

Eco Choice Aotearoa Labelling Guide

This Guide is intended to advise entities who've been awarded the Eco Choice Aotearoa ecolabel, how to use the ecolabel correctly by summarising the requirements for use.

It also provides best practice guidance around making environmental claims in relation to eco-labelled products and services.

Using the Label

Only entities with a current license issued by The New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust (NZET) may use the ecolabel. In using it, licensees must adhere to rules set out in the application, license conditions and explained in this guide.

NZET is available to review proposed usage of the ecolabel, or claims relating to it, and confirm compliance. This is strongly recommended as licensees will be required to amend or stop using the ecolabel, if NZET deems it is being used in an unacceptable or misleading manner, or adversely affects the Trust or Eco Choice Aotearoa's reputation.

Licence Condition Requirements

Licensees and their agents must only use the ecolabel on products or services that meet the requirements of the relevant Eco Choice Aotearoa product or service standard (and that are included on their current Licence schedule) or in information about those products or services.

In using the Label licensees:

- Must always include the license number with the label
- Can choose whether to also include the **exact** product category wording; no other wording can be used with the ecolabel
- Must maintain a clear zone around the ecolabel and wording, as shown in the keyline art to ensure the ecolabel is not associated with any other claim, logo, or organisation

- Must not use the ecolabel in any way that could be taken as referring to anything other than licensed products or services or use it in any way that could be taken to imply that Eco Choice Aotearoa or NZET endorse your products or services in any other way.
- Must meet the requirements of the keyline art for reproducing the ecolabel: refer to the Eco Choice Aotearoa brand palette
- Can apply the ecolabel directly to licensed products by moulding, engraving, embossing, or printing.
- Can attach the ecolabel to licensed products on an adhesive or tie-on label.
- Can integrate the ecolabel as a watermark on sheets of licensed paper products
- Can place the logo on company vehicles, where there is a reference to the products or services have the Eco Choice Aotearoa licence.

Packaging

Licensees and their agents may apply the ecolabel to packaging for a licensed product or service but must ensure the ecolabel is used in a way that does not suggest the packaging is licensed (unless the packaging is also licensed).

For licensed packaging products or containers, the ecolabel can only be applied to the package or container if it's clear that it does not apply to the product inside the container or package (unless the product is also licensed).

If a licensed product is packaged or contained in a licensed package or container, options include:

1. Use two separate ecolabels on the packaging with relevant license numbers
2. Use a single label including both license numbers

Advertising

The ecolabel can only be used by licensees and their agents in advertising, promotional or other information in relation to licensed products or services. When it is used in relation to a product or service it means that the product or service meets the requirements of the relevant Eco Choice Aotearoa product or service standard. The ecolabel can't be used, or claims made about your Licence, Eco Choice Aotearoa or NZET, which could be taken to imply the Trust endorses the company or its products or services in any other way.

Printing and applying the ecolabel

The ecolabel is available in electronic form from NZET, along with a copy of the keyline art.

The Law

Using claims that mislead or are unsubstantiated could breach the requirements of the Fair Trading Act. It could also bring advertisers into conflict with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The Act states that those in trade must not mislead or deceive customers in any way, and serious penalties apply for business and individuals that fail to meet these requirements.

A “green” claim can contravene the Act either as misleading or deceptive conduct, or as a false or misleading representation.

Other guides

The Commerce Commission’s most recent guidance (2020):

https://comcom.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/220247/Environmental-claims-guidance-July-2020.pdf

The ASA has a Code for Environmental Claims: <https://www.asa.co.nz/codes/codes/code-for-environmental-claims/>

There is also an International Standard for making environmental claims (ISO 14021 Environmental labels and declarations – Self-declared environmental claims):

<https://www.iso.org/standard/66652.html>

Greenwashing

In the book, *The Sins of Greenwashing*, environmental marketers and consultants Terrachoice identify what they term the **Seven Sins of Greenwashing**:

1. **The Hidden Trade-Off**, e.g. “recycled paper” – what about the source, energy used, emissions, etc?
2. **No Proof**, e.g. use of words like “green” or “eco”; claims that can’t be substantiated by easily assessable or reliable data.
3. **Vagueness**, e.g. claims of being “environmentally friendly”.

4. **Irrelevance**, e.g. claims like “CFC-free”, which may be accurate but are unimportant or irrelevant for some products.
5. **Fibbing**, i.e. making false claims.
6. **The Lesser of Two Evils**, e.g. claims like “organic cigarettes” or “green pesticides”.
7. **Worshiping False Labels**, e.g. using fake labels to suggest an endorsement.

Further information

The Eco Choice Aotearoa Application and Licence Conditions are available on the Eco Choice Aotearoa website at www.ecochoiceaotearoa.org.nz