

Report snapshot

About this report

The *Government Advertising Act 2011* requires the Auditor-General to undertake a performance audit of the activities of one or more government agencies in relation to government advertising campaigns in each financial year.

This year, we examined two campaigns run by Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) - 'Don't trust your tired self' (DTYTS) and 'Saving lives on country roads' (SLCR). The audit assessed whether they were carried out effectively, economically, and efficiently, and complied with regulatory and policy requirements.

Audit findings

The DTYTS campaign complied with all requirements set out in the Act, the Regulation, and

Government Advertising Guidelines - except for the requirement to complete an approved and complying cost-benefit analysis (CBA), as per the Guidelines.

The campaign had a clear target audience. It achieved many of its stated objectives and other performance measures and represented an economical and efficient spend.

However, TfNSW has not measured the campaign's long-term impact and this, combined with the lack of a complying CBA, meant that TfNSW could not confidently demonstrate the campaign's effectiveness.

The SLCR campaign (which commenced in 2017) was last run fully in 2021–22. TfNSW could have improved the formal documentation of its decision-making process when it cancelled the SLCR campaign.

TfNSW continued to run state-wide advertising campaigns – with regional components - to address road safety in regional NSW.

Recommendations

By 31 October 2024, TfNSW should implement processes that ensure:

1. CBAs prepared for government advertising campaigns comply with the Government Advertising Guidelines
2. long-term impacts of advertising campaigns are evaluated
3. strategic and operational decision-making about advertising campaigns, such as starting, stopping or significantly changing a campaign, is well-documented and follows good practice.

Fast facts

\$131.5m

The amount spent by the NSW Government on media advertising in 2022–23 (media expenditure is a subset of total advertising spend)

\$27.2m

Total expenditure on road safety campaigns in 2021–22 (latest available)

5.0m

Approximate number of active licence holders in NSW (as at June 2023)

\$3.0m

Approximate cost of running the 'Don't trust your tired self' campaign in 2022–23

\$3.1m

Total cost of running the 'Saving lives on country roads' campaign in 2021–22 (the last full year in which it was run)