

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009

Report to the Legislative Assembly

for the period from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2019

**Prepared by: Prof. Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer**

21 August 2019

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009
Report by the Independent Reviewer – Professor Dennis Pearce AO
1 January 2019 to 30 June 2019

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 30th June. This report covers the eleven campaigns referred for review from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2019.

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 ten campaigns from 1 January to 30 June 2018. All of the campaigns I reviewed during the reporting period met the requirements of the Act.

In the case of one campaign, I reviewed a preliminary draft of documents and made suggestions as to how the content could be amended to remove elements that could have been considered party political.

Mr Derek Volker, the Alternate Independent Reviewer, reviewed one campaign which required attention in my absence. The campaign 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-K.

Date approved	Campaign	Referring Directorate/Agency	Budget (itemised costs)		Review decision and reasons	Full report is at Attachment:
7 January 2019	Griffith and Narrabundah - Asset Renewal Initiative Campaign	EPSDD - SLA	Production:	\$58,980.90	Accepted - the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	A
			Media and signage:	\$74,925		
			Contingency:	\$13,390.59		
			Total:	\$147,296.49		
13 February 2019	'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: March 2019 Edition	CMTEDD	Printing:	\$22,000	Accepted - the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	B
			Distribution:	\$30,000		
			Total:	\$52,000		
20 February 2019	Canberra and Region Heritage Festival 2019	EPSDD	Creative Development:	\$56,000	Accepted – the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	C
			Production:	\$9,000		
			Other Promotional Activities:	\$19,705		
			Total:	\$84,705		
14 March 2019	'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: April 2019 Edition	CMTEDD	Printing:	\$22,500	Accepted - the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	D
			Distribution:	\$30,500		
			Total:	\$53,000		
20 March 2019	New Network Pre-launch Campaign	TCCS	Development/Design:	\$14,726	Accepted - the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	E
			Production:	\$22,000		
			Media Spend:	\$90,642.59		
			Contingency:	\$6,368.43		
			Total:	\$133,737.02		

Date approved	Campaign	Referring Directorate/Agency	Budget (itemised costs)		Review decision and reasons	Full report is at Attachment:
19 April 2019	'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: May 2019 Edition	CMTEDD	Printing:	\$22,500	Accepted - the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	F
			Distribution:	\$30,500		
			Total:	\$53,000		
3 May 2019	New Transport Network Campaign	TCCS	Design:	\$14,726	Accepted - the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	G
			Production:	\$22,000		
			Media buy:	\$90,642.59		
			Contingency:	\$6,368.43		
			Total:	\$335,076.39		
14 May 2019	'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: June 2019 Edition	CMTEDD	Printing:	\$22,500	Accepted – the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines <i>Reviewed by Mr Derek Volker, Alternate Independent Reviewer.</i>	H
			Distribution:	\$30,500		
			Total:	\$53,000		
3 June 2019	2019-20 ACT Budget	CMTEDD	Postcards Print Production:	\$5,077.60	Accepted – the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	I
			Postcards Additional run-ons:	\$997		
			Postcard Delivery:	\$29,759.68		
			Progress update	\$4,800		
			Total:	\$40,634.28		

Date approved	Campaign	Referring Directorate/Agency	Budget (itemised costs)	Review decision and reasons	Full report is at Attachment:
4 June 2019	Taylor Single Residential Sales and Information event	EPSDD - SLA	Creative Development: \$12,925 Production: \$5,000 Brochure delivery: \$10,494 Event costs: \$3,018. Traditional Media spend: \$43,203.29 10% contingency: \$7,464.05 Total: \$82,104.31	Accepted - the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	J
13 June 2019	'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: July 2019 Edition	CMTEDD	Printing: \$22,500 Distribution: \$30,500 Total: \$53,000	Accepted – the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines	K

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

21 August 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development - Suburban Land Agency

Campaign: Griffith and Narrabundah - Asset Renewal Initiative Campaign

Date received by Reviewer: 4 January 2019

Comments: The primary purpose of this campaign is to promote the sale of 5 parcels of land across two locations in Griffith and Narrabundah. The release of these sites is an urban renewal priority under the ACT Government Asset Recycling Initiative (ARI).

The campaign is also directed to maintaining consideration of Canberra as a destination of choice for property development and to build awareness and increase consideration of the three Asset Renewal Initiative properties (Stuart Flats in Griffith, Gowrie Court in Narrabundah and Strathgordon in Lyons) being sold by auction on 20 March 2019.

The campaign will target local, interstate and international developers. The Canberra community is likely also to have an interest in the redevelopment.

The campaign is to commence on 2 February 2019.

The campaign will use media advertising both digital and press, brochures and advertising hoardings. Most campaign materials will be available in hard copy format. All electronic versions will be accessible and made available on the Suburban Land Agency website. Radio and television will not be used.

Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly and public servants will not take part in the campaign

The Chief Executive Officer, Suburban Land Agency, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

I am satisfied that the campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

Budget:

Production: \$58,980.90 (inc GST)

Media and signage: \$74,925(inc GST)

Contingency: \$13,390.59 (inc GST)

Total: \$ 147,296.49 (inc GST) (including contingency)

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the Griffith and Narrabundah - Asset Renewal Initiative Campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO

Independent Reviewer

Date: 7 January 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: 'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: March 2019 Edition

Date received by Reviewer: 13 February 2019

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, delivered directly into every Canberra letterbox, is produced. This is the newsletter for March 2019.

The newsletter is tailored to five regions: Belconnen; Central Canberra; Gungahlin; Tuggeranong; and Woden/Weston Creek/Molonglo.

The newsletter will be distributed from 4 March 2019.

The Newsletter contains an introductory paragraph from the Chief Minister.

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

I am satisfied that the Campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

Budget

Printing: \$22,000

Distribution: \$30,000

Total: \$52,000

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the 'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: March 2019 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO

Independent Reviewer

Date: 13 February 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

Campaign: Canberra and Region Heritage Festival 2019

Date Received by Reviewer: 19 February 2019

Comments: The Canberra and Region Heritage Festival celebrates the importance of heritage to Canberra and its surrounds with well over 100 events and activities held over a three-week period. The Campaign is intended to raise awareness for the ongoing need to conserve our natural, Aboriginal and historic heritage. Organisers list events in the program.

The 2019 Festival theme 'Space' will celebrate 50 years since man walked on the Moon and the ACT's unique space heritage. The theme will also explore other conceptions of 'space' such as a place or location, an interval of time, an expanse, a perspective and more.

The primary purpose of the advertising campaign is to:

- promote the program of events and theme;
- encourage attendance; and
- increase access to new target audiences (specifically a younger demographic, families and interstate audiences).

The 2019 Canberra and Region Heritage Festival will run from 13 April to 5 May 2019. The Campaign will run from 13 March 2019 until the Festival closes.

Campaign activities include radio, print, online, social as well as printed material (i.e. posters, flyers). A Festival program will also be distributed through print media.

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage will launch the Festival. Public servants will be used in in-house produced material for digital media (such as digital ads, social media content, videos etc.) and media interviews. These will not be paid elements of the campaign.

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

No issues are raised under the Act and Guidelines.

The Campaign is scheduled to begin on 13 March 2019.

Budget:

The total allocated budget is \$84,750, the largest component of which is for print advertising, including a Festival program.

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival 2019 Campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 20 February 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: 'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: April 2019 Edition

Date received by Reviewer: 13 March 2019

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, delivered directly into every Canberra letterbox, is produced. This is the newsletter for April 2019.

The newsletter is tailored to five regions: Belconnen; Central Canberra; Gungahlin; Tuggeranong; and Woden/Weston Creek/Molonglo.

The newsletter will be distributed from 1 April 2019.

The Newsletter contains an introductory paragraph from the Chief Minister.

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

I am satisfied that the Campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

Budget

Printing: \$22,500

Distribution: \$30,500

Total: \$53,000

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the 'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: April 2019 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 14 March 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

Campaign: New Network Pre-launch Campaign

Date Received by Reviewer: 20 March 2019

Comments: The objective of the campaign is to ensure that Canberrans are aware of the new transport network commencement date and to inform the public of timetable availability. It is also intended to inform the Canberra community about the light rail launch and raise awareness of the activities and events planned to mark that launch. Key messaging focuses on event activities and how the community can engage and participate in the launch.

This campaign will support Transport Canberra and Canberra Metro's other communication campaigns regarding the beginning of services, the new transport network and safety messages.

The campaign will extend over a 4-5 week period and will use a range of channels to communicate with the Canberra Community including social media, mainstream print, broadcast (radio), digital media and the Transport Canberra website.

Ministers and MLAs will not be involved in the Campaign.

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

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

The Campaign is scheduled to begin in March 2019.

Budget:

Development/Design: \$14,726

Production: \$22,000

Media Spend: \$90,642.59

Contingency: \$6,368.43

Total: \$133,737.02

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the New Network Pre-launch Campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO

Independent Reviewer

Date: 20 March 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: 'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: May 2019 Edition

Date received by Reviewer: 4 April 2019

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, delivered directly into every Canberra letterbox, is produced. This is the newsletter for May 2019.

The newsletter is tailored to five regions: Belconnen; Central Canberra; Gungahlin; Tuggeranong; and Woden/Weston Creek/Molonglo.

The newsletter will be distributed from 29 April 2019.

The Newsletter contains an introductory paragraph from the Chief Minister.

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

I am satisfied that the Campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

Budget

Printing: \$22,500

Distribution: \$30,500

Total: \$53,000

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the 'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: May 2019 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 4 April 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

Campaign: New Transport Network Campaign

Date Received by Reviewer: 3 May 2019

Comments: The objective of the communications campaign is to build on previous campaigns to ensure that Canberrans are aware of the new public transport network that began on 29 April 2019 and the opportunity to use free travel to try the network.

This campaign will support Transport Canberra and Canberra Metro's other communication activities regarding the beginning of services, the new transport network and safety messages.

The primary campaign audience has been identified as Canberra locals, with a focus on families, school children, current passengers and car users.

Advertising will be placed in mainstream print, broadcast media (radio and television), digital media, including the Transport Canberra's Facebook and Twitter pages and ACT Government screens, and public sites.

Ministers and MLAs will not be involved in the Campaign but media releases from Ministers will support the campaign.

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

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

The Campaign is scheduled to begin on 13 May 2019

Budget: \$335,076.39.

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the New Transport Network Campaign

meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 3 May 2019

REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Campaign: "Our Canberra" Monthly Community Newsletter---June 2019 Edition

Agency/Directorate: Chief Minister Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Date: Received by Reviewer on 10 May 2019

Comments: These are the June 2019 editions of the monthly "Our Canberra" newsletter. It has five versions—for Civic and Central, Belconnen, Tuggeranong, Woden/Weston Creek and Molonglo and Gungahlin. Several items are in all five versions. Each version has items of local interest.

There is a message from the Chief Minister which is common to all five versions.

The Chief Minister has certified that there is compliance with the Act and Guidelines including Guideline 4: Avoiding the misuse of public funds.

For reasons given in earlier reviews of this series of campaigns I conclude that the campaign meets the Act and Guidelines.

The newsletter is delivered by mail to Canberra households. The Chief Minister has confirmed that suitable action has been taken so that those who need help with access to the material can be assisted. A webpage on www.act.gov.au contains all the content online and that site is said to meet minimum accessibility requirements.

Budget:

Printing: \$22,500 (approximately)

Distribution: \$30,500 (approximately)

Design, Production and Management: In house (no cost provided)

Total Estimated Expenditure: \$53,000 (approximately) (not including in house costs)

I, Derek Volker, declare that the "Our Canberra" newsletter for June 2019, with five versions, meets the requirements of the Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009 and Guidelines.



Derek Volker

Date: 14 May 2019

Acting Independent Campaign Reviewer



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaigns: ACT Government Budget 2019-20 communication materials campaign.

Date Received by Reviewer: 3 June 2019.

Comments: A suite of materials has been produced to inform Canberrans of the initiatives contained in the 2019-20 ACT Budget.

While all documentation is contained on the Budget website, three pieces of communication collateral are particularly community and stakeholder focussed:

1. ACT Government Budget 2019-20 Regional Postcards
The aim of the 2019-20 ACT Budget regional postcards is to inform Canberra householders broadly of the initiatives contained in the Budget.

The postcards will be produced for each region of Canberra (Inner North, Inner South, Belconnen, Gungahlin, Woden, Weston Creek & Molonglo, Tuggeranong) and letter-box dropped to every Canberra household.
2. ACT Government Budget 2019-20 video
The aim of the 2019-20 ACT Budget video is to inform Canberrans using social media broadly of the initiatives contained in the Budget. The video will be shared on Ministerial social media channels on and after budget day, Tuesday 4 June 2019.
3. Progress update
The aim of the progress update *Delivering a better Canberra: ACT Government progress update* is to provide a clear summary of what the ACT Government has delivered since being established in October 2016, and what has been funded for delivery through the ACT Budget 2019-20. A print run of 1000 documents is planned for distribution to stakeholders.

I have looked at these campaigns against the requirement in the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Guidelines 2010* Principle 6(c) that ACT Government advertising promotion should not be conducted for party political purposes. The Principle says that "Something is 'party political' if it is designed to promote, advance or enhance a political party's reputation rather than informing the public." Principle 9(b) says that Public funds may be used "to inform the community of new, existing, changed or proposed legislation,



policies, programs and services”. Guideline 3 says: “Public funds should not be used to disseminate information in circumstances where a reasonable person would interpret the information as being given on behalf of a political party, or as directed at influencing public support for a political party rather than as communicating a factual message.”

It will always present a problem for a government in power to present material that does not have an underlying message that the government is doing a good job and therefore the party should be re-elected. However, to take that view of the operation of the Act and Guidelines pays insufficient heed to the fact, recognised by Principle 9(b), that people need to be informed of Government programs and services.

I looked at preliminary drafts of the documents.

I made suggestions as to the content of the Progress update which I considered in its original form could have been thought to contain elements that were party political. Following from my comments, the document was redrafted in a manner that I thought complied with the Act. I also pointed out some typographical errors in the document.

I do not consider that the documents to be used in the campaign stray beyond the line of informing the public into the area of inviting party support. Accordingly, I consider that the requirements of the Act are not breached.

Ministers will not be directly involved in the campaigns here but the 2019-20 ACT Budget initiatives have been and will continue to be promoted by ACT Government Ministers via social media, through traditional forms of media engagement and community engagement activities.

There will be vision of public servants in the campaign documents. Approval to use the images has been granted by both the individuals and the Head of Service.

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

All materials will be published and available on the ACT Budget website on Tuesday 4 June 2019. Hard copies of materials will be available at stakeholder and media events from 4 June and the postcards will be distributed to households in the week commencing Monday 11 June 2019.

Budget:

1. ACT Government Budget 2019-20 Regional Postcards



- Print Production: \$5,077.60 (188,098 copies)
- Additional run-ons for Budget Day: \$997.00 (total 6,300 copies)
- Delivery: \$29,759.68 (185,998 copies)
- Total cost: \$35,834.28 including GST where applicable.

2. ACT Government Budget 2019-20 Video

- The videos were produced in-house using existing resources.

3. *Delivering a better Canberra: ACT Government progress update*

- Estimate for the producing 1000 copies of the progress update is \$4,800 including GST.

Total: \$40, 634.28.

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the ACT Government Budget 2019-20 communication materials campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 3 June 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

Directorate/Agency: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development–
Suburban Land Agency

Campaign: Taylor Single Residential Sales and Information Event

Date received by Reviewer: 4 June 2019

Comments: The primary purpose of this campaign is to promote the release of 215 Single Residential blocks of land in Taylor and inform new home buyers and builders on how to build in Taylor.

The brand and messaging is an evolution of the initial brand developed for Stage 1 of the Estate. Advertising will target first home buyers and builders in Canberra, young couples and families and includes Chinese, Indian and Middle Eastern audiences.

The campaign will use media advertising both digital and press, brochures and radio advertisements. There will be a sales and information event on 29 June 2019.

Ministers and Members of the Legislative Assembly will not take part in the campaign. Public servants will be involved in the event delivery and sales process but not in the campaign marketing materials.

The campaign will commence on 6 June 2019.

The Chief Executive Officer, Suburban Land Agency, has certified that there is compliance with Guideline 5.31.

The campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

Budget:

Creative Development: \$12,925.00

Production: \$5,000.00

Brochure delivery: \$10,494.00

Event cost: \$3,018.00

Media spend: \$43,203.29

Contingency: \$7,464.05 (10% of total budget)

Total: \$ 82,104.31(inc GST) (including contingency)

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the Taylor Single Residential Sales and Information Event campaign meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO

Independent Reviewer

Date: 4 June 2019



REVIEWER ASSESSMENT

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

Campaign: 'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: July 2019 Edition

Date received by Reviewer: 12 June 2019

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, delivered directly into every Canberra letterbox, is produced. This is the newsletter for July 2019.

The newsletter is tailored to five regions: Belconnen; Central Canberra; Gungahlin; Tuggeranong; and Woden/Weston Creek/Molonglo.

The newsletter will be distributed from 1 July 2019.

The Newsletter contains an introductory paragraph from the Chief Minister.

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

I am satisfied that the Campaign raises no issues under the Act and Guidelines.

Budget

Printing: \$22,500

Distribution: \$30,500

Total: \$53,000

I, Professor Dennis Pearce AO, declare that the 'Our Canberra' Monthly Community Newsletter: July 2019 meets the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*.

Professor Dennis Pearce AO
Independent Reviewer
Date: 13 June 2019