Case Report

Case number:	0228-26
Advertiser:	Clean Air Wood Heaters
Medium:	Website
Decision date:	9-Sep-2026
Decision:	Breach
Action:	Ad not amended or removed

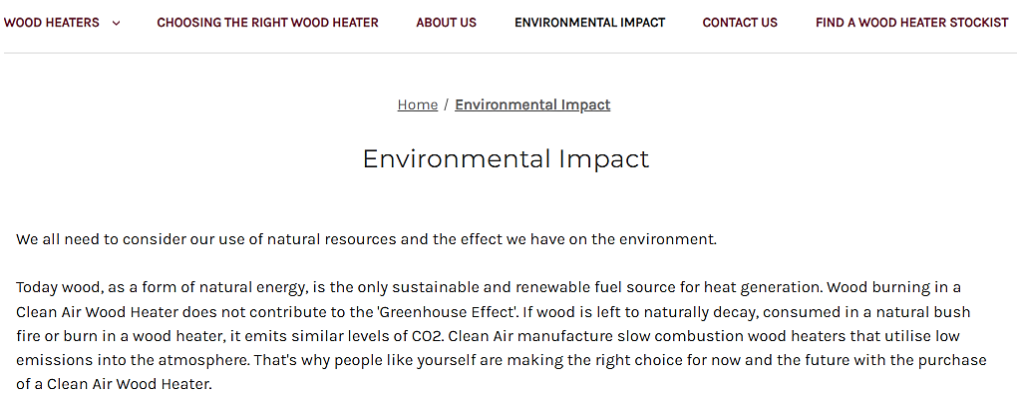
ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITY PANEL

- AANA Environmental Code - 1. Truthful & Factual - breach
- AANA Environmental Code - 2. Evidence - breach

AD DESCRIPTION

This website promotes the advertiser's wood heaters. On its 'Environmental Impact' page, it states, 'Wood burning in a Clean Air Wood Heater does not contribute to the 'Greenhouse Effect'. If wood is left to naturally decay, consumed in a natural bush fire or burn in a wood heater, it emits similar levels of CO2. Clean Air manufacture slow combustion wood heaters that utilise low emissions into the atmosphere. That's why people like yourself are making the right choice for now and the future with the purchase of a Clean Air Wood Heater.'





SUMMARY

Complaint

A complaint alleged that there are no reasonable grounds for the claim that 'Wood burning in a Clean Air Wood Heater does not contribute to the Greenhouse Effect.' The complainant argued that it is factually incorrect, noting that methane and black carbon are responsible for almost half of global warming.

The complaint referred to several documents and studies that state:

- Wood smoke is not climate neutral and contributes significantly to CO_2-equivalent emissions.
- Leaving wood to decay naturally takes many years, and enriches the soil with carbon and nitrogen, which are crucial for biodiversity maintenance. It can take decades for trees to regrow and absorb carbon. Burning wood in the meantime means more of it is released into the atmosphere.
- For the same amount of heat or energy, burning wood releases more CO_2 than oil or gas.

Advertiser response

The advertiser did not submit a response.

Decisions

The Panel found that the content on the Clean Air Wood Heaters website breached Section 1 and Section 2 of the AANA Environmental Claims Code as it made an environmental claim that did not appear to be truthful or supported by evidence.

ASSESSMENT AND DECISIONS

Section 1 (AANA Environmental Claims Code): 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 Practice Note states:

> 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.

Panel assessment

The Panel considered that the claim appears on the advertiser's website, is under its direct control, and that it is intended to promote the sale of the advertiser's heaters on the basis that

they do not contribute to greenhouse emissions. The Panel also considered that this information was not presented in a manner that represented a corporate report, press release or public affairs messages.

The Panel, therefore, considered that this content met the definition of 'advertising' as contained in the Code.

The Panel then considered whether the claim constituted an 'environment claim' as defined in the Code. The Panel noted the definition of an 'environment claim', which reads:

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

The Panel considered that the claim advises people that burning wood in the advertiser's heaters would not contribute to 'the greenhouse effect' and that its overall design and function made it 'the right choice for now and the future'.

The Panel considered that this constituted an 'environment claim' as defined in the code. Accordingly, the Panel needed to determine whether the claim was truthful and factual.

In this regard, the Panel noted that the advertiser did not respond to the complaint. The Panel also considered that the website provided information about safety standards and build specifications, but nothing that could be considered evidence of the environment claim.

The Panel noted the complainant's evidence which, according to the complainant suggests that:

- Wood smoke was not climate neutral because it produced black carbon, methane and nitrous oxide.
- The combined effect of all wood heater emissions (Short-Lived Climate Forcing Pollutants) cause more global warming than an efficient reverse cycle heating system.
- For an equivalent amount of energy burning wood releases more carbon dioxide than oil or gas.
- Other countries have started clamping down on advertising promoting wood heaters as environmentally friendly or carbon neutral.

The Panel considered that the advertiser has not responded to, or refuted these allegations, and has provided nothing to show that its environmental claim was truthful or factual.

Panel decision

Given the above, and the lack of evidence from the advertiser, the Panel found that the claim in dispute breached Section 1 of the AANA Environmental Claims Code.

Section 2 (AANA Environmental Claims Code): Environmental claims in advertising must be supported by evidence.

The Practice Note states:

> Advertisers should have reasonable grounds for making an environmental claim, based on evidence held at the time the claim is made.
>
> Environmental claims in advertising must be substantiated and verifiable.
>
> 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.

Panel assessment

The Panel considered that the advertiser provided no evidence to support the environment claim. The Panel also considered that the advertiser's website did not appear to provide evidence for this claim.

Panel decision

Given this, the Panel found that the ad breached Section 2 of the AANA Environmental Claims Code.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Panel found that the ad did not breach any other section of the relevant advertising codes.

ACTION

The advertiser has not responded to the breach decision.