

## Recommendations

**Recommendation no.1** The *Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities* be strengthened to ensure that:

**Paragraph 2.22**

- (a) campaigns *must* be relevant to government responsibilities (Principle 1);
- (b) campaigns *must* be presented in an objective, fair and accessible manner and be designed to meet the objectives of the campaign (Principle 2);
- (c) campaigns *must* be objective and not directed at promoting party political interests (Principle 3); and
- (d) campaigns *must* be justified and undertaken in an efficient, effective and relevant manner (Principle 4).

**Department of Finance response:** *Noted.*

**Recommendation no.2** The Australian Government amend the terms of reference for the third-party compliance advisory function (currently undertaken by the Independent Communications Committee) to enable it to review and advise on:

**Paragraph 2.38**

- (a) campaigns at any stage of development; and
- (b) final advertising materials, including creative materials and the media plan.

**Department of Finance response:** *Noted.*

**Recommendation no.3** The Department of Finance improve the transparency of its annual reporting on campaign expenditure by:

**Paragraph 2.52**

- (a) reporting a total expenditure figure for all campaigns that consolidates media spend, 'consultants, services and other costs', and GST; and
- (b) separating the Australian Electoral Commission's advertising spend relating to general elections from the overall media placement spend.

**Department of Finance response:** *Partially agreed.*

**Recommendation no.4** The Australian Government require entities to report on the government approved budget for any new campaign or any new phase of an existing campaign, as soon as possible after launching the campaign or new phase.

**Paragraph 2.58**

**Department of Finance response:** *Noted.*

### **Physical Activity for Young Women campaign (Chapter 4)**

30. Health undertook most of the necessary review and certification requirements for the Physical Activity for Young Women campaign. Health's Secretary certified all campaign phases before they commenced. Health did not provide its Minister with a copy of the Secretary's Certifications prior to the launch of each phase, as required by the guidelines. Publication requirements were undertaken.

31. The campaign was: relevant to government responsibilities; presented in an objective and accessible manner; and campaign messaging was not directed at promoting party political interests. The campaign justification was an identified public health need and the department followed a media plan and the master media agency's advice for efficient and effective media placement. There was a variance of \$1 million between actual expenditure and the figure reported in Finance's annual report to Parliament, due to the approach adopted for reporting expenditures to Finance. There is no basis on which to assess the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the campaign, as Health did not evaluate the impact of campaign events, merchandise or campaign partnerships on the physical activity of young women. Health sought advice on compliance with legal requirements. There was compliance with procurement policies and procedures, with the exception of some contract publication timeframes.

32. Each phase of the campaign was evaluated, with the Phase 3 evaluation providing an overview of the entire campaign. Health did not develop performance targets until Phase 3 and did not report performance against these targets in the final evaluation report. The evaluations reported high reach but there was little evidence of impact on the physical activity levels of the target audience. Phase 3 was undertaken at a cost of \$6 million, notwithstanding evaluations indicating that the campaign was unlikely to change behaviour in the short term.

### **National Child Care Plan campaign (Chapter 5)**

33. Education undertook the necessary review, certification and publication requirements for the National Child Care Plan campaign. The Independent Communications Committee reviewed the two campaign phases together. The Secretary's certification was aided by a thorough briefing pack, including a checklist developed by the department to ensure compliance with the guidelines.

34. The campaign was: relevant to government responsibilities; presented in an objective and accessible manner; and campaign messaging was not directed at promoting party political interests. The campaign justification was that it communicated changed administrative and financial arrangements directly affecting families, and policy changes requiring families to take action to update their personal details. Education adopted the recommended media plan which advised on how to achieve efficient and effective reach for the campaign. Education sought advice on compliance with legal requirements and largely complied with procurement requirements for the campaign.

35. The department closely monitored traffic to the campaign website and media channel performance to assess effectiveness, and reported positive results for the campaign. Education evaluated the campaign, but in the absence of specific performance targets for public awareness, transition, webpage traffic and stakeholder activity, there is no basis to fully evaluate the success of the campaign.