



Australian Government
Department of Education and Training

Additional Estimates 2014-15
Education and Employment Committee
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Tabled by: LISA PAUL

Secretary
Lisa Paul AO PSM

Senator the Hon Kim Carr
Senator for Victoria
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Carr

Higher education communications campaign

I write regarding your correspondence of 9 December 2014 to Ms Jane Halton PSM, Secretary of the Department of Finance, regarding the 2014–15 higher education communications campaign. Ms Halton referred your letter to me. I apologise for the delay in responding to your concerns.

The campaign was developed to better inform Australians about the current higher education system and about Government support and funding available to students undertaking higher education.

Between July and September 2014, departmental officers spoke with around 8 000 students and their families while attending five tertiary education skills/career exhibitions and 41 open days at 36 higher education institutions. The department encountered a number of misconceptions and a lack of understanding about eligibility for Government support and the Government's proposed higher education changes announced in the 2014–15 Budget.

This feedback was confirmed through subsequent qualitative and quantitative research conducted by ORIMA Research on the department's behalf. The department was concerned that a widespread lack of knowledge about the university funding system and HECS, together with a lack of knowledge about the Government's higher education changes, might lead to a decline in higher education participation.

The Government agreed to an overall budget of \$14.6 million for the campaign. The campaign budget has been allocated as follows:

- Media buy - \$9.5 million
- Creative development - \$2.3 million
- Website development - \$1.3 million
- Market research services - \$800,000
- Contact centre support - \$500,000
- Other costs - \$200,000

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The estimated media buy for Phase 1 of the campaign is \$5.4 million (including GST). The timing and focus of Phase 2 is expected to be determined in early 2015 on the basis of the outcomes of benchmarking, tracking and evaluation results from Phase 1.

The first part of Phase 1 ran from 7 to 20 December 2014, with a small number of press and other advertisements appearing until 31 December 2014. The second part of Phase 1 runs from 27 January 2015 to 14 February 2015. The media buy for Phase 1 includes placements for television, radio, newspaper, digital media, bus-shelters and social media monitoring. Culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous media channels are also included.

Phase 1 of the campaign aims to counter the myths and misconceptions about the current higher education system, raise awareness of government support for higher education and the mechanisms that will be retained in the future, encourage audiences to seek further information about current Government resources, assistance and financial support for higher education, and set the scene for the proposed policy changes.

Each claim conveyed in the campaign has been certified as accurate either by me or Mr Robert Griew in his capacity as Acting Secretary. Certification Statements stating both parts of Phase 1 of the campaign are compliant with the Australian Government's *Short-term Interim Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns* are available on the department of Finance's website.

I understand that on 15 January 2015 you also wrote to Mr Ian McPhee, Auditor-General for Australia regarding the campaign. Mr Mc-Phee's response to you of 20 January 2015 provides further detail on the costs and status of the campaign and the certification process.

As outlined in Mr McPhee's letter I note that the higher education campaign will be considered by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) as it scopes its next performance audit of government advertising arrangements. My department is happy to assist the ANAO as needed.

Yours sincerely



Lisa Paul

13 February 2015

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