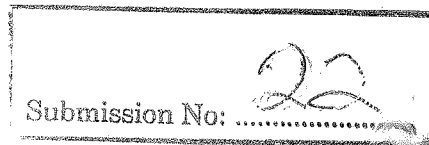
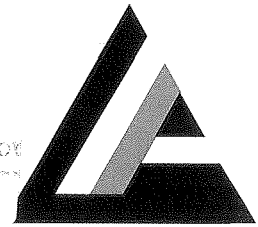




Auditor-General



Auth: 12/5/10.



**Australian National
Audit Office**

11 March 2010

Ms Sharon Grierson MP
Chair
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Grierson

I am writing to provide a number of documents in response to requests for information arising at the public hearing on 22 February 2010 for the Committee's inquiry into the role of the Auditor-General in scrutinising government advertising. These requests were identified through our review of the Hansard transcript of that hearing, and we would appreciate any advice from the Committee Secretariat as to any other matters that may require a response.

Documents

Please find attached the following documents:

- The draft discussion paper from the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) dated 28 May 2009, the final opinion from the AGS of 4 September 2009, and a further opinion from the AGS of 11 March 2010.
- The three versions of the *Auditor-General's Review of Information and Advertising Campaigns – Advice for Department and Agencies* that have been placed on the ANAO's website from August 2008 to present.
- A table which lists each review report issued by the ANAO in respect of a government advertising or information campaign, detailing the timing of the ANAO's review from initial contact with agencies through to the review report being issued, and adherence to Guideline 1 (legislative authority; appropriation of the Parliament; or Cabinet decision). You will note that from 20 February 2009 an opening letter was issued for campaigns under review, to complement the Section 20 agreement with departments and agencies.
- A summary of issues raised by the ANAO with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) about the Economic Security Strategy campaign's ability to show compliance with Guideline 3 of the *Guidelines on Campaign Advertising by Australian Government Departments and Agencies*.

Following discussion of these matters with FaHCSIA, the ANAO formed the view that this Guideline had been met. In relation to the Think Climate Think Change campaign, the ANAO, after reviewing the documents provided by the Department of Climate Change (DCC), formed the view that nothing had come to our attention to indicate that Guideline 3 had not been satisfied. Accordingly, no specific issues were raised by the ANAO with DCC on this matter.

- A table outlining 11 proposed campaigns which did not proceed, and the reasons given by the relevant agencies as to why these campaigns did not proceed. You will note that this information has not been identified as audit-in-confidence. This decision follows from our discussion at the hearing about the need and purpose for identifying this information as in-confidence, and the ANAO's commitment to place a list of campaigns formally under review on our website.

Other matters

In relation to advertising campaigns that have been exempted from the Guidelines (proof transcript, p. 22), apart from the particular campaign exempted from the Guidelines (the swine flu – H1N1 – campaign), on 9 August 2009 the Cabinet Secretary, Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig, allowed for a general exemption, whereby any campaign advertising undertaken by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) in relation to federal elections, by-elections or referenda was exempted from review by the Independent Committee on Communications and the ANAO.

Regarding a question from Mrs Bishop regarding the Climate Change Household Action campaign (proof transcript, p. 41), I can confirm that while the Department of Climate Change's Communication and Consultation Strategy for the campaign indicated that the department planned to implement more than one phase of the campaign, the ANAO was only ever asked to issue a review report for Phase 1 (that is, the review report issued on 18 July 2008).

Yours sincerely



Ian McPhee

Auditor-General

Attached:

Advice from the AGS dated 11 March 2010, 4 September 2009, and a draft discussion paper dated 28 May 2009.

The three versions of the Advice for Departments and Agencies currently placed on the ANAO website: the most recent version, dated 24 February 2009, uploaded to the website 26 February 2009; the previous version, dated 31 October 2008, uploaded on the website 5 November 2008; and the initial version created 22 August 2008, uploaded on the website 25 August 2008.

The table of review reports identifying initial contact date, opening letter or Section 20 agreement letter date, review report date, advised campaign launch date, and the relevant part of Guideline 1.

A summary of discussions with FaHCSIA around Guideline 3.

The list of campaigns which were issued with opening letters, but which did not proceed to finalisation.