

23 September 2013

## **AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT** **GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING 2012–13**

The *Government Advertising Act 2011* commenced in October 2012. The Act requires the Auditor-General to conduct an annual performance audit to check agency compliance with the Act.

“My performance audits in 2007 and 2009 found that the government advertising guidelines that were applicable at the time were not adequate to prevent the use of public funds for party political purposes,” said Mr Achterstraat.

“My reports led to progressive improvements in these guidelines, which have been strengthened by the 2011 Act,” added Mr Achterstraat.

“In this audit, I reviewed two campaigns, the Cancer Institute NSW ‘Break the Chain’ anti-smoking campaign and the former Rail Corporation NSW ‘Fixing the Trains’ recruitment campaign. The second campaign was selected by the public via a survey on the Audit Office website. The Fixing the Trains campaign received the highest number of votes so was included in my review,” said Mr Achterstraat.

“I am pleased that the two advertising campaigns I reviewed complied with the Act, Regulations, other laws and the guidelines,” he added.

In 2012–13, NSW Government agencies spent nearly \$62 million on media used for government advertising. Government advertising is used to inform the community of government services and programs and any changes to them. It is also used to address social and health issues by influencing behaviours, such as anti-smoking campaigns.

This is the first performance audit conducted under these new obligations. It examined campaigns planned and implemented while the new frameworks were still being bedded down. My findings and conclusions should be read in that context.

“Future performance audits, especially the one covering the 2014-15 period, will provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the new framework on a wider range of campaigns, including capturing advertising in the run up to the next state election in March 2015,” said Mr Achterstraat.

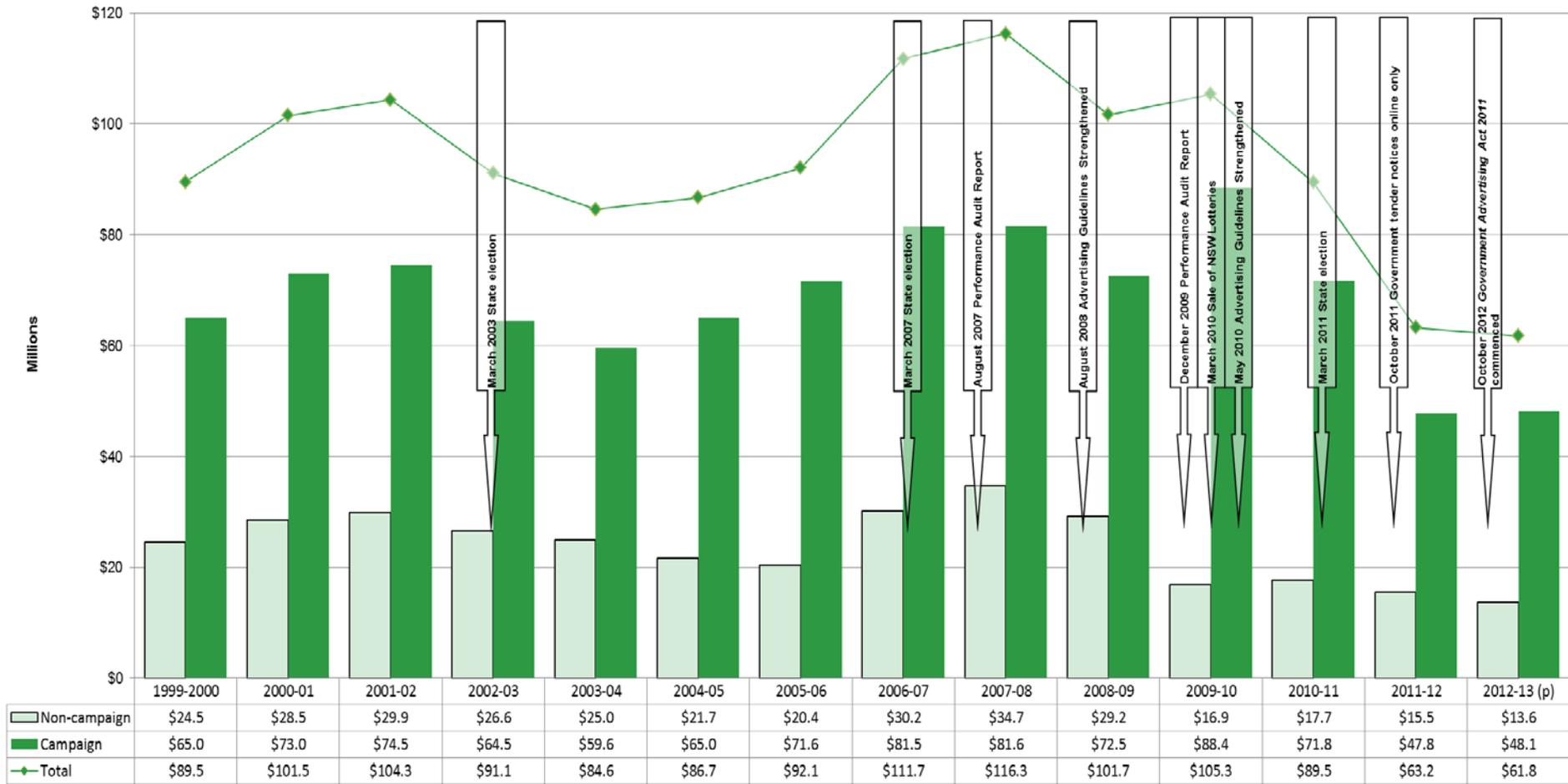
Mr Achterstraat concluded:

“Overall, from what I have seen so far the new government advertising requirements are operating as intended.”

### **Further Information**

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## Government campaign and non-campaign media placement expenditure 1999-2000 to 2012-13



Source: Department of Premier and Cabinet and Audit Office Research 2013.

Notes: These costs do not include all costs to government agencies for advertising. That is, they do not include costs for development and production of the creative elements of advertising campaigns.

(p) Data is provisional for 2012-13