

AANA

Environmental Claims Code



MARCH 2025

The Environmental Claims Code & Practice Notes

Objective

This Code has been adopted by the AANA as part of advertising and marketing self-regulation. The object of this Code is to ensure that advertisers and marketers apply rigorous standards when making Environmental Claims and to increase public trust and confidence in communications of those claims.

This Code is accompanied by a Practice Note which has been developed by the AANA. The Practice Note provides guidance to advertisers and complainants and must be applied by the Community Panel in making its determinations. In the event of any ambiguity the provisions of the Code prevail.

The AANA encourages advertisers to also consider all relevant guidance including the case studies and good practices examples as provided in the **ACCC's guide - Making environmental claims. A guide for business.**

Definitions

In this Code, unless the context otherwise requires:

Advertising means

(a). any advertising, marketing communication or material which is published or broadcast using any Medium or any activity which is undertaken by, or on behalf of an advertiser or marketer,

- over which the advertiser or marketer has a reasonable degree of control, and
- that draws the attention of the public in a manner calculated to promote or oppose directly or indirectly a product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct,

(b). but does not include:

- labels or packaging for products
- corporate reports including corporate public affairs messages in press releases and other media statements, annual reports, statements on matters of public policy and the like

Definitions /cont.

- in the case of broadcast media, any material which promotes a program or programs to be broadcast on that same channel, station or network.

Practice Note

Images of labels or packaging related to or containing Environmental Claims contained within 'Advertising' will be considered to be an element of that 'Advertising'.

Community Panel

means the panel appointed by Ad Standards from time to time, the members of which are representative of the community, to administer a public complaints system in relation to Advertising.

Environment Claim

means any message or representation (including text, images, graphic, audio or symbolic representation) that gives the impression that an industry, business, product or service:

- a. has a neutral or positive impact on the environment
- b. is less harmful for the environment than alternatives, or
- c. has specific environmental benefits.

Medium

means any medium whatsoever including without limitation cinema, internet, outdoor media, print, radio, telecommunications, television or other direct-to-consumer media including new and emerging technologies.

Target Consumer

means the average and reasonable consumer of the target audience.

Practice Note

In the event of a complaint being considered by the Community Panel, the advertiser should be in a position to provide details about the Target Consumer, which may include data from audience data tools. Where accurate audience data is not available, the Community Panel may have regard to other factors.

Code Rules & Practice Notes

Code Rule	Practice Note
<p>1. Truthful and factual</p> <p>Environmental Claims in Advertising must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be truthful and factual. The overall impression created by the advertisement including the Environmental Claim should not be false or inaccurate. b. Not be or likely to be misleading or deceptive to the Target Consumer. 	<p>It is not intended that legal tests be applied to determine whether advertisements are misleading or deceptive, or likely to mislead or deceive, in the areas of concern in this Code.</p> <p>Instead, consideration will be given as to whether the Target Consumer would likely be misled or deceived by the Advertising.</p> <p>Any Environmental Claim should be accurate, true and factually correct.</p> <p>Even claims that are factually correct can sometimes still mislead consumers. Advertisers should consider the overall impression created by the claim and within the overall context of the Advertising, including through use of visual and audio elements. Advertising can be found in breach of this provision if the overall impression is false, inaccurate, misleading or deceptive even if each individual claim can be substantiated.</p> <p>Comparative claims for products or services, whether the comparison is with the advertiser's own previous process or product/service or with those of a competitor, should be worded in such a way as to make the comparison clear. Advertisers should present information to consumers in a way that enables them to make like-for-like comparisons.</p> <p>Care should be taken when making absolute claims (for example: that a product does not contain or is free from a chemical/substance) that it can be adequately substantiated as such. More guidance can be found in the ACCC's guide - Making environmental claims. A guide for business.</p> <p>Advertising making top parity Environmental Claims (e.g. "no one better") should have reasonable data backing up the claim.</p> <p>Regulation, research and consumer understanding of Environmental Claims is constantly evolving. Given this, advertisers must ensure their Environmental Claims remain valid through the life of the advertisement.</p>

Code Rule	Practice Note
<p>2. Evidence</p> <p>Environmental Claims in Advertising must be supported by evidence.</p>	<p>Advertisers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have reasonable grounds for making an Environmental Claim, based on evidence held at the time the claim is made; and • not misrepresent third party certifications and validations supporting an Environmental Claim. <p>Supporting evidence</p> <p>Environmental Claims in Advertising must be substantiated and verifiable.</p> <p>Advertisers must be able to support claims at the time the claim is made but are not necessarily required to include that supporting information in the advertisement unless it is required to make the claim true. Additional information provided must be truthful and not misleading. Supporting information held by advertisers at the time a claim is made must include sufficient detail to allow evaluation of a claim by the Target Consumer.</p> <p>Third party certification or verification</p> <p>Advertisers should carefully consider the use of any third party certification schemes or verification bodies to ensure they are independent, transparent, reputable and robust and do not give the impression that the certification or verification goes beyond what has been certified/verified.</p> <p>Scientific claims</p> <p>Scientific claims should be consistent with the body of evidence, not simply selective parts that can be used in a misleading way.</p> <p>Test methods & statistical models</p> <p>Test methods and statistical models may be appropriate. However, they must be relevant to the particular attribute and product conditions of use, and to the particular environmental impact that the advertiser is measuring.</p>

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	<p>Tests and statistics used should relate to conditions likely to be experienced by the consumer to assure the test results provide a reliable scientific basis to substantiate the specific Environmental Claim.</p> <p>Life cycle claims & life cycle assessments</p> <p>If an Environmental Claim states or implies that a product has minimal negative environmental impact throughout its life cycle (for example, “from cradle to grave, the most eco-friendly product on the market”), the claim may imply that it is supported by a Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA), and the advertiser should disclose the basis that was relied on to make the claim. If Advertising makes an Environmental Claim based on a single attribute, this must be made clear and be appropriately substantiated.</p> <p>Products and services may have different environmental impacts across different stages of their life cycle. Advertisers do not necessarily need to conduct a LCA or provide information about the full product life cycle in every claim however should consider the overall impression created by the Environmental Claim. The broader the claim, the more likely the need to consider life cycle implications.</p> <p>It should always be clear to which stage or which part of an organisation, product or service an Environmental Claim refers. If an Environmental Claim only relates to part of the life cycle, it should be made clear which part. For example, if a claim relates only to the transport of the product, this should be clearly stated and it should not also suggest that it applies to the manufacture of the product.</p> <p>Compostable claims</p> <p>Environmental Claims about compostability must be based on reliable evidence. For example, a current compostable certification or similar and whether the product or packaging has been certified for home or industrial composting.</p>

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<p>3. Clear and not vague</p> <p>Environmental Claims in Advertising must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use clear language, having regard to the Target Consumer b. Be specific - broad, vague or unqualified claims should be avoided c. Include important limitations, conditions or qualifications in a way that is clear to the Target Consumer. 	<p>Clear language</p> <p>Scientific terminology or references should be relevant and accurate. They should be used in a way that can be readily understood by the Target Consumer, including through further information provided to explain the terminology (for example through website links, QR codes and other available means).</p> <p>Be specific – avoid broad, vague or unqualified claims</p> <p>Advertisers should be specific when making Environmental Claims and it should be clear if the Environmental Claim refers to an entire or part of a product, component, package, service or company's business operations.</p> <p>Vague, broad or non-specific claims (sometimes called "general" claims) include claims such as "environmentally friendly," "eco friendly", "eco safe", "green", "go green", "choose green", "sustainable," or any other terms implying that a product or an activity has no impact—or only a positive impact—on the environment. Such claims may be misleading unless appropriately qualified, a high standard of proof is available, or the claim is linked to a specific properly substantiated environmental attribute that clearly limits the scope of the claim to such attribute.</p> <p>A specific claim about individual environmental attributes supported by reliable evidence could be linked to a claim of "sustainability" (for example, "our products are sustainable because they are made of 100% post-consumer recycled content and are recyclable") However, Advertising should not state or imply that a product is "sustainable" (without relevant qualifications) simply because it has some positive environmental benefits.</p> <p>Include important limitations, conditions or qualifications in a way that is clear</p> <p>Advertisers must consider if there are any conditions that need to be met or steps that need to be taken for a claim to be true. If claims are only true in certain circumstances, advertisers should explain this to consumers clearly. Any information or qualifications in small print should not conflict with the overall</p>

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	<p>message of the Environmental Claim.</p> <p>Advertisers should avoid providing partial information where it may create a misleading overall impression. Absolute or broad claims which require qualification to be true should not be made without that qualification. For example, claims like: "Made from recycled materials", "Renewable", "Produced with renewable energy", "Plastic free", "Uses less water" should be qualified if they only relate only to an aspect, portion or stage of a product, service or business and this should be made clear in the Advertising.</p> <p>This rule is not intended to limit or restrict advertisers from offering additional useful information through website links, QR codes and other available means to support rather than contradict the overall message contained in the Environmental Claim.</p> <p>Emissions related claims</p> <p>In relation to emissions related claims, the Target Consumers may have difficulty understanding what is meant by broad, headline claims like "Carbon Neutral", "Climate Neutral" or "Net Zero" unless further information is provided to explain the claim. Emissions related claims should be expressed in a way so as to be clear to the Target Consumer and should (where relevant):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be based on a thorough emissions baseline assessment using established and recognised methodologies • Provide clear information to the Target Consumer on what emissions are included or excluded from any assessment relevant to the Environmental Claim • Clearly and transparently communicate action taken to underpin the claim, including actual emissions reductions as opposed to reliance on purchased offsets • Where there is reliance on offsets to make a claim, those offset projects should be verified to ensure the offsets have not already been claimed or been issued under multiple registries • Avoid broad, headline emissions related claims where the emission reduction relates to a product, service or segment

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	<p>which represents a small proportion of the advertiser's overall emissions profile</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For future claims, be based on reasonable grounds and in line with this Code. <p>Providing some information while leaving out important details which contradict or qualify the Environmental Claim is likely to be misleading.</p> <p>Recyclable claims</p> <p>When making 'recyclable' claims, advertisers should have regard to accepted Government or industry definitions of 'recyclable' (for example, Australian Recycling Label for consumer packaging). Where Advertising contains the Australasian Recycling Label, the use of the label should comply with Australasian Recycling Label rules.</p> <p>Unqualified recyclable claims should only be made where publicly available or home recycling collection systems exist.</p>
<p>4. Genuine benefit</p> <p>Environmental Claims in Advertising must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Be about a genuine benefit to the environment Not overstate the environmental benefit 	<p>Advertisers should not make Environmental Claims that exaggerate an environmental benefit or understate an environmental harm.</p> <p>Environmental Claims about a product, service or business should only be made when there is a genuine environmental benefit. You risk misleading consumers if you advertise environmental benefits which are irrelevant, insignificant, or simply advertise the observance of existing law (unless this is made clear).</p> <p>Some claims that are literally true may be misleading because they exaggerate the benefits of the product or they may give an overall impression that is misleading. For example, a claim that a product contains "twice as much recycled content as before" when the amount was very low to begin with could be misleading or when one or more specific and accurate claims about relatively minor or related matters give a misleading impression about overall environmental effects.</p>

Code Rule	Practice Note
<p>5. Future claims</p> <p>Environmental Claims in Advertising about future environmental objectives must be based on reasonable grounds at the time the claim is made.</p>	<p>Environmental Claims relating to aspirational targets or environmental goals should only be made if the advertiser has reasonable grounds at the time the claim is made. Reasonable grounds may include verifiable data, clear plans and milestones that outline how the target or goals will be met.</p> <p>Where relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the goals should also be based on accepted methodologies (for example, the Science Based Targets Initiative), resources or technologies that are effective and available now (or the advertiser has a reasonable basis to consider they will be available to the advertiser in the near future); updates should be made available to the public about performance against the goals, including if the advertiser is on track to achieve them or any setbacks; and the advertiser should regularly revise the goals and any related Environmental Claims where it becomes apparent the advertiser will not meet them.

This section does not form part of the **AANA Environmental Claims Code** and is provided here for information only.

Complaints under the AANA self-regulatory system

Compliance with AANA Codes is the responsibility of the advertiser. Complaints about the content of an advertisement can be made under this Code and the other AANA Codes to Ad Standards.

Once Ad Standards has received your complaint, it then assesses the complaint to determine whether it is eligible for consideration by the Ad Standards Community Panel. The Community Panel is the body established to consider complaints. If accepted the advertiser/marketer is notified and a response is requested. The complaint is then considered by the Community Panel and the advertiser and complainant are advised of the determination. If the complaint is upheld, the advertiser is notified and will be asked to change or remove the ad. A case report is then published. The original complainant or advertiser/marketer can also ask for a review of the determination.

You can make a complaint online at:
www.adstandards.com.au

If your complaint is about a program (not an advertisement) on television or radio, please contact the relevant industry body.