

Report highlights

What the report is about

The *Government Advertising Act 2011* requires the Auditor-General to undertake a performance audit on government advertising activities each financial year.

This audit examined whether TAFE NSW's annual advertising campaign in 2021–22:

1. was carried out effectively, economically, and efficiently
2. complied with regulatory requirements and the Government Advertising Guidelines.

What we found

TAFE NSW complied with Section 6 of the Act, prohibiting political content.

It also complied with most other advertising requirements.

An important exception was that the Managing Director certified that the campaign complied with regulatory requirements and was an efficient and cost-effective means of achieving its public purpose, before a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) was completed.

We have found issues with agencies complying with CBA requirements in previous government advertising audits. This includes the failure to complete them before signing compliance certificates.

The policy owner, the Department of Customer Service (DCS), does not consider oversight of CBAs to be within the scope of their peer review process.

TAFE NSW evaluated this advertising campaign by surveying a population significantly broader than the target audience. As such, survey results may not accurately reflect the views of the intended audience.

What we recommended

By 30 June 2023, TAFE NSW should:

1. implement processes that ensure:
 - a) CBAs are completed before the launch of campaigns over \$1 million
 - b) compliance certificates are completed only after all regulatory requirements are met
2. consider adding to its current evaluation methods by surveying a population which closely reflects the age profile of its intended target audience.

By June 2023, DCS should:

3. improve whole-of-government reporting and monitoring processes to provide the NSW Government with a central view of compliance, including the completion of CBAs by agencies.

Fast facts

\$15.25m

was approved for this TAFE NSW campaign

\$1m+

is the threshold under the *Government Advertising Act 2011* where a cost-benefit analysis is required

550,000

leads or enquiries was a TAFE NSW target for 2021–22

79%

of advertising spend by TAFE NSW in this campaign related to the purchase of media, such as social media advertisements, out of home advertising, or print

\$135.46m

spent overall by public service agencies across NSW on advertising in 2021–22