

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009

Report to the Legislative Assembly

for the period from 11 September 2020 to 31 December 2020

**Prepared by: Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer**

23 March 2021

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009

Report by the Independent Reviewer – Emeritus Professor Dennis Pearce AO

11 September 2020 - 31 December 2020

The Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009 (the Act) requires that a report be prepared for the Legislative Assembly about government campaigns for the 6 month period ending on the 31st December. As this is an election year, a report was previously prepared for the Legislative Assembly about government campaigns for the period beginning on 1 July in the year and ending at the start of the pre-election period. This report covers campaigns referred to me for the period 11 September 2020 to 31 December 2020.

The report, and its attachments, outline the details of each of the campaigns referred to me during this period, including campaign costs, the ways information was communicated to the public, the result of my review and the reason for my decision. Section 21 of the Act deals with “sensitive information”. No campaign referred to me during this period has included information in this category.

I note that section 19(2)(b)(i) requires the Independent Reviewer to report on “the campaign costs itemised by the kind of costs incurred...” I have taken this to require reporting on the budgeted costs for each campaign. In some instances, campaigns extend beyond a reporting period or are part of a bigger campaign and information about actual expenditure is not available until the campaign has been completed.

I reviewed no campaigns during the caretaker period. I reviewed five campaigns from 3 November 2020 (the commencement date of the incoming Government) to 31 December 2020. All of the campaigns I reviewed during the reporting period met the requirements of the Act. The table below lists the campaigns, itemised costs and the result of the review. The full review of each campaign is included at [Attachments A-E](#).

Date approved	Campaign	Referring Directorate/Agency	Budget (with itemised costs)		Review decision and reasons	Full report at Attachment
19 November 2020	ChooseCBR Discounts Campaign	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	Media costs:	\$30,000.00	Accepted – the campaign meets the requirements of the Act	A.
			Total:	\$30,000.00		
30 November 2020	Our Canberra Monthly Community Newsletter: December 2020 Edition	Environment Planning, Sustainable Development Directorate	Production:	\$23,914.00	Accepted – the campaign meets the requirements of the Act	B.
			Distribution:	\$33,236.87		
			Total:	\$57,150.87		

Date approved	Campaign	Referring Directorate/Agency	Budget (with itemised costs)	Review decision and reasons	Full report at Attachment
9 December 2020	COVID19 – Prevention Campaign	ACT Health – Public Information Co-ordination Centre	Production: \$100,000.00 Media costs: \$5,000.00 Total: \$105,000.00	Accepted – the campaign meets the requirements of the	C.
9 December 2020	Job Trainer Campaign	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	Production: \$40,000.00 Media costs: \$260,000.00 Total: \$300,000.00	Accepted – the campaign meets the requirements of the Act	D.
22 December 2020	Actsmart – Summer energy saving campaign	Environment Planning, Sustainable Development Directorate	Media costs: \$25,059.00 Total: \$25,059.00 NB: Total could increase to \$45,000 if TVC advertising is taken up	Accepted – the campaign meets the requirements of the Act	E.

Comments

There were no matters of significance raised by these campaigns other than as referred to in the individual reports.



Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer

23 March 2021



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Campaign: ChooseCBR Discounts Campaign

Date Received by Reviewer: 19 November 2020

Comments: COVID-19 has required significant public health measures and has put a strain on our community and our economy. Driving the city's economic recovery whilst learning to manage the health risks as restrictions ease is a key focus of the ACT Government.

The objective of the communications campaign will be to stimulate the ACT economy through an online discounts program. Canberra businesses in the hardest-hit sectors such as retail, tourism and accommodation, arts and recreation, hospitality and personal services sectors will be able to register their participation in the ChooseCBR discounts digital platform and the Canberra community will be encouraged to prioritise spending their dollar locally by using the discount vouchers with these businesses.

The campaign will run from 23 November 2020 to 13 December 2020.

Advertising will be placed in social media and on digital advertising outlets. There will be media events in which the Minister will be involved.

Public servants will not be involved in the Campaign.

No issues are raised under the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009* and Guidelines.

The Minister for Business and Regulatory Services has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

Budget:

Media: \$30,000

TOTAL: \$30,000

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the ChooseCBR Discounts Campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 19 November 2020



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development
Directorate

Campaign: *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: December 2020 Edition

Date received by Reviewer: 30 November 2020

Comments: I am informed that Government research has found that 20% of Canberrans would prefer to receive Government information directly in their letterboxes. With that in mind, a printed monthly community newsletter, *Our Canberra*, is produced and delivered directly into every Canberra letterbox. This is the newsletter for December 2020.

This edition of the newsletter is directed to each of the five Canberra regions. It contains a message from the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

The Newsletter will be distributed from 14 December 2020.

The Campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

Budget

Printing: **\$23,914.00**

Distribution: **\$33,236.87**

Total expenditure: **\$57,150.87**

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: December 2020 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 30 November 2020



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: ACT Health – Public Information Co-ordination Centre

Campaign: COVID19 – Prevention Campaign

Date Received by Reviewer: 8 December 2020

Comments: This is a further Campaign forming part of the Government’s response to the COVID-19 epidemic. To support the public health response, and to raise awareness that while restrictions are easing, personal responsibility for being COVID-safe is even more important, a new public information campaign has been developed that is focused primarily on the prevention of COVID-19 through compliance with health advice. It also ties in themes related to economic recovery and living with COVID-19 in our new normal.

The campaign will be advertised through a wide range of media and public advertising outlets to reach as many people as possible.

The Campaign is scheduled to begin immediately and conclude on 31 January 2021.

Ministers and public servants will not be involved in this Campaign.

No issues are raised under the Act and Guidelines.

The budget for this Campaign is \$105,000.00.

The Chief Minister has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the COVID19 – Prevention Campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 9 December 2020



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Skills Canberra

Campaign: Job Trainer Campaign

Date Received by Reviewer: 9 December 2020

Comments: The Australian and State/Territory Governments are partnering to offer Australians access to new skills by retraining and upskilling them into sectors with job opportunities, as the economy recovers from COVID-19. This is funded through the \$1 billion [JobTrainer fund](#). The total funding of the ACT JobTrainer program is \$16.75 million and will provide 3,500 free qualifications to young people and job seekers.

The objective of the campaign is to inform and encourage enrolments in fee-free vocational training courses in areas of high growth and emerging high value industries in the ACT. The campaign will be advertised through a wide range of media and through paid and public advertising outlets to reach as many people as possible.

The Campaign is scheduled to begin on 14 December 2020 and conclude on 28 February 2021.

The Minister will launch the campaign and ministers may be involved at other times throughout the campaign but will not be involved in the campaign materials. Public servants may be involved in video and photo shoots.

No issues are raised under the Act and Guidelines.

The budget for this Campaign is \$300,000.00.

The Minister for Skills has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the Job Trainer Campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 9 December 2020



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Environment Planning, Sustainable Development Directorate

Campaign: Actsmart – Summer energy saving campaign

Date received by Reviewer: 22 December 2020

Comments: This campaign follows on from the previous campaign directed to saving energy costs in Winter. The purpose of the campaign is to encourage Canberrans to change behaviour to prepare their homes to be more energy efficient over Summer and minimise the risk of high energy bills. It will also encourage Canberrans to contact their energy retailer to ensure they are on the best plan for their needs and understand their energy use and costs to help minimise bill shock. It will encourage Canberrans to shop around with energy providers to get the best energy deal for their household.

The planned communication activities run from late December 2020 through February 2021. It contains narratives that highlight the actions individuals can take to make a difference to their finances and ultimately their lives, the lives of family and friends, and the lives of future generations. The campaign is particularly targeted at people in lower socio-economic or vulnerable groups and will:

- provide practical tips on improving energy efficiency (including low/no cost options and options that save money)
- explain how to read and understand energy bills and what changes they can make now to avoid excessive electricity, gas and water bills in the future
- promote the supports available to help them improve their energy efficiencies.

The campaign will utilise press, radio, television, online advertisements, other electronic media, audio-visual and printed material. An option to run TVC will be explored as a possible extension to the campaign, to run later in summer.

Neither Ministers nor public servants will be involved in the campaign.

I consider that the requirements of the Act and Guidelines have been satisfied by the campaign material.

The campaign will run from December 2020 to March 2021.

The budget for the campaign is \$25,059 but it could increase to \$45,000 if TVC advertising is taken up. It is this additional expenditure that brings the campaign within the operation of the Act.

The Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the Actsmart – Summer energy saving campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 22 December 2020