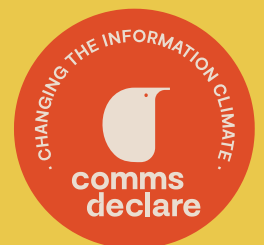
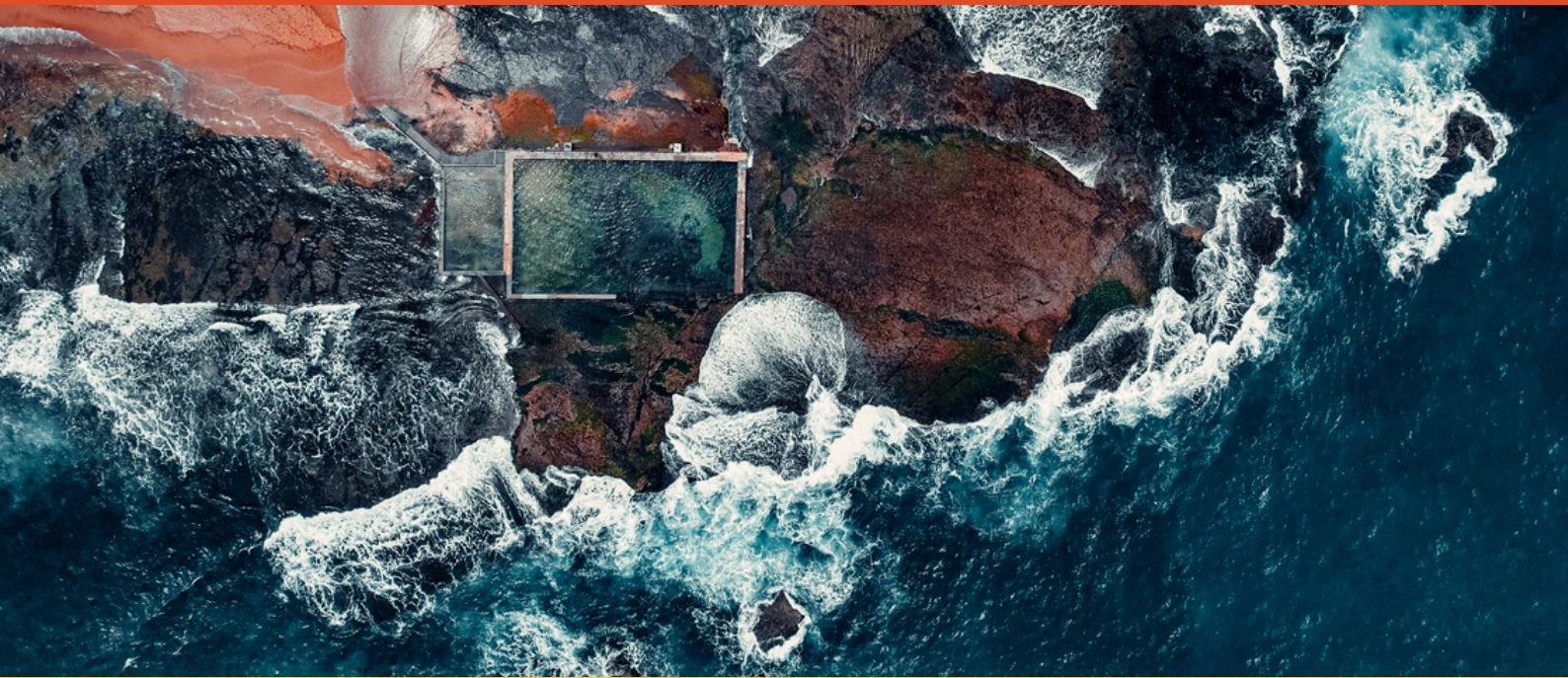


TRUSTED VOICES, CLEAN ADS:

A GUIDE TO FOSSIL-FREE PODCASTING



AUDIENCE TRUST IS YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET

Podcasting is built on something rare in modern media: genuine trust. Listeners choose to spend hours with your voice. Over time, that creates a real relationship, one where people come to value your perspective and trust what you have to say.

That trust is your greatest asset. It is also what makes podcast advertising uniquely powerful... but, as all podcasters know, this comes with responsibility.

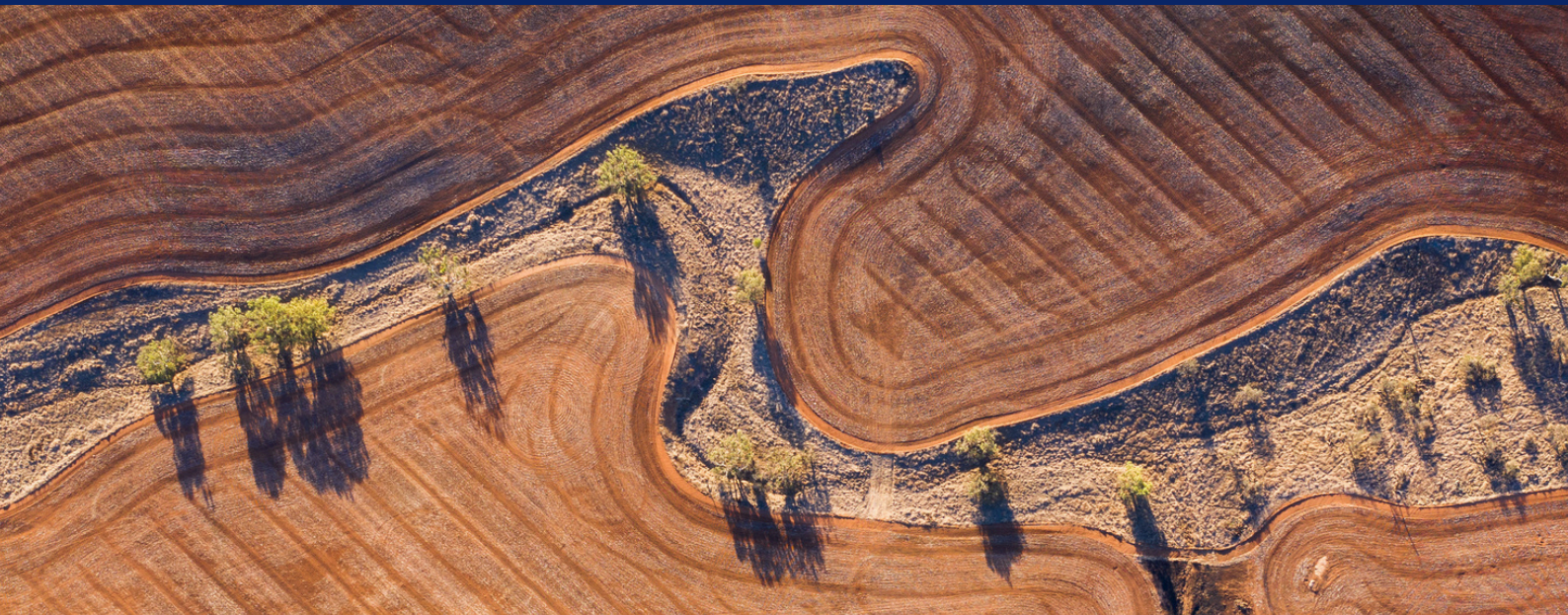
Podcast audiences often experience ads as implicit endorsements. When advertising aligns with your values, it can strengthen your relationship with listeners. But when it conflicts with the values of your community, the consequences can include reputational damage and a loss of trust that is difficult, sometimes impossible, to rebuild.

WHY FOSSIL FUEL ADVERTISING IS A PROBLEM FOR YOUR REPUTATION

Fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas are the primary driver of climate change, producing most of the pollution that is heating the planet and intensifying floods, fires and extreme weather.

Fossil fuel companies and their industry groups are increasingly using podcast advertising to build public goodwill and maintain support for continued fossil fuel use. These campaigns rarely promote fuels directly.

Instead, they present companies as responsible, community-minded, or part of the climate solution. When this messaging appears inside trusted podcast environments, it borrows the credibility of the host and can influence audiences in subtle but powerful ways.



CASE STUDY: PODCASTS AS POLITICAL PAWNS

In 2025, coal industry lobby group the Minerals Council of Australia, ran campaigns across major lifestyle podcasts such as Mamamia and Life Uncut. The ads portrayed coal mining as community-focused and environmentally responsible while omitting its central role in climate change. Because they appeared within trusted entertainment content, many listeners would not recognise them as industry lobbying or an attempt to persuade women to be more favourable towards coal mining.

Over 2025, petroleum, mining, electricity and gas suppliers spent nearly \$7000,000 on podcast advertising.*

The resources sector spent 82% of its budget in April and May - coinciding with the May Federal election - signalling its use as a political tool.

*Source: Standard Media Index



PROGRAMMATIC ADS

As podcasting has grown across Australia and around the world, so has automated programmatic advertising. Around 30% of podcast ads are inserted into episodes without direct creator involvement, targeted to specific audiences or moments. Many podcasters do not know which advertisers appear on their show.

Most major podcast hosting and monetisation platforms provide creators with a degree of control over programmatic advertising. This is typically achieved through category-based exclusion lists, individual domain exclusions or keyword exclusions.

For example, the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) taxonomy used by most of the larger platforms currently includes the higher carbon categories of "Oil, Gas and Consumable fuels", "Forestry and Logging", "Refrigerated Meats", "Dairy", "Gas Vehicles", "Diesel Vehicles", "Hybrid Vehicles", "Transportation", "Air Travel", "Cruises" and "Mining and Quarrying".

But there's potential problems, namely:

1. If your ad sales platform does not have the capability to granularly select what to block
2. The categories are too broad (eg "Transportation") meaning you may block advertisers you don't object to (eg Bicycles).
3. Your platform does not recognise fossil fuels, coal or other high emissions products as blockable categories.

THE GOOD NEWS

Momentum to restrict fossil fuel advertising is growing worldwide. Governments, cities, media organisations, sports groups, cultural institutions and even the entire country of France have curbed high emissions advertising in recognition of health and climate harms.

Major publications and platforms such as the Guardian and British Medical Journal have also stopped accepting fossil fuel advertising.

The good news is that there is a clear path for you to lead in your industry and enhance the trust of your audience.

HOW TO DEFINE A FOSSIL FUEL COMPANY

A company whose primary business is the extraction, processing, transportation, or sale of oil, gas, or coal.

1. Utilities and companies that meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Generate 50% or more of their electricity from fossil fuels
 - Generate 50% or more of their revenue from business in fossil fuels
 - Play an active role in new fossil fuel infrastructure
2. Trade associations or other industry-funded nonprofit groups representing the interests of these companies, utilities, or cooperatives.
3. Any new entity meant to advance the message or goals of the above companies or groups, while obscuring or hiding their financial contributions.



05

STEPS TO CLIMATE-RESPONSIBLE REVENUE

01. REFUSE FOSSIL FUEL ADS OR SPONSORSHIPS

Your voice carries trust wherever it appears, and withholding it prevents your credibility from being used to promote climate-harming industries.

02. REVIEW YOUR PLATFORM SETTINGS

Locate your ad exclusion tools and block all relevant categories related to fossil fuels and high-emissions industries wherever possible. You may wish to include fossil-fuelled vehicles, airlines and cruises.

03. MAKE A FORMAL EXCLUSION REQUEST

If your platform does not allow you to block the specific products or companies you want, contact them and ask for assistance. However, you may be told the exclusion categories don't allow you to accurately block fossil fuel companies, in which case....

04. ASK FOR A FOSSIL FUEL CATEGORY

A specific "fossil fuel" exclusion category to manage these ads more effectively, without having to block whole industries.

05. MAKE IT PUBLIC

Add your brand to the [Comms Declare Clean Directory](#), to improve your visibility with values-aligned agencies, sponsors and audiences.



comms declare

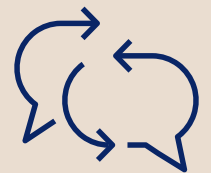
CHANGING THE INFORMATION CLIMATE

Comms Declare promotes sustainable communication, and is dedicated to shifting the narrative around climate action. We exist to reduce the social licence of climate polluters and champion those that integrate sustainability into their communications practice.

At our core is our unwavering belief in the power of communications to create cultural change and shape a safer, healthier future for each of us and our planet.

We represent dozens of communications agencies and hundreds more professionals across the influence industries in Oceania.

Comms Declare is a registered charity and member of CANA.



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