

Case Report

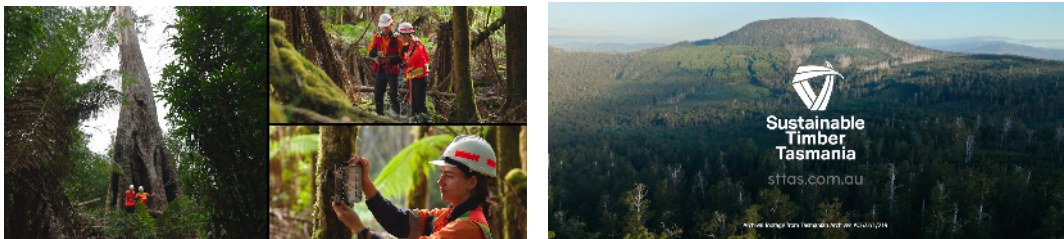
1. Case Number :	0144-25
2. Advertiser :	Sustainable Timber Tasmania
3. Product :	Energy/Resources
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Decision:	2-Jul-2025
6. Decision:	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Environmental Code\1. Truthful & Factual
AANA Environmental Code\3. Clear & Not Vague
AANA Environmental Code\4. Genuine Benefit

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a voice-over which says, "our forests hold a history from which we learn. They provide shelter, and hold wonders. We have forests that support communities, providing materials from which we grow. Our mission is to care for our forests. To learn. Protect. Produce. To maintain the balance so our forests have a future".



THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

MAKING FALSE ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS. The very title this advertiser uses is a marketing falsehood, making false claims about their products and misleading consumers.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

Sustainable Timber Tasmania appreciates the opportunity to provide clarification regarding the purpose and content of the advertisement, and to address any concerns raised.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania is a Tasmanian Government Business Enterprise entrusted with the management of more than 812,000 hectares of Permanent Timber Production Zone land across Tasmania.

Governed by Tasmanian Government legislation, our responsibility is twofold: to maintain and promote the health of Tasmania's production forests and to supply high-quality timber to customers throughout Tasmania.

The television advertisement was developed as part of our commitment to community engagement. Its primary objective is to build public understanding and awareness of Tasmania's public production forests - specifically, how these forests are managed, cared for, and regenerated. The ad features genuine employees of Sustainable Timber Tasmania and depicts real locations within our managed estate across the state.

We are confident that the advertisement presents a truthful, factually accurate representation – and reflects our commitment to transparency and responsible forest management.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania takes its responsibilities seriously, including compliance with advertising codes and standards. We respectfully maintain that this advertisement does not contain any misleading, deceptive, or otherwise non-compliant content.

However, we remain open to dialogue and review, and we are happy to supply further supporting information should it be required by the panel.

Thank you for considering our response.

THE DECISION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches the AANA Environmental Code (the Environmental Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement makes false environmental claims.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

Does the advertisement make an Environmental Claim?

The Panel noted the Environmental Code provides the following definition:

"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."*

The Panel noted that other than the historical footage, there is no footage in the advertisement of trees being cut down to make timber. The Panel considered the focus of the forest images is on greenery and growth. The Panel further considered that the voice-over referencing 'protecting' forests, and 'maintain the balance', the use of the word 'sustainable', and the images of green, thriving forests combined to form an overall impression that the business as a whole has a neutral or positive impact on the environment. The Panel considered that this was an Environmental Claim.

Section 1: Environmental Claims in Advertising must:

- 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.**

The Panel noted that the Practice Note for the Environmental Code says:

"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.

Instead, consideration will be given as to whether the Target consumer would likely be misled or deceived by the Advertising.

Any Environmental Claim should be accurate, true and factually correct.

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."

The Panel considered that the target consumer would likely be adults living in Tasmania who have some awareness of issues relating to timber production and the importance of Tasmanian forests.

The Panel considered that while the advertisement did not make a specific environmental claim, the overall impression suggested that the business as a whole has a neutral impact on the environment. While some members of the community would consider timber production to have negative environmental impacts, the Panel considered that the target consumer would likely understand that the advertiser was promoting its efforts to mitigate negative effects.

The Panel also noted that the website linked in the advertisement provides further information on the forest management plan, which elaborates on these mitigation strategies.

The Panel considered that the environmental claim made in the advertisement was unlikely to mislead or deceive the target consumer.

Section 1 conclusion

The Panel concluded that the advertisement did not breach Section 1 of the Environmental Code.

Section 3: Environmental Claims in Advertising must:

- **Use clear language, having regard to the Target Consumer**
- **Be specific – broad, vague or unqualified claims should be avoided**
- **Include important limitations, conditions or qualifications in a way that is clear to the Target Consumer**

The Panel noted that the Practice Note for the Environmental Code says:

*“Be specific – avoid broad, vague or unqualified claims
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.*

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.

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.”

The Panel considered that while no substantiation was provided in the response, the advertiser’s website offered clear and appropriate information supporting the claim that the business has a neutral impact on the environment.

Section 3 conclusion

The Panel concluded that the advertisement did not breach Section 3 of the Environmental Code.

Section 4: Environmental Claims in Advertising must:

- **Be about a genuine benefit to the environment**
- **Not overstate the environmental benefit**

The Panel noted that the Practice Note for the Environmental Code says:

“Advertisers should not make Environmental Claims that exaggerate an environmental benefit or understate an environmental harm.”

The Panel considered that the environmental claim in the advertisement was accurately reflecting the work being done by the advertiser and was not overstating the environmental benefit.

Section 4 conclusion

The Panel concluded that the advertisement did not breach Section 4 of the Environmental Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Environmental Code the Panel dismissed the complaint.