

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009

Report to the Legislative Assembly

for the period from 1 July 2024 to 12 September 2024

**Prepared by: Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer
18 September 2024**

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009
Report by the Independent Reviewer – Mr Bill Campbell AO KC
1 July 2024 to 12 September 2024

The *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009* (the *Act*) requires in an election year that a report be prepared for the Legislative Assembly about government campaigns for the period beginning on 1 July and ending at the start of the pre-election period.

This report is for the period 1 July 2024 to 12 September 2024 and includes the details of each of the campaigns referred to the Independent Reviewer during this period. This report summarises itemised campaign costs, the nature of the campaign, the result of each review and the reason for each decision.

I note that *section 19(2)(b)(i)* of the *Act* 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.

There were eight campaigns reviewed from 1 July 2024 to 12 September 2024. I reviewed all eight campaigns.

Section 21 of the *Act* deals with “sensitive information”. No campaign referred to me during this period has included information in this category.

The table below lists the campaigns, itemised costs, and the result of the review. The full review of each campaign is included the attached document.

Date approved	Campaign	Referring Directorate/Agency	Budget (with itemised costs)	Review decision and reasons	Full report at Attachment
1/07/2024	Our Canberra Monthly Newsletter: July 2024 Easy English Edition *	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	Production: \$693.00 Total expenditure: \$693.00	Accepted – the publication meets the requirements of the <i>Act</i> .	U-b

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009
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Date approved	Campaign	Referring Directorate/Agency	Budget (with itemised costs)	Review decision and reasons	Full report at Attachment
18/07/2024 & 30/07/2024	Our Canberra Monthly Newsletter: August 2024 Edition and Easy English Edition	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	Printing: \$29,639.94 Distribution: \$40,926.20 Total expenditure: \$70,566.14 Easy English Production: \$1,265.00	Accepted – both publications meet the requirements of the Act.	A-a A-b
24/07/2024	Opening of the Critical Services Building at Canberra Hospital	Canberra Health Services	Media costs: \$33,000.00 Total expenditure: \$33,000.00	Accepted – the campaign meets the requirements of the Act.	B
05/08/2024	CIT Woden Campus Project Update – August 2024	Major Projects Canberra	Creative: \$2,432.00 Printing and Distribution: \$6,517.00 Total expenditure: \$8,949.00	Accepted – the campaign meets the requirements of the Act.	C
16/08/2024 & 26/08/2024	Our Canberra Monthly Newsletter: September 2024 Edition and Easy English Edition	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	Printing: \$29,668.74 Distribution: \$40,995.29 Total expenditure: \$70,664.03 Easy English Production: \$693.00	Accepted – both publications meet the requirements of the Act.	D-a D-b
02/09/2024	Sustainable Canberra Expo 2024	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate	Production: \$4,610.00 Media: \$33,000.00 Other; Communications: \$2,000.00 Total expenditure: \$39,610.00	Accepted – the campaign meets the requirements of the Act.	E

*The Our Canberra July 2024 - Easy English Edition, assessed on 1 July 2024 was included in the previous Independent Reviewer report (1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024) alongside the Our Canberra July 2024 Edition. This was due to the budget for both being agreed in the 23-24 financial year. It has been included in this report as the review falls within the report window and is identified by the same attachment reference as the previous report for consistency.

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1 July 2024 to 12 September 2024

Comments

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bill Campbell", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer

18 September 2024



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: July 2024 Edition – *Easy English* Version.

Date received by Reviewer: 1 July 2024.

Comments: I have previously reviewed the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: July 2024 Edition. Subsequent to that review of 19 June 2024, key articles from the July 2024 edition have been translated into an *Easy English* version to assist those who have difficulty reading and understanding written English. The translation was in part conducted by an external agency, Scope Australia. That version has been sent separately to me for review.

The July 2024 *Easy English* edition of the Newsletter contains content on cost-of-living support; help for apprentices and trainees; new health centres and more nurses; stamp duty changes; car registration; the Winter in the City Fire and Ice Festival; and changes to Canberra Theatre. The actual wording of the *Easy English* version differs substantially from that contained in the original July 2024 edition of *Our Canberra* though the core messages conveyed are essentially the same.

Section 17(3)(d) of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising Act) 2009* (the Act) provides that ‘information in a government campaign must be presented in a way that is accessible and takes into account any special communication needs of particular people or groups.’ This requirement also is reflected in paragraph 20 of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Guidelines 2010 (No 1)* (the Guidelines) which states in part that ‘[w]here appropriate, special attention should be paid to communicating with disadvantaged groups and individuals that are identified as being within the designated target audience’, with particular attention being paid to ‘those for whom English is not a first language in which to receive information.’

Bearing in mind those requirements, I have concluded that the campaign in the form of the *Easy English* version of the July 2024 edition of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

The Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

The *Our Canberra Easy English* July 2024 edition will be distributed online via ACT Government channels in July 2024.

Budget

The cost of the contribution made by Scope Australia to the *Easy English* version of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter June 2024 is \$693.00.

I, Bill Campbell, declare that the *Easy English* version of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: July 2024 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Signed

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer

1 July 2024

REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: August 2024 Edition.

Date received by Reviewer: 18 July 2024.

Comments: I am informed that Government research has found that 31% of Canberra residents (as of April 2019) would prefer to receive Government information directly in their letterboxes. With that in mind, a printed monthly community newsletter, *Our Canberra*, is produced for each of the five Canberra regions and delivered directly into every Canberra letterbox. The August 2025 editions of the newsletter contain a message from the Chief Minister as well as information relating to the opening of the Critical Services Building at the Canberra Hospital, funding for ACT public education, proposed upgrades for ACT schools, ways people can support local business and disposal of batteries. Key articles from this edition also will be translated into Easy English to assist those who have difficulty reading and understanding written English. This work will be conducted in conjunction with an external agency, Scope Australia, and sent for separate review.

The ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

The Newsletter will be distributed between 5-9 August 2024.

The Campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

Budget

Printing:	\$29,639.94
Distribution:	\$40,926.20
Total expenditure:	\$70,566.14

I, Bill Campbell, declare that the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: August 2024 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Signed

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer

18 July 2024

REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: July 2024 Edition – *Easy English* Version.

Date received by Reviewer: 30 July 2024.

Comments: I have previously reviewed the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: August 2024 Edition. Subsequent to that review of 18 July 2024, key articles from the August 2024 edition have been translated into an *Easy English* version to assist those who have difficulty reading and understanding written English. The translation is carried out by an external agency, Scope Australia. That version has been sent separately to me for review.

Articles in the August 2024 *Easy English* edition of the Newsletter include information on services in the new Canberra Hospital Critical Services Building (Building 5), the Strong Foundations program to be introduced into Canberra public schools, school infrastructure improvements across Canberra, the new recycling facility to be built and ways to support local businesses. The actual wording of the *Easy English* version differs substantially from that contained in the original August 2024 edition of *Our Canberra* though the core messages conveyed are essentially the same.

Section 17(3)(d) of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising Act) 2009* (the Act) provides that ‘information in a government campaign must be presented in a way that is accessible and takes into account any special communication needs of particular people or groups.’ This requirement also is reflected in paragraph 20 of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Guidelines 2010 (No 1)* (the Guidelines) which states in part that ‘[w]here appropriate, special attention should be paid to communicating with disadvantaged groups and individuals that are identified as being within the designated target audience’, with particular attention being paid to ‘those for whom English is not a first language in which to receive information.’

Bearing in mind those requirements, I have concluded that the campaign in the form of the *Easy English* version of the August 2024 edition of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

The Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

The Our Canberra *Easy English* August 2024 edition will be distributed online via ACT Government channels commencing 5 August 2024.

Budget

The cost of the contribution made by Scope Australia to the *Easy English* version of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter August 2024 is \$1265.00.

I, Bill Campbell, declare that the *Easy English* version of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: August 2024 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Signed

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer

30 July 2024



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Canberra Health Services

Campaign: *Opening of the Critical Services Building at Canberra Hospital*

Date Received by Reviewer: 23 July 2024.

Comments: Canberra Hospital is being expanded to include a new Critical Services Building. The new building will be home to a new emergency department with a dedicated children's emergency area, intensive care unit, operating theatres and inpatient wards. Clinical services will commence in the new building in August 2024. The ACT Government is rolling out a communications campaign to increase awareness of the opening of the new Critical Services Building, its benefits and the key services that will be delivered within the building. The campaign includes both paid and non-paid elements.

The campaign will run from 1 August to 12 September 2024.

Ministers will not be involved in the campaign, though there will be Ministerial media in relation to the opening. Public servants will be involved. The necessary approvals have been obtained.

The Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

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

Budget:

Total media costs: \$33,000.00

Total expenditure: \$33,000.00

I, Bill Campbell, declare that the *Opening of the Critical Services Building at Canberra Hospital Campaign* meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Signed

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer

Date: 24 July 2024



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Major Projects Canberra

Campaign: CIT Woden Campus Project Update – August 2024.

Date Received by Reviewer: 2 August 2024.

Comments: As part of regular project communications for the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Woden Campus infrastructure project, a printed update newsletter is distributed periodically to all households in Woden suburbs and to a subscriber list of approximately 460 people. The newsletter also is published on the project website. The August 2024 newsletter contains information on the latest progress on the project, the Woden Youth Foyer, technology for a smarter campus, courses that will be available at CIT Woden, the CIT Open Day and the new CIT Yurauna.

Although the cost of the Campaign is less than that prescribed by the Act as requiring review, it is appropriate to review the August 2024 newsletter because it includes a message from the Minister for Skills and Transport, Chris Steel MLA.

Public servants will not be used in the Campaign.

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

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

The Newsletter will be distributed in August 2024.

Budget:

Creative: \$2432.00

Printing and distribution: \$6517.00

Total expenditure: \$8949.00

I, Bill Campbell, declare the *CIT Woden Campus Project Update August 2024* meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Signed

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer
Date: 5 August 2024



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: August 2024 Editions.

Date received by Reviewer: 14 August 2024.

Comments: I am informed that Government research has found that 31% of Canberra residents (as of April 2019) would prefer to receive Government information directly in their letterboxes. With that in mind, a printed monthly community newsletter, *Our Canberra*, is produced for each of the five Canberra regions and delivered directly into every Canberra letterbox. The September 2024 editions of the newsletter contain a message from the Chief Minister as well as information on the meals in schools program, the location of the new Canberra Hospital Emergency Services Department, the Sustainable Household Scheme, Floriade and mowing and road resurfacing programs.

Key articles from this edition also will be translated into Easy English to assist those who have difficulty reading and understanding written English. This work will be conducted in conjunction with an external agency, Scope Australia, and sent for separate review.

The ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

The Newsletter will be distributed between 2-6 September 2024.

The Campaign raises no issues under the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009* and Guidelines.

Budget

Printing:	\$29,668.74
Distribution:	\$40,995.29
Total expenditure:	\$70,664.03

I, Bill Campbell, declare that the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: August 2024 Edition Campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Signed

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer

Date: 16 August 2024



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: September 2024 Edition – *Easy English* Version.

Date received by Reviewer: 26 August 2024.

Comments: I have previously reviewed the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: September 2024 Edition. Subsequent to that review of 16 August 2024, key articles from the September 2024 edition have been translated into an *Easy English* version to assist those who have difficulty reading and understanding written English. The translation is carried out in conjunction with an external agency, Scope Australia. That version has been sent separately to me for review.

Articles in the September 2024 *Easy English* edition of the Newsletter include information on medical care for children, the location of the Canberra Hospital Emergency Department, the Sustainable Households Scheme, Floriade and Night Fest, a new park at Acton Waterfront and advice on starting and running a business. The actual wording of the *Easy English* version differs substantially from that contained in the original September 2024 edition of *Our Canberra* though the core messages conveyed are essentially the same.

Section 17(3)(d) of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising Act) 2009* (the Act) provides that ‘information in a government campaign must be presented in a way that is accessible and takes into account any special communication needs of particular people or groups.’ This requirement also is reflected in paragraph 20 of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Guidelines 2010 (No 1)* (the Guidelines) which states in part that ‘[w]here appropriate, special attention should be paid to communicating with disadvantaged groups and individuals that are identified as being within the designated target audience’, with particular attention being paid to ‘those for whom English is not a first language in which to receive information.’

Bearing in mind those requirements, I have concluded that the campaign in the form of the *Easy English* version of the September 2024 edition of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

The Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

The Our Canberra *Easy English* August 2024 edition will be distributed online via ACT Government channels commencing 2 September 2024.

Budget

The cost of the contribution made by Scope Australia to the *Easy English* version of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter September 2024 is \$693.00.

I, Bill Campbell, declare that the *Easy English* version of the *Our Canberra* Monthly Community Newsletter: September 2024 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Signed

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer

26 August 2024



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

Campaign: *Sustainable Canberra Expo 2024.*

Date received by Reviewer: 23 August 2024

Comments: The ACT Government is hosting the Sustainable Canberra Expo on Saturday, 2 November 2024. The Expo will showcase the latest sustainable technologies and initiatives in energy, waste, water, and transport. I am informed that it will include live demonstrations, workshops and panel discussions from industry leaders and ACT businesses on sustainability issues and solutions. I am informed also that it will include an EV Drive Day (supported by NRMA) where attendees can test drive an electric vehicle.

Ministers will not be involved in the Campaign. Public servants will be included in imagery used for campaign material. I am informed that necessary approvals have been obtained.

The Minister, Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, Shane Rattenbury, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

I am informed that advertising for the *Sustainable Canberra Expo 2024 Campaign* will not commence until 21 October 2024 in order to meet the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*, which restrict the conduct of government campaigns during the pre-election period. The campaign will end on 1 November 2024.

The *Sustainable Canberra Expo 2024 Campaign* raises no issues under the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009* and Guidelines.

Budget

Production:	\$4610.00
Total media costs:	\$33,000.00
Other communications costs:	\$2000.00
Total expenditure:	\$39,610.00

I, Bill Campbell, declare that the *Sustainable Canberra Expo 2024 Campaign* meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Signed

Bill Campbell AO KC
Independent Reviewer

Date: 2 September 2024