



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on the Integrity
Commission and Statutory Office
Holders

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Amendment Bill 2025

Submission number: 003

Submitter: ACT Greens

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Standing Committee on the Integrity Commission and Statutory Office Holders
ACT Legislative Assembly

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry into the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Amendment Bill 2025*.

This bill would amend the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009* with the intention of preventing the misuse of public funds for political purposes. It aims to tighten the current legislation so that the promotion of politicians' profiles is not disguised as unbiased public information, proposed programs are not advertised before approval, and more rigorous democratic safeguards apply during federal election periods. In doing so, the bill refines the criteria under which the independent reviewer makes decisions relating to integrity and compliance.

The *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009* was unconventional in its origins, having been passed by the Opposition without in-principle support from the Government of the day. Combined with the fact that the Act has barely been amended since its introduction in 2010, this demonstrates the need for legislative modernisation and amendment to ensure the Act operates as originally intended. These modifications are essential to upholding democratic integrity, as the current legislation has permitted politically partisan advertising to occur within gaps and ambiguities in the law.

A free and fair democracy hinges upon equitable access to accurate and unbiased information - this ensures public trust in democratic institutions. The community expects democratic institutions to operate with integrity, and the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Amendment Bill 2025* seeks to reassure Canberrans that public funds are being used appropriately and transparently. As such, the bill has been positively received to date.

Initial feedback received from the Chief Minister's Office has raised concerns about a potential unintended consequence of the bill, namely that emergency services communications - such as bushfire warnings - may be inadvertently captured by the amendments as currently drafted. This does not align with the Greens' interpretation of this bill, nor is it our intention. As such, the ACT



The Greens respectfully acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra region and recognise the ongoing connection that other communities and families also hold to the lands.

Greens support moving amendments to clarify this point, but will await the outcome of the committee inquiry before doing so.

It is vital that public information and political promotion are kept entirely separate. This bill seeks to strengthen democratic institutions and encourage public trust by ensuring public funds are used solely for genuine public communication, not political advantage.

Kind regards,

Shane Rattenbury
Leader of the ACT Greens



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