

COMPLAINT NUMBER	25/162
APPEAL NUMBER	25/018
APPLICANT	Advertiser
ADVERTISER	WUUL PRODUCTS NZ LIMITED
ADVERTISEMENT	WoolLife, Digital Marketing
DATE	11 December 2025
OUTCOME	Appeal Allowed, Complaint Not Upheld

SUMMARY

On 7 October 2025, the Complaints Board upheld a complaint about a Facebook advertisement for WoolLife dog beds. The advertisement said: "New Zealand's Most Sustainable Dog Bed... Recycled, Recyclable, and Built to Last". The Complaints Board said the advertisement made unsubstantiated environmental claims and was misleading.

The Advertiser appealed the decision. A copy of the appeal application is in Appendix 5. The appeal application provided new evidence which included a table comparing the "sustainability attributes" of the WoolLife dog bed with 14 other dog bed products.

The Chairperson of the Appeal Board considered the appeal application and ruled it had raised sufficient matters for the appeal to be accepted, the parties be provided the opportunity to comment, and the matter be referred to the Appeal Board. Full copies of these responses are in Appendices 6–9.

The Appeal Board carefully considered the original complaint, the advertisement, the responses from the Advertiser, the Complaints Board Decision, the Appeal Application, the responses from the Complainant about the Appeal, the subsequent responses from the Advertiser, and the relevant precedent decisions.

The Appeal Board took into account the context, generally prevailing community standards, the medium, audience, and the likely consumer takeout of the advertisement.

The Appeal Board said taking all factors into account, the new evidence provided sufficient substantiation for the environmental claim made in the advertisement.

The Appeal was Allowed, and the Complaint was Not Upheld.

Decision: Complaint **Not Upheld** Appeal **Allowed**

APPEAL BOARD DECISION

Relevant ASA Codes of Practice

The Chair directed the Appeal Board to consider the complaint with reference to the following code:

ADVERTISING STANDARDS CODE

Principle 2: Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must be truthful, balanced and not misleading.

Rule 2(b) Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must not mislead or be likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust or exploit their lack of knowledge. This includes by implication, inaccuracy, ambiguity, exaggeration, unrealistic claim, omission, false representation or otherwise. Obvious hyperbole identifiable as such is not considered to be misleading.

Rule 2(d) Comparative advertising: Comparative advertisements, or advertising that identifies a competing product or service, must be factual, accurate, make clear the nature of the comparison, must not denigrate competitors and must be of 'like' products or services available in the same market.

Guidelines

... Advertisements that do not identify a specific competitor can still be considered a comparative advertisement, e.g. if a comparison is made against all competition within an industry or with specific aspects of an unnamed competitor product or service.

Rule 2(h) Environmental Claims: Environmental claims must be accurate and able to be substantiated by evidence that reflects scientific and technological developments.

Relevant precedent decisions

The Appeal Board noted the range of precedents presented to the Complaints Board and that the appeal submission questioned the relevance of the precedents used. (See Summary of Precedents in Complaints Board Decision in Appendix 4.) The

Appeal Board discussed the application of the precedents, and confirmed each advertisement is judged on its own merits. Precedents are not binding and act as guidance for the Complaints Board and the Appeal Board. They show how the advertising codes have been applied in different circumstances.

Procedural Matters

The Appeal Board noted the Advertiser raised two procedural issues: there were two different versions of the complaint, and the Advertiser suggested the Complainant may be a competitor. The Appeal Board addressed both issues prior to discussing the substance of the appeal.

Two versions of the complaint

The Appeal Board noted there were two versions of the complaint, the full version, which was included in the Complaints Board decision, and a shorter version, which was sent to the Advertiser. The Appeal Board agreed this created an inconsistency.

The full version contained the following additional text:

"I contacted the owner who only responded once. They were going to adjust ad. But still haven't over 1 month on and am seeing even more of them and different ones".

The Appeal Board noted this additional text had been removed from the complaint sent to the Advertiser, to protect the identity of the Complainant, in accordance with the ASA [Privacy Policy](#).

The Appeal Board recommended the following change to the procedures of the ASA Secretariat, to avoid any similar inconsistencies occurring in future:

- Where the Secretariat believes a Complainant may have "self-identified" in the body of their complaint, the Secretariat will contact the Complainant. The Secretariat will ask for their agreement to provide to the Advertiser either the full complaint, including information that may identify them, or an amended version of the complaint, excluding any identifying text
- The version the Complainant agrees to will be sent to the Advertiser. If details are removed, the complaint will be labelled "Complaint - Edited in accordance with the ASA Privacy Policy"

Is the Complainant a Competitor?

The Appeal Board noted the comment from the Advertiser in their "Response to Complainant Comments" (Appendix 9): "the complainant is not a typical consumer, but more likely a competitor or a party acting on behalf of one".

The Appeal Board noted the standard procedure for all complaints being lodged with the ASA is for the Complainant to agree to the following statement, before the complaint can proceed further:

I confirm I do not, nor am I associated with someone who does, operate a competitor business in the same industry as the advertiser and therefore I am not making this complaint as a competitor.

The Appeal Board said it was satisfied the Complainant confirmed this statement in writing and the Advertiser had been advised.

APPEAL BOARD DISCUSSION

The Chairperson of the Appeal Board introduced the appeal and confirmed the role of the Appeal Board was to review the matter from the beginning.

The Appeal Board carefully considered the original complaint, the advertisements, the responses from the Advertiser, the Complaints Board Decision, the Appeal Application, the responses from the Complainant about the Appeal, and the relevant precedent decisions.

The Appeal Board also considered the context, generally prevailing community standards, the medium, audience, and the likely consumer takeout of the advertisements.

What is the consumer takeout?

The Appeal Board discussed the likely consumer takeout of the advertisement. The Appeal Board agreed with Complaints Board's view of the consumer takeout: "the Wool.Life dog bed is more sustainable than all other dog beds available on the New Zealand market".

Does the advertisement make any environmental claims?

The Appeal Board said the advertisement did make an environmental claim, that the dog bed was "New Zealand's Most Sustainable Dog Bed". The Board said being "sustainable" is an environmental claim and being the "most sustainable" is an absolute claim. The Appeal Board referred to the ASA [Guidance Note on Environmental Claims in Advertising](#).

The Appeal Board noted the following excerpt from this Guidance Note:

Absolute claims are generally understood to cover the entire life cycle of a product—from production to disposal. For example, phrases like "environmentally friendly" imply responsibility at every stage.

Advertisers should only use these broad claims if they can substantiate them across the full life cycle. If evidence cannot be provided, the limitations of the claim must be clear. More specific claims may be acceptable, such as a claim about the recyclability of packaging, provided the ad specifies what

the claim relates to. Advertisements must not mislead consumers about the overall environmental impact.

Was the advertisement misleading? Have any environmental claims been substantiated?

The Appeal Board said the advertisement was not misleading. This is because the claim, that the dog bed was “New Zealand’s Most Sustainable Dog Bed”, had been adequately substantiated, following new evidence provided by the Advertiser, as part of their appeal application.

The Appeal Board noted this evidence included a table comparing the “sustainability attributes” of the Wool.Life dog bed with 14 other dog bed products. According to the table the Wool.Life dog bed outperformed all the other products overall in four categories: NZ Manufactured, Recycled Content, Supports Local Manufacturing Jobs, and NZ Recycling Scheme (turning used dog beds into new dog beds). The Appeal Board said the category where the Wool.Life dog bed most clearly outperformed all the others was NZ Recycling Scheme, with the filling, dust cover, outer cover and embroidery all being recycled.

The Appeal Board noted another table provided by the Advertiser headed “Wool.Life Integrated Environmental Compliance Table” showed that the Wool.Life dog bed complies with all the criteria listed under the “NZ MfE Product Stewardship – Voluntary Scheme Guidelines”, the “Commerce Commission Environmental Claims Guidelines (2020)” and the “UK CMA Green Claims Code (2021)”.

The Appeal Board said when Advertisers make comparative claims with similar products it is important for them to provide sufficient context for consumers, to help describe what the claims are based on. In addition to this, it is advisable for Advertisers to include the time frame of any comparative studies made, and to ensure that comparative information is kept up to date.

The Appeal Board said all Advertisers, including small business owners, need to take extra care when making absolute claims. The onus is on the Advertiser to have the relevant evidence prior to making any such claims.

Is the advertisement comparative advertising?

The Appeal Board said the advertisement was comparative advertising as the Wool.Life dog bed was being compared to all other dog beds available on the New Zealand market.

Was the comparative advertisement factual and accurate, and did it make clear the nature of the comparison?

The Appeal Board said the comparative advertisement was factual and accurate and did make clear the nature of the comparison.

Outcome

The Appeal Board ruled that the advertisement was not misleading and the environmental claims had been adequately substantiated.

The Appeal Board agreed unanimously that the Appeal was Allowed, and the complaint was Not Upheld.

Decision: Complaint **Not Upheld**, Appeal **Allowed**

APPENDICES

- 1. Description of Advertisement**
- 2. Summary of the Complaint**
- 3. Summary of Complaints Board Upheld Decision**
- 4. Summary of Precedents in Complaints Board Decision**
- 5. Appeal Application from Advertiser**
- 6. Response from Complainant to Appeal Submission**
- 7. Response from Advertiser to Complainant Response**
- 8. Further Response from Complainant to Advertiser Comments**
- 9. Response from Advertiser to Further Response from Complainant**

Appendix 1

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

The sponsored Wool.Life NZ Facebook advertisement promoted its Wool'Life dog beds. It included the text "New Zealand's Most Sustainable Dog Bed... Recycled, Recyclable, and Built to Last".

Appendix 2

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

The Complainant said it was misleading to describe the dog bed as "New Zealand's Most Sustainable Dog Bed".

Appendix 3

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS BOARD DECISION

The Complaints Board upheld a complaint about a Facebook advertisement for Wool.Life dog beds. The Board said the advertisement made unsubstantiated environmental claims and was misleading. A copy of the full decision can be found on the ASA website.

Appendix 4

Summary of Precedents in Complaints Board Decision

Decision 24/036 concerned a billboard advertisement for Gun City, which was situated on the back of a vehicle. The advertisement was headed "Gun City" with an arrow image and the wording "250 metres. This way to world's largest gun shop!".

The Complainant was concerned the claim in the advertisement was misleading because this statement was unlikely to be true.

The Complaints Board said the advertisement was misleading because it made an absolute claim which had not been adequately substantiated.

Decision 22/099 concerned an Accuro Health Insurance television advertisement which ended with the Accuro name on screen and the tagline, "New Zealand's best little health insurer".

The Complainant was concerned the advertisement was misleading to claim Accuro Health Insurance is the best and cheapest little insurance company without substantiation.

The Complaints Board did not uphold the complaint. The Board said the Advertiser had substantiated the comparative claim it was "New Zealand's best little health insurer." The Board agreed the advertisement did not make any claim about being the cheapest insurer.

Decision 10/135 concerned a newspaper advertisement for Ablaze firewood which contained the following text: "Firewood - the cheapest, healthiest and most sustainable heat".

The Complainant was concerned the advertisement was misleading because woodsmoke is toxic pollution and heat pumps are very efficient and very sustainable. The Complainant said most of our electricity is from windfarms or hydro schemes, the diesel used in transporting the wood, and the petrol used in the chainsaws cutting the wood are not sustainable.

The Complaints Board said the advertisement was likely to mislead consumers, where it referred to firewood as being the "cheapest, healthiest and most sustainable heat".

Decision 16/178 Appeal 16/014 concerned the appeal of a Complaints Board decision regarding a Ssangyong Korando SUV television advertisement.

The Appeal Board considered all the matters afresh and was of the view the advertisement was likely to mislead the consumer and had not been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers. The Appeal Board said the advertiser had not substantiated the claim that the car was "New Zealand's best value mid-size SUV".

The Appeal Board noted that "best" is a superlative term used for comparing one thing favourably with every other member of their group. The term "best" is always used in relation to more than one alternative.

The Appeal Board agreed that in order to support the unqualified claim that the Ssanyong Korando SUV is "New Zealand's best value mid-size SUV", the Advertiser would need to provide specific evidence. This evidence could include information about all the other mid-size SUVs available in New Zealand, and how the Ssangyong Korando was relatively better value overall.

As the advertisement did not contain this information the onus was on the Advertiser to provide this evidence, in response to the complaint. The Appeal Board agreed this evidence was not provided.

Appendix 5

APPEAL APPLICATION FROM ADVERTISER, WOOL.LIFE

APPEAL OF DECISION IN RESPECT OF COMPLAINT 25/162 – Wool.Life (WUUL PRODUCTS NZ LIMITED)

1. This is an appeal of the decision of the Complaints Board in respect of Complaint 25/162, issued by the Complaints Board on 16 October 2025.

2. The grounds of the appeal in summary are that:

- (a) the ASA's proper procedures have not been followed;
- (b) there is new evidence of sufficient substance to affect the decision;
- (c) evidence provided to the Complaints Board has been misinterpreted to the extent that it has affected the decision;
- (d) the decision is against the weight of the evidence; and
- (e) it is in the interests of natural justice for the matter to be reheard.

3. The detailed grounds for the appeal are as follows:

3.1 **The ASA's Proper Complaint Procedures Were Not Followed:** This is because:

- (a) the complaint itself ought not to have been initially accepted by the ASA because:

- (i) the complaint contained untruths (the complaint itself said that the advert is a “straight lie” (which is a deliberate telling of something untruthful for a particular motive), the complainant stated that Wool.Life had agreed to discontinue the advertisement (Wool.Life had never done this, but rather had asked the complainant for further particulars in an effort to engage and better understand the substance of their complaint, but this attempt at dialogue with the complainant was not reciprocated and accordingly failed)). (“I contacted the owner who only responded once. They were going to adjust ad. But still haven’t over 1 month on and am seeing even more of them and different ones.”) The copy of correspondence with the complainant is now being enclosed (Attachment 1);
- (ii) (ii) the complaint had no evidence to support it; and
- (iii) (iii) the complaint was stated to rely on a “quick Google search” which simply does not make sense (ie as opposed to having no reliable evidence, it stated explicitly that it relied on evidence which is universally acknowledged as being unreliable); and

(b) an important part of the complaint, which is explicitly referenced in the decision at first instance, was not provided to Wool.Life and in consequence Wool.Life did not have the chance to respond to it. This is in contravention of the ASA’s own procedural rules¹; and

(c) the Complaints Board failed to consider the ease and cost of the substantiation measures on the relevant advertiser (or at least this did not feature in the decision).

3.2 There is New Evidence of Sufficient Substance to Affect the Decision: We have researched other relevant material in other, perhaps more, mature corporate or regulatory jurisdictions and attached an Integrated Environmental Compliance Table (Attachment 2). We have also prepared an updated tabular competitive analysis of Wool.Life’s dog beds, and its competitors’ respective sustainability attributes (that are publicly available) (Attachment 3). This is because the ASA has relied in the decision at first

¹ *The ASA’s Complaints Process on the website says that the “... ASA requests a response from advertiser...”. The advertiser in this instance was not provided with an important part of the complaint (the complainant saying that they had been in contact with the advertiser, and received certain assurances from them which were subsequently not adhered to).*

instance on its conclusion that WoolLife did not meet ASA's "threshold" (with no elaboration about how to meet the threshold in a compliant way).

In the decision, the Complaints Board said that it "... agreed the Advertiser has provided evidence that their dog beds are very sustainable. The evidence provided didn't reach the threshold to fully substantiate the absolute claim made in the advertisement, that their dog beds were the most sustainable compared to all other dog beds available on the New Zealand Market". From this we conclude that:

- (a) the only additional evidence needed to supplement the evidence already previously provided to the ASA about our products (which the ASA admits has been substantiated as being "very sustainable") is that our competitors do not produce a more sustainable product than we do. If this is the case, then the enclosed comparative analysis will demonstrate that this is the case. We are taking this initiative only because we consider that the Complaints Board did not attribute sufficient weight to the statutory declaration previously provided and that our hope is that by making our commercially sensitive analysis available this will achieve that objective;
- (b) the evidence in the attachment will be sufficient for the Appeal Board's purposes because it is the same, in nature and degree of particularity, as the evidence that the Complaints Board accepted (explicitly on two occasions in their decision) as substantiating the fact that our dog beds are "very sustainable".

3.3 The Evidence Provided to the ASA was Misinterpreted to the extent that it Affected the decision: We make this assertion because:

- (a) there was minimal mention of the solicitor's statutory declaration provided earlier in the advertiser's response;
- (b) the ASA in its decision rehearses the MBIE guidance about "sustainable businesses" which on any interpretation is irrelevant to the current complaint and the way it must be considered by the ASA;
- (c) some of the decisions rehearsed in Appendix 3 are plainly irrelevant. The Complaints Board does not state in its decision how the cases are relevant or have been relied on to support any of their conclusions. And we have struggled to access some of the decisions referred to on the ASA's decision database, which makes distinguishing them nearly impossible. For example, it would have been helpful to see the reasoning in the Accuro Health Insurance decision to see that was considered by the ASA to be satisfactory substantiation (and

illuminate us on what the ASA's "threshold" actually is). That decision is not available on the website currently; and

(d) all of the decisions pre-date the date of introduction of the ASA's Guidance Note on Environmental Claims in Advertising. This makes it even more important for public policy reasons and for reasons of natural justice that the ASA seeks to publicly put flesh on the bones of its "threshold" which it so far seems reluctant to do. In the absence of such elaboration, we consider that the evidence produced to the ASA throughout the complaint process ought to be sufficient to enable the Complaints Board to reach the conclusion that the complaint ought not to be upheld.

3.4 The Decision is Against the Weight of the Evidence: We have previously made the point that the Complaints Board in our view had no evidence demonstrating a breach of any Code by WoolLife, against the evidence submitted by WoolLife incorporating the statutory declaration from our solicitors, supporting the proposition that our advertisement had been properly substantiated; and

3.5 It is in the Interests of Natural Justice that this Matter be Reheard: This is principally by reason of the procedural failures on the ASA's part traversed in paragraph 3.1 above.

4. WoolLife accordingly seeks the Appeal Board to overturn the decision at first instance and to confirm (including by informing the complainant) that no further action will be taken by the ASA.

Appendix 6

RESPONSE FROM COMPLAINANT TO APPEAL SUBMISSION

First email

The advertising is simply misleading and not true. There is 2 other company's that do the exact same thing i found with a quick Google search although they do not advertise it like these guys do. At the end of the day they made a bold statement that they are nz most sustainable dog bed. And I feel like I was misled with their consistently advertisements of this. Which is not backed up by any evidence. Making such environmental claims needs to be fact for when I was in the market for a dog bed and I just feel I got misled as I've found better alternatives. The fact they are even appealing this decision is bewildering to me.

Second email

There dog beds / covers are made from plastic. How do they suggest that is more sustainable than natural products?

Appendix 7

Response from Advertiser to Complainant Response

RESPONSE TO COMPLAINANT COMMENTS – COMPLAINT 25/162 – WoolLife (WUUL PRODUCTS NZ LIMITED)

1. The complainant states that there are “two other companies that do the exact same thing,” but fails to name them or provide any substantiation. It should be noted I specifically asked the complainant several months ago to provide this information, and no names or supporting material were provided then or again now. Given the seriousness of the allegation and the significance it holds for this matter, I again invite the complainant to disclose the names of these companies and explain the basis of comparison. We have conducted extensive structured research into the New Zealand dog bed market, including desktop audits, supplier engagement, and legal review and have not identified any other company offering a recycling scheme and remanufacturing programme for their dog beds in New Zealand. If such businesses do exist, we are open to reviewing their practices. However, in the absence of disclosure, the claim appears to be based solely on personal perception rather than any verifiable fact.
2. The complainant refers to a “quick Google search” and expresses a personal feeling of being misled. While consumer perception is important, advertising complaints must be assessed on objective grounds and supported by evidence. In contrast to the complainant’s unsubstantiated remarks, our original claim has been extensively supported.
3. The complainant questions the sustainability of our product based on the presence of plastic components. It is true, and transparently stated by us from the outset, that the product uses a poly-cotton outer cover and a standard zip, while the internal dust cover is made from 100% cotton. The choices made are for durability, washability, and product lifespan. However, the product’s core fill is made from over 80% recycled NZ wool-rich textiles, previously destined for landfill, and the entire product is designed for return, disassembly, and remanufacture. This is the definition of circular product design.
4. Sustainability is not solely about using natural materials, it also includes the social and economic impacts of production. True sustainability considers whole-of-life environmental performance, including responsible sourcing, product longevity, recyclability, and local production. Even a fully natural fibre product that ends up in

landfill or is composted cannot be reused and may carry a larger environmental footprint than a recycled product designed for circularity. By incorporating limited virgin materials alongside recycled wool-rich textiles, the product enables the majority of material, previously destined for landfill, to be recovered, retained in use, and remanufactured multiple times, extending its life and reducing overall waste. This distinction is central to modern sustainability frameworks, including Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), which evaluate environmental impact across sourcing, use, and end-of-life, not just material type.

5. The complainant asserts that our appeal is “bewildering.” On the contrary, what this reveals is their fundamental misunderstanding of what sustainability entails. Modern sustainability practice, including frameworks such as life cycle assessment (LCA) and circular economy principles recognises that the most environmentally beneficial products are those that reduce waste, use recycled inputs, and are designed for recovery and reuse. Wool.Life’s product aligns directly with these principles. The complainant thus far has only provided a subjective opinion that fails to reflect how sustainability is defined or measured in policy or practice. Our initial response and appeal were based on transparency, evidence, and a commitment to fair process, and it remains our view that dismissing circular innovation based on untested, unproven assertions would send the wrong signal to every SME in New Zealand trying to do sustainability right. Whilst I assume the complainant will receive this response, on the off chance that is not the case I am comfortable for this response to be provided directly to them. Finally, I again ask that the complainant provide the names of the “two other companies that do the exact same thing,” specifically companies that offer a recycling scheme and remanufacturing programme for their dog beds in New Zealand.

Appendix 8

Further Response from Complainant to Advertiser Comments

REBUTTAL – Complaint 25/162 – Wool.Life Sustainability Claims

Submitted to the Advertising Standards Authority

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Wool.Life's comments dated 28 November 2025.

This rebuttal addresses each of the key assertions made by Wool.Life and explains why their advertising claims remain misleading, unsubstantiated, and in breach of the ASA Code—particularly regarding the superlative claim **“New Zealand’s Most Sustainable Dog Bed...”**.

1. Identification of Other Sustainable Wool Dog Bed Companies

Wool.Life asserts that no other companies have been named. For clarity and formal record, the following New Zealand companies produce wool-based dog beds with established sustainability credentials:

- **Life of Riley** – NZ-made, NZ wool-filled dog beds, durable construction, natural materials, carbon-neutral shipping, NZ supply chain.
- **VIP Pet Beds** – NZ wool-filled dog beds, recyclable components, natural fibre focus.
- **BagEm NZ** – Wool-filled dog beds using recycled materials.

These examples demonstrate unequivocally that Wool.Life is not the sole provider of sustainable NZ-made wool dog beds and therefore cannot use superlative claims without detailed comparative proof.

The ASA requires substantiation, not “desktop audits” performed internally by the advertiser. Independent verification is required to support a superlative.

2. Lack of Evidence Supporting the Claim “New Zealand’s Most Sustainable Dog Bed...”

Wool.Life’s advertising collapses this complex picture into a single unverified narrative: that its recycling programme inherently makes it **“New Zealand’s Most Sustainable Dog Bed...”**.

This is not an objective or evidence-based conclusion.

Without independent LCA evidence, the claim amounts to unsubstantiated environmental superiority, which the ASA Code explicitly prohibits.

3. Presence of Non-Circular, Non-Biodegradable Components

Wool.Life acknowledges the use of:

- poly-cotton covers
- polyester-bound recycled wool fill
- synthetic zips

These introduce non-circular, non-biodegradable materials into the product. By definition, a product containing virgin synthetic materials is not fully circular unless Wool.Life can demonstrate:

- full disassembly,
- full recovery of all components, and
- a proven remanufacturing loop at scale (not in principle, but in actual measurable return rates).

In contrast, Other companies already produce beds with

- 100% wool fill,
- natural covers,
- longer product lifespan
- carbon-neutral logistics.

These characteristics materially influence sustainability and must be factored into any comparative claim.

4. Circularity Claims Are Theoretical Without Return-Rate Data

Wool.Life promotes its recycling and remanufacturing scheme as the grounding for sustainability superiority. Circularity is commendable—but only when it is measurable.

Wool.Life has provided:

- No return-rate statistics
- No remanufacturing volume data
- No transparency on how many products have actually completed the circular loop

Circular design claims do not equate to circular outcomes.

Competitors who produce biodegradable, natural-fibre beds with no synthetic bindings or polymer additions may, in practice, have lower total environmental impact, even without a return scheme.

A circular model cannot form the basis of a superlative claim unless the advertiser can demonstrate that it operates at scale and provides a measurable, lower environmental footprint compared with alternatives.

5. Mischaracterisation of Sustainability Principles

Wool.Life suggests the complainant “misunderstands sustainability.” That assertion is misplaced.

Sustainability in ASA advertising context requires:

- clear, substantiated, non-exaggerated claims
- comparative data when superlatives are used
- avoidance of misleading impressions about environmental benefits

Sustainability is multi-dimensional. It includes:

- material composition
- durability
- carbon footprint
- supply chain impacts

- emissions
- biodegradability
- end-of-life outcomes
- consumer uptake of return schemes

Wool.Life's advertising collapses this complex picture into a single unverified narrative: that its recycling programme inherently makes it "**New Zealand's Most Sustainable Dog Bed...**".

This is not an objective or evidence-based conclusion.

Without independent LCA evidence, the claim amounts to unsubstantiated environmental superiority, which the ASA Code explicitly prohibits.

Conclusion

While Wool.Life is entitled to promote its circularity initiative and recycled wool content, it cannot elevate these features into a superlative sustainability claim without independent, comparative evidence, especially when:

- other NZ companies offer sustainable wool dog beds
- some use fewer synthetic materials
- some offer longer durability
- some provide carbon-neutral operations

None of this has been measured, benchmarked, or compared.

The claim "**New Zealand's Most Sustainable Dog Bed...**" is therefore:

- misleading
- unsubstantiated
- not supported by independent evidence
- in breach of the ASA Environmental Claims Code

I respectfully request that the ASA uphold the complaint.

Appendix 9

Response from Advertiser to Further Response from Complainant

RESPONSE TO COMPLAINANT COMMENTS – COMPLAINT 25/162 – Wool.Life (WUUL PRODUCTS NZ LIMITED)

Dear ASA Complaints Appeal Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the complainant's most recent submission. We address the key points raised below and reaffirm our position that the original decision should be overturned due to the proper procedures not being followed, that there is new evidence of sufficient substance to affect the decision and it was in the interests of natural justice that the matter be reheard.

1. Reference to “Two Other Companies”

The complainant now names three businesses all who feature in our market analysis. The complainant provides no evidence that any of them operate a recycling scheme or a product remanufacturing programme for dog beds. As far as we can determine and based on a comprehensive market analysis conducted by us and disclosed in our appeal no businesses offer a circular, closed-loop system comparable to ours. Our claim of “New Zealand’s Most Sustainable Dog Bed” is based on verifiable differentiators, the use of locally sourced recycled textile fill, an active product takeback scheme, and remanufacturing into new beds, a process no other brand in New Zealand has publicly implemented or communicated.

2. Mischaracterisation of Evidence Requirements

The complainant suggests that our claim lacks “independent evidence.” This is incorrect. We submitted:

- o A legal statutory declaration confirming:
 1. Our comparative review
 2. Confirmation from manufacturing partners
 3. Programme documentation demonstrating our recycling and return system.
 4. An independent expert statement reviewing our sustainability model reviewed as part of the statutory declaration.
- o A documented comparative analysis of publicly available product and company claims.

We note the complainant has submitted no evidence beyond subjective views and a post hoc list of competitors with no substantiated circularity credentials.

3. Virgin and Synthetic Material Use

The complainant asserts that use of virgin or synthetic materials disqualifies our product from being “most sustainable.” This misrepresents how modern sustainability and circularity are defined, including in MfE guidance and LCA frameworks. We are fully transparent that our cover includes poly-cotton, chosen for durability, washability and recyclability while over 80% of the fill is made from recycled wool-rich textiles previously destined for landfill. The entire product is designed for return, disassembly, and reuse enabling us to extend material life across multiple production cycles, which is the essence of a circular model.

4. Return Rates and Circular Infrastructure

Our circular system is in place and operational. While return volume will naturally scale over time as products reach end-of-life, the existence and functionality of the programme is what underpins the claim. There is no ASA precedent, nor industry standard requiring small businesses to wait for full return cycles before describing a system that is built, disclosed, and offered to customers.

5. Sustainability Misunderstood

The complainant equates sustainability narrowly with natural fibres, while overlooking the whole-of-life environmental benefits of circular systems, waste diversion, the environmental impact of the production of natural fibres, local manufacture, and material recovery. Our sustainability credentials reflect the principles of life cycle thinking and no part of the complainant’s submission references or reflects these principles.

Conclusion

We submit that the complainant has, in fact, reinforced our claim of having “New Zealand’s Most Sustainable Dog Bed.” The three businesses they reference are already included in our original competitive analysis, and no new information has been introduced beyond what we have already assessed. To be clear, we have never claimed that other sustainable dog beds do not exist, in fact, we celebrate the efforts of other responsible suppliers. What distinguishes Wool.Life is that we have gone a step further than anyone else. We have designed a product that resolves a waste issue for a NZ clothing manufacturer and with the products entire life cycle in mind, including end-of-life recovery and the ability to remanufacture a dog bed into another dog bed.

We also question the complainant’s now repeated insistence that only a formal Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) would suffice as evidence. It is highly unusual, and concerning, for a member of the public to assert such a technical standard as the

baseline for substantiating a sustainability claim. This expectation was not introduced in the original complaint but only emerged once our claim was substantiated with legal, expert, and comparative documentation. This evolution, as our resolve and commitment to our claim are demonstrated, is a shifting of the goalposts, which strongly suggests the complainant is not a typical consumer, but more likely a competitor or a party acting on behalf of one.

Accepting the view that an LCA is the only acceptable form of substantiation would set a dangerous precedent, one that assumes small, honest, and transparent businesses must undertake costly and complex studies simply to communicate their verified circular practices. This is inconsistent with the ASA's own guidance on proportional substantiation.

We respectfully request that the appeal be upheld, the original complaint dismissed, and the integrity of responsible sustainability claims, especially those from SMEs demonstrating genuine circular innovation, be supported.