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# Appendix one – Responses from agencies

## Response from Department of Customer Service



Customer  
Service

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Office of the Secretary

*Our reference: COR-07257-2020*

Ms Margaret Crawford  
Auditor-General  
NSW  
GPO Box 12  
SYDNEY NSW 2001  
By email: [mail@audit.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@audit.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Crawford

### Report on the Performance Audit– Government Advertising 2018-19 and 2019-20

Thank you for your recent letter and the opportunity to respond to the Performance Audit of Government Advertising 2018-19 and 2019. I welcome your findings that the two campaigns assessed did not breach the Government Advertising Act and generally met the regulatory requirements.

The Department of Customer Service (DCS) is committed to ensuring all agencies continue to comply with the NSW Government advertising regulatory framework. We accept all recommendations in principle and will implement actions as outlined below to further strengthen our robust whole of government guidance and processes.

**By 30 June 2021, the Department of Customer Service will:**

- 1. update its guidance to ensure that post-campaign evaluations are not used to measure sentiment towards the government.**

DCS response:

- Current guidance reflects that campaigns should be apolitical in line with section 6 of the *Government Advertising Act 2011*. This is already reinforced through DCS guidance and peer review.
- Understanding customer needs and views is important to enable agencies to ensure services, programs and communication are delivered effectively.
- Prior to 30 June 2021, the [nsw.gov.au](http://nsw.gov.au) website will be updated to ensure such evaluation directly connects to campaign objectives.

- 2. review its guidance and the new process for campaign review to ensure that they support agencies to comply with all requirements set out in the Act, the regulations and the guidelines including common areas of deficiency such as**

- **the development of campaign objectives and targets that are sufficient to fully measure campaign effectiveness.**

DCS response:

- In April 2020, DCS introduced a campaign objective template as part of the peer review process for FY 20/21 campaigns. This template ensures all objectives are measurable and targets are set prior to campaign commencement.
- Prior to 30 June 2021, DCS will provide further guidance to agencies on setting appropriate campaigns objectives. Through peer review of all campaigns greater than \$250,000 DCS will continue to ensure objectives are set appropriately by agencies using the best available insights and benchmarks and, for repeat campaigns, there is strong evidence of campaign effectiveness before subsequent phases are approved.
- **identifying options other than advertising that could be used to achieve campaign objectives and assessing the costs and benefits of these options when a cost benefit analysis is required under the Act.**

DCS response:

- DCS has further reviewed the responses of agencies examined in the audit and the regulatory and policy guidance on government advertising.
- DCS considers that there is sufficient policy in place, in the NSW Government Advertising Guidelines and NSW Treasury's guidance on the preparation of cost benefit analyses (CBA), on the need to undertake an options analysis.
- The compliance with this framework (and internal procurement policies) is a matter for agency heads.
- Prior to 30 June 2021, DCS will however consult with agencies about the issues related to this finding and remind agencies of this policy requirement through its regular communications with agencies (website, newsletters and peer review).

If you would like more information, please contact Isobel Scouler, Director, NSW Government Brand and Campaigns.

Yours sincerely



Emma Hogan  
**Secretary**

Date: 10/11/20

## Response from Service NSW



Ms Margaret Crawford  
Auditor-General for New South Wales  
Level 19, 201 Sussex Street  
Darling Park Tower 2  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Crawford

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Performance Audit *Government Advertising 2018-19 and 2019-20* report, which assessed whether Service NSW was effective, economical and efficient and compliant in delivering of Phase 2 and 3 of our 'Cost of Living' advertising campaign in 2018-19.

I am pleased that the report concludes both phases of our campaign largely fulfilled their objectives and complied with the regulatory requirements. Since the time period audited, the Cost of Living program has continued to expand, offering over 70 rebates and savings. Altogether, these programs have saved the people of NSW over \$3 billion. This campaign was instrumental in the continuing success of this program, driving significant increases in uptake and awareness of the range of rebates and savings available.

While there are many variables that drive our customers' choices, our goal is to present timely and engaging information about how Service NSW can help make their lives easier. The response across diverse demographics indicates we were able to deliver that. This is echoed in our final campaign evaluation report, which revealed that in many instances the media strategy exceeded its targets. This report included metrics on all advertised savings and rebates; however, several of these metrics were not set until after the peer review process, as the list of savings to be included was not yet finalised.

The campaign process also researched sentiment to establish whether customers considered the key messages to be trusted and believable. As with this campaign, we will ensure future campaigns continue to comply with DCS guidelines, including those on measuring sentiment.

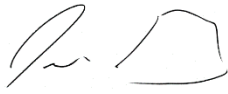
Service NSW has also reflected on the insights gained over the course of this campaign. Thank you for highlighting some of these in the report. I am pleased to advise that our planning for future campaigns has taken these into consideration.

Service NSW will provide our full support to the Department of Customer Service on any actions arising from this audit, and we look forward to conducting future campaigns under the new cluster arrangements resulting from Machinery of Government changes last year.

I would like to again thank you and your team for your work on this audit and the insights it has provided.

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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Damon Rees  
Chief Executive Officer  
Service NSW

10/11/2020

# Response from NSW Rural Fire Service



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Ms Margaret Crawford  
NSW Auditor-General  
GPO Box 12  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Your ref: D2022690/PAXX  
Our ref: DOC20/203041

Dear Ms Crawford

26 OCT 2020

## Performance Audit – Government Advertising 2018–19 and 2019–20

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2020 regarding the Performance Audit of the NSW Rural Fire Service 'How Fireproof Is Your Plan' public awareness campaign.

The Service's advertising and public awareness campaigns have been a critical component in improving community safety, particularly during the devastating bush fire season of 2019-20.

The recent fire season was unprecedented in terms of fire danger, fire activity and the impact on the community. It also saw a remarkable response from the community, responding to our efforts to ensure people planned and prepared.

During the past season, the proportion of people with some form of plan for a bush fire increased from the benchmark of 70 percent to 77 percent at the conclusion of the season. Importantly, the campaign also underlined the critical long term approach to improving community safety, such as through these activities. Since the introduction of the Prepare Act Survive campaign in 2009, the rate of planning has increased from 30 percent.

The NSW RFS notes the outcomes of the performance audit and will seek to incorporate the findings of the audit into future campaigns.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to the report, and to your team's engagement with the NSW RFS during the audit.

Yours sincerely

  
Rob Rogers AFSM  
Commissioner

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