
Appendix four – About the audit

Audit objective

This audit assessed whether the selected government advertising campaigns were carried out effectively, economically and efficiently and in compliance with the *Government Advertising Act 2011*, the regulations, other laws and the Government Advertising Guidelines.

Audit criteria

We addressed the audit objective with the following audit criteria:

1. Did the selected advertising campaigns comply with the *Government Advertising Act 2011*, the regulations, other laws and the Government Advertising Guidelines?
 - a) The campaign is compliant with the *Government Advertising Act 2011*, the Government Advertising Regulation 2018, the NSW Government Advertising Guidelines and the NSW Government Advertising Handbook.
 - b) The campaign complied with other relevant laws, regulations and requirements, including:
 - Cost-Benefit Framework for Government Advertising and Information Campaigns
 - NSW Government Brand Guidelines
 - NSW Government evaluation framework for advertising and communications.
2. Were the selected government advertising campaigns carried out effectively, economically and efficiently?
 - a) The campaign had measurable targets which could be attributed to the campaign and which aligned with the objectives of the campaign.
 - b) The campaign achieved its targets and this was verified through post-campaign evaluation.
 - c) The agency demonstrated that the campaign was the most efficient way to achieve its objectives.
 - d) The agency achieved efficient expenditure on media placement.
 - e) The campaign was efficiently targeted to its intended audience.
 - f) The agency ensured value for money through its procurement.

Audit scope and focus

The audit examined the following three advertising campaigns conducted by Destination MSW in 2020–21:

- Love Sydney (which comprised two sub-campaigns being ‘Sydney - Love It Like You Mean It’ and ‘Get Your Sydney On’)
- Love NSW
- Road Trips.

Audit exclusions

The audit did not:

- examine government advertising framework issues unless directly relevant to in-scope campaigns (peer reviews, cost-benefit analysis, post campaign evaluations)
- examine the use of social media by agencies outside of paid social media spend for selected campaigns
- question the merits of government policy objectives.

Audit approach

Our procedures included:

1. Interviewing:
 - select staff from Destination NSW involved in campaign development and approval to discuss government advertising procedures and assess agency views on the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the campaigns
 - Department of Customer Service staff to discuss their observations of the selected campaigns, role in the campaign approval process, and understanding of the application of the Act and Guidelines.
2. Examining:
 - a) campaign materials and documentation
 - b) documents evidencing internal controls/processes designed to ensure compliance with the Act, Regulations and Guidelines
 - c) DCS or cabinet approval of campaign budget (for campaigns approved in 2019–20)
 - d) documentation regarding targeting of intended audience, including any research, analysis or testing of message and medium (including targeting CALD and Aboriginal audiences)
 - e) peer review reports
 - f) compliance certificates
 - g) cost-benefit analysis
 - h) post-campaign evaluations.
3. Analysing data:
 - a) evidence of monitoring and evaluation regarding quality of advertising and public awareness of subject matter
 - b) campaign expenditure.

The audit approach was complemented by quality assurance processes within the Audit Office to ensure compliance with professional standards.

Audit methodology

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standard ASAE 3500 'Performance Engagements' and other professional standards. The standards require the audit team to comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance and draw a conclusion on the audit objective. Our processes have also been designed to comply with requirements specified in the *Government Sector Audit Act 1983* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by Destination NSW and the Department of Customer Service.

Audit cost

The estimated cost of this audit including overheads is \$224,000.