

Avoiding Greenwashing in Advertising



This document is provided for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Please refer to the [ACCC Environmental Claims Guidelines](#) and the [AANA Environmental Claims Code](#) for further details and seek your own independent legal advice if you require specific guidance on environmental claims in advertising.

Environmental claims in advertising materials must be true and accurate and backed up by evidence. Advertising materials must:

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| <p>✓ Be truthful and factually accurate.</p> | <p>✗ Not mislead or deceive consumers. Consult pages 22 to 23 of ACCC Guidelines and Section 1(a) Practice Note of AANA Environmental Claims Code for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Clearly explain the environmental benefit.</p> | <p>✗ Not overstate the environmental benefit. Consult pages 11 to 12 of ACCC Guidelines and Section 2(b) Practice Note of AANA Environmental Claims Code for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Display any disclaimers or important limitations and qualifications prominently.</p> | <p>✗ Not leave out or hide any important information. Consult pages 19 to 20 of ACCC Guidelines for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Use clear and easy-to-understand language.</p> | <p>✗ Avoid technical terms that could confuse consumers. Consult page 28 of ACCC Guidelines and Section 2(a) Practice Note of AANA Environmental Claims Code for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Be clear on whether the environmental benefit applies to the whole product or just one aspect of it (e.g. the packaging).</p> | <p>✗ Avoid vague / broad / unqualified claims (e.g. 'green' or 'eco-friendly') as they can more easily mislead consumers <u>unless</u> there is evidence to properly substantiate them. Consult pages 24 to 25 of ACCC Guidelines for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Be clear and transparent about what products/services are being compared to if the advertisement is making a comparison claim.</p> | <p>✗ Not make vague comparisons to other products/services (e.g. 'this is a greener alternative') without specifying what products/services it is greener than, and how it is greener than them. Consult pages 24 & 31 of ACCC Guidelines and Section 2(a) Practice Note of AANA Environmental Claims Code for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Be verifiable, accurate, and specific, and include credible sources to support the environmental claims (best practice is to include weblinks, QR codes etc).</p> | <p>✗ Not make claims which are not supported by current, up-to-date sources (e.g. scientific data / reports). Consult page 16 of ACCC Guidelines and Section 3(a) of AANA Environmental Claims Code for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Use words and visual elements which create an accurate overall impression of the environmental benefit.</p> | <p>✗ Avoid misleading visual elements such as natural imagery and the colour green for a product/service which has little to no environmental benefit. Consult pages 29 to 30 of ACCC Guidelines for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Explain the meaning and source of any featured logo or trust mark (e.g. the recycle mobius).</p> | <p>✗ Don't include logos or trust marks if they are confusing, their source or meaning is not clear, or they imply certification that does not exist. Consult page 30 of ACCC Guidelines for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Only include testimonials that reflect the genuine, informed and current opinion of the person giving the testimonial.</p> | <p>✗ Not include false or out of date testimonials. Consult page 37 of ACCC Guidelines and Section 3(c) Practice Note of AANA Environmental Claims Code for further details.</p> |
| <p>✓ Future claims must be based on actual plans in place to reach that goal at the time the claim is made.</p> | <p>✗ Don't include aspirational goals without a strong basis in fact. Consult pages 6 and 8 of ACCC Guidelines for further details.</p> |