



# NSW Government Advertising Guidelines

(s 5 of the *Government Advertising Act 2011*)

## Introduction

These guidelines for New South Wales Government advertising (Guidelines) are published in accordance with section 5 of the *Government Advertising Act 2011* (the Act).

To ensure consistency in interpretation, the Guidelines adopt the meanings of words and phrases as defined in the Act. Provisions of the Act prevail to the extent of any inconsistency with the Guidelines.

The Guidelines set out the requirements for the style and content, dissemination of information and cost of Government advertising campaigns, as well as the requirements for cost benefit analyses and peer reviews of Government advertising campaigns.

In exceptional circumstances, the Minister administering the Act may approve deviation from strict compliance with the Guidelines, provided it is not inconsistent with the Act or other laws.

## 1. Government advertising campaigns

1.1 A “Government advertising campaign” is the dissemination to members of the public, of information about a government program, policy or initiative, or about any public health or safety or other matter, that:

- I. is funded by or on behalf of a Government agency, and
- II. is disseminated under a commercial advertising distribution agreement by means of radio, television, the Internet, newspapers, billboards, cinemas or other media.

Other media includes, but is not limited to, internet search marketing, mobile device marketing (text, audio and video), posters, mobile billboards and signage on buses, trains, boats, aircraft and taxis.

1.2 Government advertising campaigns may only be used to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Encouraging changed behaviours or attitudes that will lead to improved public health and safety or quality of life;

- ii. Maximising public and commercial compliance with laws and regulations;
- iii. Encouraging use of government products and services;
- iv. Encouraging public involvement in government decision-making;
- v. Raising awareness of a planned or impending initiative and reporting on performance in relation to NSW Government undertakings;
- vi. Assisting in the preservation of order in the event of a crisis or emergency; and
- vii. Recruiting staff, disseminating important statutory information and promoting business opportunities with the NSW Government.

## **2. Style and content**

2.1 The following principles apply to the style and content of Government advertising campaigns:

- i. Compliance with all laws (including the Act and State and Commonwealth privacy, media and electoral laws) throughout each stage of the development, production and dissemination of the campaign;
- ii. Accuracy in the presentation of all facts, statistics, comparisons and other arguments. All statements and claims of fact included in Government advertising campaigns must be able to be substantiated;
- iii. Objective presentation in a fair and accessible manner;
- iv. Political neutrality. Advertisements must be clearly distinguishable from party political messages;
- v. Sensitivity to cultural needs and issues when communicating with people from diverse ethnic or religious backgrounds;
- vi. Maintenance of the highest standards of decency and good taste in the portrayal of gender and sexuality; and
- vii. Awareness of the communication requirements for people with a disability.

2.2 Advertisements produced for and on behalf of the NSW Government should be clearly identifiable as originating from the NSW Government and include clear and consistent branding (by use of the NSW Government logo) and, where required, authorisation tags in accordance with the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) (Authorisation Tags).

## **3. Dissemination of information**

Government advertising campaigns must be disseminated by the most cost effective means taking into consideration the nature, size, location and requirements of the target audience.

## **4. Cost of Government advertising campaigns**

4.1 Government agencies are accountable for all aspects of the development and implementation of their Government advertising campaigns.

4.2 Government agencies are required to:

- i. demonstrate in each campaign proposal the specific need being addressed by the proposed advertising activity and explain the rationale for the chosen approach.;
- ii. allow reasonable and realistic timeframes to undertake advertising, with consideration of required approvals, media deadlines and cost efficiencies; and
- iii. ensure that the method or medium of advertising is not excessive or extravagant in relation to the objective being pursued.

4.3 Additional cost management requirements are contained in the Peer Review and Cost Benefit Analysis arrangements set out in sections 5 and 6 of these Guidelines.

## **5. Peer review**

5.1 Where a peer review of a Government advertising campaign is required under the Act, an independent peer review team will examine the campaign against the criteria of:

1. need;
2. strategy; and
3. management.

5.2 The examination of campaign need must consider whether:

- i. the need for the campaign is supported by sound data or research;
- ii. there is a strong link between the campaign and Government priorities and objectives;
- iii. there would be consequences if the campaign did not take place;
- iv. the objectives of the campaign are clearly set out and realistic; and
- v. timing is critical to the campaign's effectiveness.

5.3 The examination of campaign strategy must consider whether the tactical approach and creative and media strategies are likely to be effective for the campaign issue, objectives and target audience, including whether:

- i. the target audience is well defined and understood;
- ii. the culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous communities and their communication needs have been considered as part of the target audience;
- iii. the campaign goals are clearly defined to demonstrate cost efficiencies;
- iv. the creative and media strategies are likely to be cost effective and to achieve the campaign objectives;
- v. mainstream advertising is the most appropriate medium to achieve the campaign objectives or whether cost-effective non-advertising alternatives are available; and
- vi. the media strategy reflects the campaign objectives and aligns with the target audience.

- 5.4 The examination of campaign management must establish whether the campaign demonstrates a sound approach to budget management, procurement, evaluation, risk management and stakeholder consultation, including whether:
- i. the campaign objectives are measurable and a sound approach and specific timelines to evaluate the campaign have been planned;
  - ii. the size of the campaign budget is appropriate to achieve the campaign objectives;
  - iii. the timing of the campaign allows for cost-effective advertising media procurement;
  - iv. campaign production costs are reasonable; and
  - v. potential campaign risks have been identified and, if so, the strategies to manage the risks are in place.

## **6. Cost benefit analysis**

- 6.1 Where a cost benefit analysis of a Government advertising campaign is required under the Act, the analysis must:
- i. define the objective of the campaign;
  - ii. assess options to achieve the objective;
  - iii. identify and assess costs and benefits, including non-quantifiable aspects, of all reasonable options; and
  - iv. consider the best option to achieve the objective.
- 6.2 The cost benefit analysis must isolate the additional costs and benefits attributable to the advertising campaign itself compared to the base-case of not advertising.
- 6.3 The cost benefit analysis must specify the extent to which the expected benefits could be achieved without advertising.
- 6.4 The cost benefit analysis must outline what options other than advertising could be used to successfully implement the program and achieve the program benefits and a comparison of their costs.
- 6.5 If advertising is required, the cost benefit analysis should identify the likely effectiveness of the advertising campaign by quantifying the expected additional costs and benefits that the advertising campaign will generate.

**The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP  
Premier**

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