



COMMERCE COMMISSION

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It's not easy being green - Commerce Commission releases guidelines on green claims

The Commerce Commission has today released guidelines to businesses that make environmental, or 'green', claims in their marketing.

The guidelines are intended to educate businesses about avoiding making misleading or untrue claims about their products or services under the Fair Trading Act.

“Environmental claims can be a powerful marketing tool. Consumers are increasingly aware of their own impact on the environment and may choose one product or service over another based on the green claims made on the label or in advertising,” said Director of Fair Trading, Commerce Commission Adrian Sparrow.

“This is an area in which we are seeing a proliferation of marketing claims, many of which have the potential to mislead consumers. Consumers have a right to accurate information on which to base their purchasing decisions,” said Mr Sparrow.

The guidelines encourage businesses and marketers to be honest, to specify which part of the product or process the green claim is made about and to use language consumers can understand. Likewise, businesses and marketers should explain the significance of the green claim and ensure the claim can be substantiated.

“Green claims are a new area of focus for the Commerce Commission because we see it as an emerging area of concern. We already have active investigations in this area and businesses would

be well advised to read the guidelines and seek legal advice about any green marketing claims they are making,” said Mr Sparrow.

The Commission intends producing separate guidelines for carbon neutral marketing at a later date.

The publication ‘The Fair Trading Act - Guidelines for Green Marketing’ is available for download from the Commerce Commission website www.comcom.govt.nz under Fair Trading.

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