

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2015 - 2016

**Department/Agency: ACNC**

**Question: SBT 1324-1325**

**Topic: Government Advertising**

**Reference: written - 30 October 2015**

**Senator: Wong, Penny**

**Question:**

Since 1 January 2015:

1324. How much has been spent on government advertising (including job ads)?

- a) List each item of expenditure and cost
- b) List the approving officer for each item
- c) Detail the outlets that were paid for the advertising

1325. What government advertising is planned for the rest of the financial year?

- a) List the total expected cost
- b) List each item of expenditure and cost
- c) List the approving officer for each item
- d) Detail the outlets that have been or will be paid for the advertising

**Answer:**

1324.

The total cost of the ACNC's advertising between 1 January and 30 October 2015 was \$86,970.

a)

**Ask ACNC**

The total expenditure of advertising for this project was \$3,698.36.

The ACNC is the independent, national regulator of charities, as is based a single location in Melbourne.

Since Budget Estimates the ACNC conducted a program of engagement with registered charities called Ask ACNC. This was the only face-to-face engagement program conducted by the ACNC in the last two-years.

The Ask ACNC project was a series of 36 face-to-face information sessions held in 32 locations across Australia. The sessions were an opportunity for registered charities to speak directly to the ACNC's leaders and advice staff to help them understand their obligations under the ACNC Act.

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Almost 3,500 registrations were taken for the sessions, demonstrating a high level of interest from charities.

The ACNC has an obligation under the ACNC Act to support charities to comply with and understand their obligations by providing them with guidance and education. As well as printed and online guidance, the ACNC has identified that there is also a need for face-to-face methods in order to reach all segments of the charity sector, in particular older demographics running smaller, less-resourced charities.

In addition, due to the short period of time the ACNC has been in operation, there is still a lack of awareness and understanding amongst charities about their obligations. One key obligation is the requirement to submit an Annual Information Statement and non-compliance with this obligation can lead to revocation of charity status.

The sessions were held in areas with a high concentration of registered charities, low submissions of the 2013 Annual Information Statement, or both.

Paid advertising, primarily in the form of local newspaper advertisements was used to promote these sessions. Such advertising was necessary in order to reach charities that are not online or those that are currently not aware of the ACNC.

Paid editorial on sector media websites were also used to take advantage of their large and targeted audiences.

**Safe giving 2014-15**

The total expenditure of advertising for this project was \$41,181.29.

The ACNC promoted the use of the ACNC Charity Register to members of the public engaging in charitable giving throughout 2014-15, with activity peaking during the Christmas period and at the end of the financial year in 2015.

The Christmas period and end of financial are the two most popular times of the year for charitable donations, and use of the Charity Register prior to donating is recommended.

The purpose of the project was two-fold:

- Maintain and enhance public trust and confidence in charitable giving by promoting the ACNC Charity Register as a reputable source of information about Australia's registered charities during a popular time for charitable giving.
- Remind registered charities to meet their obligations under the ACNC Act.

The expenditure was a combination of online and social media advertising.

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**2014 Annual Information Statement**

The total expenditure of advertising for this project was \$23,291.86.

The ACNC Act requires registered charities to submit an Annual Information Statement to the ACNC each year. The 2014 Annual Information Statement marked only the second time that registered charities were required to submit the statement to the ACNC, and it was the first year that they were required to submit financial information.

Charities that failed to submit a 2013 Annual Information Statement and a 2014 Annual Information Statement were deemed to be 'double defaulter' charities. This group were at risk of having their charity status revoked as they had failed to meet their reporting obligations for two consecutive years.

The purpose of this advertising was to remind charities to submit their 2014 Annual Information, particularly those that were at risk of becoming 'double defaulter' charities.

**2015 Annual Information Statement**

The total expenditure of advertising for this project was \$13,778.25.

The purpose of this advertising is to remind charities to submit their 2015 Annual Information, particularly those that are at risk of becoming 'double defaulter' charities (i.e. have not submitted a 2014 Annual Information Statement).

**Charity sector announcements/notices**

The total expenditure of advertising for these projects was \$5,020.73.

Between 1 January and 30 October 2015 the ACNC undertook a number of activities for the purpose of providing education and guidance to the charity sector. This included sector briefings for charities sending funds overseas and webinars to help charities meet their obligations under the ACNC Act.

The purpose of this advertising was to raise awareness of these free events and encourage charities to attend.

b) The ACNC Commissioner, Susan Pascoe AM, approved all advertising. Attempting to provide all approval documentation relevant to the advertising projects listed above would be an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

c) All advertising is booked via the Australian Government's master media buyer, Mitchells Adcorp Alliance.

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1325.

**Safe giving 2015-16**

- a) The expected cost of the advertising is \$25,000 or less.
- b) The expenditure has yet to be finalised. The total cost is expected to be \$25,000 or less.
- c) The approving officer will be the ACNC Commissioner.
- d) The advertising will be booked via the Australian Government's master media buyer, Mitchells Adcorp Alliance.