

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2018 - 2019**

Outcome: Cross-portfolio

Education and Employment Legislation Committee

Tabled doc #: 14

Department of Education and Training Question

Tabled by: Dr Michele Brunige

Date: 5/6/18

Senator Jacinta Collins asked on 31 May 2018.

Question

Can you provide further information about how the department has addressed the principles as provided to ICC (redacted document).

Answer

The department would like to clarify that the Independent Communications Committee (ICC) received a full version of the statement against the principles, not the redacted version as provided as part of the department's response to SQ18-000193.

Considering the request of the committee, the department has further reviewed the statement against the principles and has decided to release the full, un-redacted version of the statement as provided to the ICC (see attached).

The ICC also received the following documents to support their consideration of whether the department was capable of complying with principles 1-4 as outlined in the *Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities* (the Guidelines):

- Communication strategy
- Developmental research report, and
- Media overview and media strategy developed by the Government's master media agency (Dentsu X).

The department is not able to provide a copy of the Communication Strategy, Developmental research report or Media overview and media strategy as this was considered by the relevant sub-committee of Cabinet to inform decisions on the campaign.

Statement Against the Principles of the *Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities*

Department/Entity:	Department of Education and Training
Campaign name:	The <i>Quality Schools</i> communication campaign

Principle 1: Campaigns should be relevant to government responsibilities

The subject matter of the campaign is directly related to the Government's responsibilities.

It is underpinned by:

- legislative authority; or
- appropriation of the Parliament; or
- a Cabinet Decision which is intended to be implemented during the current Parliament.

The purpose of the campaign is to:

- inform the public of new, existing or proposed government policies, or policy revisions;
- provide information on government programs or services or revisions to programs or services to which the public are entitled;
- inform consideration of issues;
- disseminate scientific, medical or health and safety information; or
- provide information on the performance of government to facilitate accountability to the public.

Please provide a statement against the relevant points to demonstrate current compliance, or planned actions that will result in compliance with Principle 1.

1. The Australian Government's *Quality Schools* package, announced on 2 May 2017, will make Commonwealth school funding transparent, consistent and based on need.
2. Legislation relating to the package, the *Australian Education Amendment Bill 2017* was passed by the Australian Parliament on 23 June 2017.
3. Under the amended *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) the Australian Government will deliver an additional \$23.4 billion in funding for Australian schools over the next 10 years, bringing total Commonwealth recurrent funding to \$247.2 billion over that period.
4. An outline of the *Quality Schools* package is available at www.education.gov.au/qualityschools.
5. The communication campaign supports the Government's responsibilities to inform parents of school aged children, education professionals and the general public about the increase to school funding and other changes associated with the package.
6. The campaign has been informed by developmental research undertaken in July 2017.
7. The research supported the need for a national communication campaign underpinned by two communication objectives:
 - a. Inform about and increase awareness of the changes to school funding.
 - b. Provide education professionals with information to lead the discussion and answer any questions on the new funding arrangements.
8. The research indicated the audience had a high level of interest in how the funding will be used to help students, with a particular interest in their own child/children. The communication campaign will equip the audience with the material they need to be informed of the package as it is

implemented, and understand how it relates to their child/children or their school.

Principle 2: Campaigns should be presented in an objective, fair and accessible manner and be designed to meet the objectives of the campaign

- Campaigns should enable the recipients of the information to distinguish between facts, comment, opinion and analysis.
- Where information is presented as a fact, it should be accurate and verifiable. When making a factual comparison, the campaign should not attempt to mislead the recipient about the situation with which the comparison is made and it should state explicitly the basis for the comparison.
- Pre-existing policies, products, services and activities should not be presented as new.
- Special attention should be paid to communicating with any information disadvantaged individuals or groups identified as being within the target audience. Particular attention should be paid to meeting the information needs of Indigenous Australians, the rural community and those for who English is not a convenient language in which to receive information.
- Imagery used in campaigns should reflect the diverse range of Australians. There should be recognition of the full participation of women, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities by realistically portraying their interests, lifestyles and contributions to Australian society.
- Campaigns should be tested with target audiences to indicate they are engaging and perform well against the objectives of the campaign.

Please provide a statement against the points above to demonstrate current compliance, or planned actions that will result in compliance with Principle 2.

1. All content appearing in the *Quality Schools* campaign will enable audiences to distinguish between fact, comment, opinion and analysis. Care will be taken to ensure scripts and language used makes this distinction clear.
2. Campaign messages will factually reflect the intent of the changes to school funding.
3. The department will ensure pre-existing policies, services and activities are not represented as new in any creative material by ensuring the appropriate tense and tone is applied.
4. A copy of the *Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities* will be provided to all creative agencies tendering for the *Quality Schools* campaign creative contract. The importance of all Principles, including Principle 2 will be stressed to the successful agency.
5. All statements appearing in paid advertising material will be examined and verified by the policy area responsible for schools reform within the Department of Education and Training.

Special Audiences

6. The planned campaign media strategy has a national scope, including regional and rural audiences.
7. The department will work with Dentsu Mitchell Media Australia, the Australian Government's Master Media Agency, to ensure the media buy reflects the communication needs of these audiences.
8. The campaign media also includes messaging to address Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) audiences.
9. Dentsu Mitchell Media Australia has considered Indigenous audiences using the campaign objectives and Indigenous research data. The proposed media plan includes media placements in Indigenous television, press, radio and digital sites tailored for Indigenous audiences.
10. Dentsu Mitchell Media Australia's recommended approach for reaching CALD audiences has been

developed with reference to both the objectives for the campaign and CALD research data. Radio, press and digital materials will be translated into four community languages, based on recommendations from Denstu Mitchell Media Australia and include Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese).

11. The communication needs of people living in remote, rural and regional areas have also been considered. Regional radio, television and online video will be used to ensure messages meet the needs of these groups.
12. All materials will be assessed for accessibility, and where necessary, provided in alternative formats. The department's campaign website will meet the WCAG 2.0 AA guidelines, meaning the material published to the site will be accessible, and video material will be available with closed captions and scripts.

Use of imagery

13. Imagery used in the campaign materials will reflect the diversity of Australians, and creative materials will be tested with research participants representing CALD and Indigenous audiences.

Campaign material to be tested with target audiences

14. All creative materials will be concept tested by an independent market research agency to ensure they are engaging and perform well against the objectives of the campaign.
15. Concept testing will include parents of school aged children, education professionals, and the general public, including CALD and Indigenous audiences.
16. The department intends to engage a research agency to conduct benchmark, tracking and evaluation research as part of the campaign.
17. This research agency will be responsible for:
 - a. benchmark research—to establish audience awareness levels immediately prior to campaign implementation
 - b. tracking research—conducted throughout the campaign, and
 - c. evaluation research – undertaken once the campaign has concluded to determine its effectiveness in achieving the stated objectives.

Principle 3: Campaigns should be objective and not directed at promoting party political interests

- Campaigns must be presented in objective languages and free of political argument.
- Campaigns must not try to foster a positive impression of a particular political party or promote party political interests.

Campaigns must not:

- mention the party in Government by name;
- directly attack or scorn the views, policies or actions of others such as the policies and opinions of opposition parties or groups;
- include party-political slogans or images;
- influence public support for a political party, a candidate for election, a Minister or a Member of Parliament; or
- refer or link to the websites of politicians or political parties.

Please provide a statement against the points above to demonstrate current compliance, or planned actions that will result in compliance with Principle 3.

1. The department will ensure the *Quality Schools* campaign will present messages in an objective

manner. This will be achieved by ensuring the language used in advertising is informed by market research and does not foster a positive impression of a particular political party or their interests.

2. The campaign materials will not:
 - a. mention the party in government by name
 - b. directly attack or scorn the views, policies or actions of others such as opposition parties or groups
 - c. include party-political slogans or images
 - d. influence public support for a political party, a candidate for election, a Minister or a Member of Parliament, or
 - e. refer or link to the websites of politicians or political parties.
3. All campaign key messages will be factual, have been developed based on existing research findings, and will be further informed by concept testing with the target audiences.
4. Phase two of the campaign targeting parents will be further informed by the findings from the segmentation research and the evaluation of the phase one digital advertising.
5. At this stage potential campaign headlines/taglines have not been identified. The department will ensure no political slogans or taglines are used. Similarly, campaign material will not contain messages, images or voice-overs from government Ministers or representatives. Campaign messages will focus on the changes to school funding and what this means for the individual student or school.
6. The website address for this campaign is education.gov.au/qualityschools. It will feature the campaign creative and advertising materials, along with detailed information about the changes.
7. All materials will contain the appropriate Australian Government authorisation statement.

Principle 4: Campaigns should be justified and undertaken in an efficient, effective and relevant manner

- Campaigns should only be instigated where a need is demonstrated, target recipients are clearly identified and the campaign is informed by appropriate research or evidence.
- Campaign information should clearly and directly affect the interest of recipients.
- The medium and volume of the advertising activities should be cost effective and justifiable within the budget allocated to the campaign.
- Distribution of unsolicited material should be carefully controlled.
- Campaigns should be evaluated to determine effectiveness.

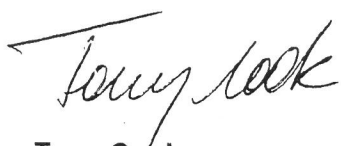
Please provide a statement against the points above to demonstrate current compliance, or planned actions that will result in compliance with Principle 4.

1. Developmental research undertaken to inform the *Quality Schools* campaign in July 2017 indicated a very low level of awareness of the *Quality School* reforms among parents, teachers and the broader community.
2. The research found there is a readiness among the community to embrace changes designed to deliver more funding to Australian schools. The community is keen to see investment that will boost school performance overall and ensure all Australian children are given the opportunity to be the best they can be. There is also a strong common desire to see a robust and well-funded government school sector that can meet the vast array of needs of school students but not at the expense of other school sectors.
3. The research also indicated that the Government has a clear role in communicating the school reforms and changes to school funding. The audience consider the Department of Education and

Training as a credible source.

4. The developmental research revealed the audience were interested in the topic once they were aware of it and were particularly interested in how the funding will be used to help achieve student outcomes.
5. The developmental research recommended the department should seek to fill the gap in awareness about the package to the target audience, with particular attention to parents of school age children, teachers and school leaders or principals.
6. In the research, parents identified that they rely on education professions (teachers and school leaders or principals) to provide information that is objective and trustworthy.
7. The developmental research highlighted the importance of engaging with teachers and school leaders or principals. This has a two-pronged benefit, providing information for teachers and school leaders or principals for their own understanding and also providing them with information to share with parents.
8. Parents of school children are also another target audience because the reforms affect them. They also have a desire for more information and to see the quality of schools and student outcomes lifted across all sectors.
9. Segmentation research has been conducted with parents of school aged children. This is an extension of the developmental research and will help to inform communication activity and creative development for phase two of the campaign. A campaign is planned across television and online video, radio, out of home and digital advertising. These channels were informed by the research and recommended by Dentsu Mitchell Media Australia, as the most effective way to reach target audiences based on the budget.
10. The distribution of material will be carefully controlled. Materials are proposed to be sent electronically to intermediaries through Dentsu Mitchell Media Australia.
11. Formal benchmark, tracking and evaluation research will measure the effectiveness of the campaign.
12. Tracking research will provide valuable feedback on the success of the campaign, and will help inform any refinements. It will determine whether the key messages are reaching audiences, how effectively they are being communicated, and which channels or activities are achieving the most cut-through.
13. Post-campaign evaluation research will help determine whether the campaign has achieved the objectives outlined in the communication strategy.
14. Dentsu Mitchell Media Australia will provide a post-campaign analysis of the advertising activity from a value-for-money perspective.

I have reviewed and approve this Statement Against the Principles of the *Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities* for submission.



Tony Cook
Associate Secretary, Schools and Youth
Department of Education and Training

Date: 27/09/2017

