


Malcolm Roberts <malcolmr@conscious.com.au> 
To: Roberts1 Malcolm
Fwd: News ABC Reference Number C31601-13

1 October 2013 12:35 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: Bob Brock [email address redacted]
Sent: Thursday, 6 June 2013 5:17 PM
To: 'News Caff'
Cc: mediawatch@your.abc.net.au
Subject: RE: News ABC Reference Number C31601-13

ABC News
Attention: Mr Adam Doyle

Copy: Sally Virgoe - Mediawatch

Dear Adam Doyle

Re: News ABC Reference Number C31601-13

Thank you for your email of 27 May 2013 regarding my concern that you have misrepresented the visible emissions from chimney stacks as carbon emissions. It is gratifying that you acknowledge that the use of close ups of "steam rising from the towers as if to indicate that they are the source of the emissions is misleading". Several issues arise from this:

1. The white clouds you see issuing from cooling towers and sometimes from chimney stacks are almost certainly water vapour. They are not steam which is invisible and they are not carbon or carbon dioxide.
2. You seem to continue to mix up carbon with carbon dioxide. Carbon is a sooty powdery substance that will soil anything on which it settles. Carbon dioxide is a colourless odourless tasteless non-toxic gas - quite different from carbon. As I have mentioned previously, there is almost no free carbon emitted from the chimney stacks of coal fired power stations in Australia or from any other commercial chimneys unless there has been some equipment or operational failure.
3. As there are virtually no emissions of carbon from chimney stacks or cooling towers in Australia, you should not refer to 'carbon' which has pejorative connotations when discussing emissions unless there is some specific instance where you know that free carbon is being emitted. By all means refer to carbon dioxide.
4. When discussing emissions from power stations you should use reasonable efforts to avoid using any images of emissions from chimney stacks or cooling towers, since such shots, as you acknowledge, are misleading.
5. When showing images of emissions from chimney stacks or cooling towers in the context of a news item on carbon or carbon dioxide you should clearly qualify the images by saying that "the emissions depicted are not carbon or carbon dioxide".
6. Now that your attention has been clearly drawn to this matter, I would put it to you that to continue to use images of water vapour issuing from chimney stacks or cooling towers when discussing carbon or carbon dioxide emissions, whether such images are close-up or wide, could be seen to be as deliberately misleading as it would be to show images of the Prime Minister, even from afar, when presenting an item on say prostitution.
7. Finally, should you agree to follow the suggestions I have made, I and my colleagues would consider it unnecessary to issue an actual on-air apology for your previous misrepresentations.

Yours faithfully
Robert J Brock

X XXXXXXXX Xx Address redacted
XXXXXX XXXX XXX XXXX
XX XXXXXXXX Phone number redacted

-----Original Message-----

From: News Caff [<mailto:Caff.News@abc.net.au>]
Sent: Monday, 27 May 2013 10:51 AM
To: 'Bob Brock'
Subject: RE: News ABC Reference Number C31601-13

Dear Mr Brock

I do understand the point you are making, and we generally try to ensure that we do not show close-ups of cooling towers on their own when we are discussing carbon emissions. **The use of close-ups or a particular focus on the steam rising from the towers as if to indicate that they are the source of the emissions is misleading. I agree.**

However, it is a different matter if we simply use a wide shot of a power station when we are talking about the emissions coming from that power station. The wide shot will almost inevitably show the cooling towers, as they are part of the station. There is little we can do about that, and of course it is not misleading to suggest that the power station is the source of the emissions.

Yours sincerely

Adam Doyle
ABC News

-----Original Message-----

From: Bob Brock [email address redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 25 May 2013 1:56 PM
To: News Caff
Cc: Media Watch
Subject: RE: News ABC Reference Number C31601-13

ABC News
Attention: Mr Adam Doyle

Copy: Sally Virgoe - MW...Mediawatch

Re: - Reference Number C31601-13

Dear Adam Doyle

Thank you for answering my letter of concern about your depiction of emissions from chimney stacks in your segment on ABC 7pm News of 8/05/2013 about carbon emissions. I consider that you have not addressed the issue that you falsely represented visible emissions of mainly water vapour from chimney stacks as carbon.

As the news item concerned carbon, it could reasonably be construed that by showing material issuing from chimneys you were intending to show that it was carbon and you say in your response that "all images used were from plants with significant carbon emissions". This is of course in itself incorrect. I am sure that you know that there is a significant difference between 'carbon' and 'carbon dioxide'. You don't refer to water vapour emissions as oxygen emissions or hydrogen emissions. Neither should you refer to carbon dioxide emissions as carbon emissions. I do not believe that the images showed the emission of carbon as there is almost no free carbon emitted from the chimney stacks of coal fired power stations in Australia or from any other commercial chimneys. To add to the misrepresentation, at least one of the images of water vapour was taken looking into the sun and showed a dark cloud that would have indicated to an unknowing audience that you were actually showing carbon being emitted.

In a news item on carbon emissions, why do you show pictures of chimney stacks that are not emitting carbon? What

were you trying to depict by showing the emission of water vapour if it was not to indicate the emission of carbon? Your comment that there was no direct reference to "carbon emissions like these" is a clumsy unconvincing attempt to avoid the point that the whole news item was about carbon emissions yet you showed pictures of emissions that were not carbon emissions. You gave no qualifying comment that they were not actually carbon emissions even though to the technically uneducated public the images would appear to be carbon since that was the thrust of the news item.

You dig the hole even deeper for yourself in the last paragraph of your response when you say you "believe it is accurate to use vision from...plants issuing water vapour and other by-products of burning fossil fuels...and where the vision is not accompanied by misleading reference to what is being shown". You are in effect saying that in the news item on carbon emissions you didn't actually need to say that the images shown didn't represent carbon emissions. What were they, just pretty pictures to pad out the article? Come on. We are not stupid. Even if you think you have done no wrong by showing misleading images, but didn't need to say they were misleading, you were clearly guilty of false reporting.

As I said previously, you should promptly apologise for your misrepresentation and ensure that you don't commit the same mistake in future. This is even more important now with an imminent election where you will be closely scrutinised for apparent bias in your news and opinion pieces.

Yours faithfully
Robert J Brock

X XXXXXXXX Xx Address redacted
XXXXXX XXXX XXX XXXX
XX XXXXXXXXX Phone number redacted

-----Original Message-----

From: News Caff [<mailto:Caff.News@abc.net.au>]
Sent: Thursday, 23 May 2013 3:48 PM
To: 'e-mail address redacted'
Subject: News

Dear Mr Brock

Thank you for your email regarding ABC 7PM TV News of 8/5/2013.

The story included vision of various emission pipes, including those issuing water vapour.

All images used were from plants with significant carbon emissions (e.g. one was from Bluescope Steel.) As you have observed, carbon dioxide is itself colourless and odourless.

Where images of emission pipes were used, there was no direct reference or false labelling of them. For instance, we did not say "carbon emissions like these."

We believe it is accurate to use vision from major industrial plants issuing water vapour and other by-products of the burning of fossil fuels where those plants burn fossil fuels and where the vision is not accompanied by misleading references to what is being shown.

Thanks again for your feedback.

Yours sincerely

Adam Doyle
ABC News

-----Original Message-----

To: Audience & Consumer Affairs
From: Robert BROCK (bobbrock@internode.on.net)
Subject: News

Date: 08/05/13 20:05

ABC program: Seven pm TV News

Response required: true

Date of program: 8 May 2013

Contact type: Complaint

Location: QLD

Subject: News

Comments: The Director

ABC TV News Programs

Dear Sir or Madam

On your ABC Channel 2 TV News at around 7:06 pm in Brisbane on 8 May 2013 in an item concerning the carbon tax you showed four large chimneys emitting something. As the news item concerned carbon, it could be reasonably construed that you were intending to depict the emission of carbon in some form. As a professional engineer who was involved in the coal industry for many years I would suggest that there is almost no free carbon emitted from Australia's coal fired power stations and that carbon is only emitted to a material degree in the form of carbon dioxide which is a colourless gas. I would further suggest that the visible emissions you depicted were water vapour. Would you please advise whether you consider I am wrong and that these visible emissions were in fact carbon in some form and give the authority for your assertion. If you acknowledge that the visible emissions were not in fact carbon, why did you show these images of water vapour in a segment on carbon emissions and what were the images intended to represent?

Could you have been trying to imply to the public who are generally uninformed on technical matters that the emissions were carbon in some form?

If you acknowledge that the images were falsely shown will you be promptly putting to air an apology and a correction at the same time on the 7:00 pm news on Channel 2 News on a future night? If not, why not? I would further comment that if you do not apologise you will be reinforcing the mounting and well publicised view in the community that the ABC is frequently biased in its presentation of the facts on climate change.

Yours faithfully

Robert J Brock

X XXXXXXXX Xx Address redacted

XXXXXX XXXX XXX XXXX

XX XXXXXXXX Phone number redacted

Network - ABC Television

RecipientName - Audience & Consumer Affairs Referer - ABC TV

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