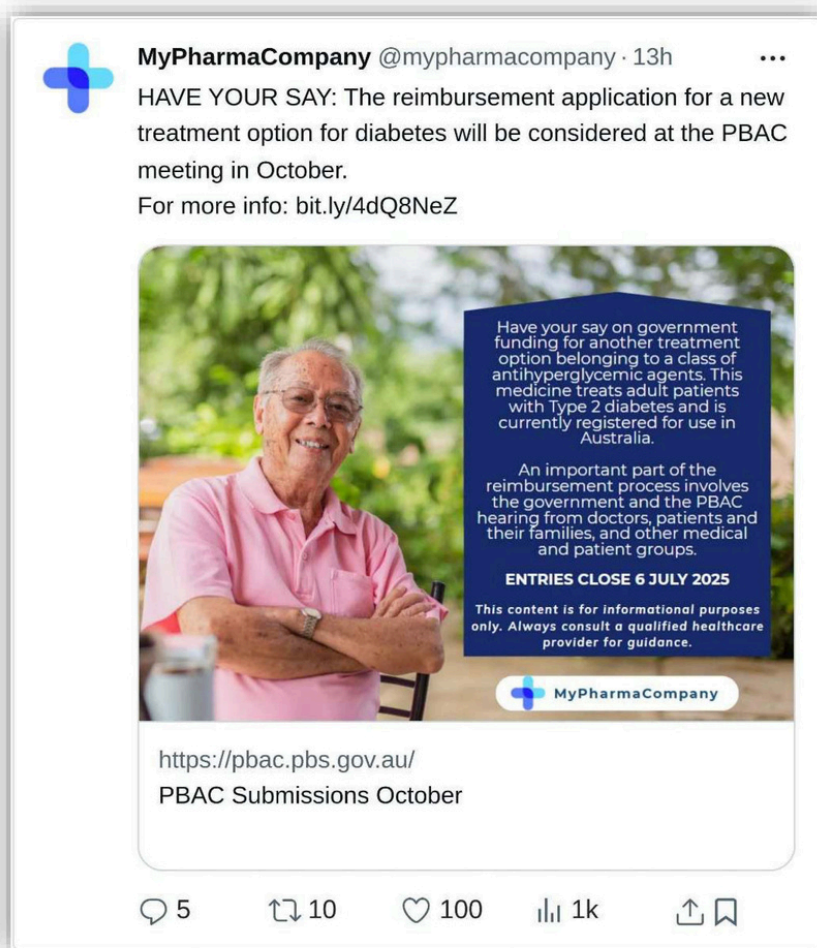
- ✓ i. The product's brand name
- ✓ ii. The Australian Approved Name of the active ingredients in the product
- ✓ iii. Its approved indications, relevant to the product-specific media statement
- ✓ iv. Therapeutic class
- ✓ v. Public funding status and restrictions, or a notation if the product is not publicly funded
- ✓ vi. A summary of the side effect profile, product's precautions, adverse effects, warnings, contraindications, and interactions
- ✓ vii. A copy of, or a link to the product's Consumer Medicine Information

Note this example includes two links; one to the CMI and the other to the PBAC agenda comments section. Where a social media platform limits links to only one, this will present a challenge.

Companies should determine whether to enable or disable comments at their discretion. However, since the post explicitly "calls for comments," it is recommended to disable comments to prevent any misunderstanding that social media comments are equivalent to commenting on the PBAC submissions.

4 - Calling for PBAC comments on X (Twitter)

This example illustrates an alternative way to call for PBAC comments without using the products name. In taking this approach, the content is unlikely to be considered a product-specific media statement, and Section 10.1 doesn't necessarily apply.



The intent of this content is to amplify the PBAC opportunity afforded to stakeholders, and without any reference to product. It is likely that Section 12.2 is relevant (educational information).

12.2b) and 12.2c) Because it is not disease awareness and instead educational information, this example broadly satisfies this principle where it is relevant to the intent and content. It advises consulting a qualified healthcare professional.

12.2 It is acknowledged that members of the general public should have access to information on medical conditions and the treatments which may be prescribed by their doctors. The purpose of such information should be educational and should encourage patients to seek further information or explanation from the appropriate healthcare professional.

- ✓ a) may include descriptions of the therapeutic category including classes but does not include any reference to a specific prescription product
- ✗ b) should be presented in a comprehensive, balanced and fair manner that does not unduly emphasise particular options or the need to seek treatment.
- ✗ c) emphasis should be on the condition and its recognition rather than on the treatment options. The appropriate treatment for an individual patient is for the healthcare professional to decide, in consultation with the patient, and this should be clearly stated.
- ✓ d) tone of the material must not be presented in a way that unnecessarily causes alarm or misunderstanding in the community nor stimulate the demand for prescription of a particular product.
- ✓ e) the intent of providing this further material is informational and not as advice