

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2009 (May 2009)

Prime Minister and Cabinet

Department/Agency: Australian National Audit Office

Outcome/Output Group:

Topic: Government Advertising

Senator: Ronaldson

Question reference number: PM93

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Number of pages: 2

Question:

No, this is a climate change ad campaign of \$13.95 million which was cancelled early this month. Of the \$13.95 million appropriated under appropriation bill No. 3, \$8.8 million was spent and then it was canned. It was just cancelled. I am asking you whether you are going to undertake an audit of that wasted \$8.8 million?

Answer:

On 18 July 2008 the Auditor-General issued his review report Climate Change Household Action Advertising Campaign that commenced on 20 July 2008.

The funding of up to \$14 million for this campaign was approved by the acting Prime Minister on 9 July 2008 and \$13.951 million was provided for this purpose through the 2008-09 Additional Estimates process.

The ANAO notes that the Department of Climate Change, in response to a Question on Notice arising from the February 2009 Additional Budget Estimates Hearings, advised the Finance and Public Administration Committee that some \$5.2 million remained unspent from its original advertising budget for the 2008 Climate Change advertising campaign. Funds remained unspent because originally planned advertising had been cancelled. The Department advised that:

(t)he decision to cancel placements was made because the Department felt the advertisement had already achieved substantial market coverage and penetration and the campaign objectives of raising awareness of the impacts of climate change so Australians could 'have their say' were unlikely to be enhanced by further advertising at that time.

The Department further advised the Committee that "No further advertising is being planned by the Department of Climate Change at this stage."

The ANAO understands that the Department of Climate Change has monitored the impact of advertising in train and ceased further advertising activity once it became apparent that campaign objectives had been realised. The ANAO does not, at this time, propose to initiate a review of this particular matter.