

ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue

Budget Estimates – May 2026

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Government Advertising

Subject/Issue

Campaign advertising activity and media expenditure.

Key facts and figures

- *Campaign advertising:*
 - informs the community about government policy, programs and services, and helps to change behaviours.
 - totalled \$204.1 million in 2024–25. Further detail is available in Finance’s *2024–25 Campaign Advertising by Australian Government Departments and Agencies Report* which was published on the Finance website in December 2025.
 - expenditure for 2025–26 up to the end of March 2026 was \$106.1 million.
- *Campaign advertising governance:*
 - Guidelines on Advertising and Information Campaigns are in place. If a campaign is above \$250,000, accountable authorities (e.g. Departmental Secretaries) are required to certify that the campaign complies with the Guidelines.
 - The Independent Communications Committee (ICC) provides advice to accountable authorities on whether campaigns are capable of complying with Principles 1-4 of the Guidelines. There are three members of the ICC, all appointed in July 2023.

Key points

- **For 2024–25**, campaign advertising expenditure by non-corporate Commonwealth entities by media channel was:

	Expenditure (\$ million)								Expenditure (\$ million)	
Media Channel	TV	Press	Radio	Magazine	Digital	Out of Home	Cinema	TOTAL	Ethnic	Indig.
Total	59.3	2.3	16.7	0.3	97.4	21.9	6.2	204.1	11.9	7.2

Note: Ethnic and Indigenous is a sub-component of the \$204.1m.
Figures are rounded to one decimal place. Discrepancies in tables between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.
All figures are gross media spend (exclusive of GST).

- The Government invested in several important campaigns in 2024–25 to change social behaviour, including on issues of Consent, Youth Vaping, and Domestic and Family Violence.

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- In addition, several campaigns focussed on raising awareness of government supports available to ease the cost-of-living pressures, including the Cheaper Medicines campaign.
- There were also recurring campaigns on topics such as Defence Force Recruiting and childhood immunisation.
- **For 2025–26**, government investment in campaigns has focussed on initiatives such as Bulk Billing, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, National Tobacco and Smoking Cessation, Act Now Stay Secure and the Social Media Minimum Age Limit.
- Advertising expenditure is reconciled after the campaign is placed in the media e.g. following appearance on television or on digital platforms.
- Specific questions on campaign budgets are best directed to the relevant entities undertaking the campaign.

Expenditure with individual media outlets

- This commercially sensitive information is not released.
 - The disclosure of the Australian Government's expenditure with individual media outlets could have an adverse effect on the Government's ability to secure competitive media rates.

National Fuel Security Plan campaign

- The National Fuel Security Plan campaign launched on 13 April 2026.
- The campaign aims to increase awareness of the National Fuel Security Plan and encourage Australians to adopt simple, practical behaviours that reduce fuel consumption and support fuel security.
- The campaign was considered by the ICC on 9 April 2026 and was assessed of being capable of complying with the Guidelines on Advertising and Information Campaigns for Non-corporate Commonwealth Entities (Guidelines).
- The Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts certified that the campaign complied with the Guidelines on 12 April 2026.
- Any further questions on the campaign should be directed to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts.

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- Advice on the suitability of social media platforms for Government advertising is provided by Universal McCann, on a campaign-by-campaign basis
- Universal McCann has processes and technology in place to mitigate brand safety risks.
- Universal McCann also has an ongoing role in monitoring adherence by media outlets to brand safety requirements across their digital platforms.
- Questions about specific campaigns should be directed to the relevant department.

Age restrictions on the use of social media platforms

- Given high levels of consumption of social media platforms, they are often employed to extend the reach of campaign activity across multiple audiences.
- The Government has not banned social media. The change relates to age restrictions for using the platforms.
- Demographics of social media users can vary depending on the platform.

Regional newspaper advertising expenditure commitment

- The Government has committed to directing \$3.0 million of annual advertising expenditure to the regional newspaper sector from 2025–26 to 2026–27.
- The government is on track to meet this commitment for 2025–26 as the use of regional newspapers has been expanded and used across multiple advertising campaigns including:
 - Act Now Stay Secure (Home Affairs),
 - Social Media Minimum Age (Communications),
 - Bulk Billing (Health),
 - PBS Awareness (Health), and
 - Housing (Treasury).

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Campaigns currently running in the media above \$250,000

Agency	Campaign
<i>Attorney-General's Department</i>	<u><i>Child Safety</i></u> <i>Aims to encourage adults to learn and take proactive steps to protect children and young people from child sexual abuse.</i>
<i>Australian Securities and Investment Commission</i>	<u><i>Moneysmart Super in Retirement</i></u> <i>Increase awareness of the free and independent superannuation and retirement resources available on Moneysmart.</i>
<i>Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade)</i>	<u><i>Go Global Toolkit</i></u> <i>Aims to create awareness and drive use of the tools, information and support available at the Go Global Toolkit.</i>
	<u><i>Southeast Asian Trade and Investment Opportunities</i></u> <i>Aims to raise awareness of the opportunities for Australian businesses to diversify and strengthen supply chains by sourcing goods and services from Southeast Asia and promote the benefits of outbound investment.</i>
<i>Department of Defence</i>	<u><i>Defence Force Recruiting</i></u> <i>Aims to generate sufficient enquiries for positions available in the Defence Force and to educate audiences in the diversity of roles in Defence.</i>
<i>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</i>	<u><i>Smartraveller</i></u> <i>Aims to motivate Australians to better prepare themselves for overseas travel and be more self-reliant in managing their own safety and security when abroad.</i>
<i>Department of Health, Disability, and Ageing</i>	<u><i>Childhood Immunisation</i></u> <i>Aims to inform parents and carers of the benefits of childhood vaccinations and increase intention to ensure children complete the recommended vaccination schedule on time.</i>
	<u><i>Maternal RSV</i></u> <i>Aims to increase awareness of the serious risks of RSV in young children and increase uptake of the vaccine among eligible pregnant women.</i>
	<u><i>National Menopause and Perimenopause</i></u> <i>Aims to improve health outcomes and experiences of women through perimenopause and menopause.</i>

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	<u>National Tobacco and E-Cigarettes</u> Aims to contribute to a reduction in smoking and vaping prevalence, particularly among priority and at-risk populations.
	<u>Urgent Care Clinics</u> The campaign aims to increase local awareness of Medicare UCCs and the services available so Australians know when they can visit a UCC and when they should seek emergency, or routine, care.
	<u>Winter Vaccination</u> Aims to increase understanding of how the COVID-19, RSV and influenza vaccinations limit severe disease, and support uptake of the vaccinations in people 65 years and older (50 years and older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders).
	<u>Youth Vaping</u> Aims to increase and reinforce awareness of the harms of vaping, and the availability of cessation support services for young people.
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts	<u>National Fuel Security Plan</u> Aims to encourage drivers to adopt simple, practical behaviors that reduce fuel consumption, to reduce pressure on communities with fewer choices.

New Government Communications Campaign Arrangement

If asked about the procurement process for the new Village Model

- Finance undertook multiple rounds of industry consultation on the re-tender. Feedback from those consultation processes was considered and where relevant, helped shape the approach to the procurement and the new arrangement.
- Tender evaluation is currently underway.

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Background

Campaign framework

Non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertaking advertising campaigns in Australia are subject to the *Guidelines on Advertising and Information Campaigns* (Guidelines).

The Guidelines contain five overarching principles which set out the context in which Commonwealth Government campaigns are to be conducted.

- Principle 1: Campaigns must be relevant to government responsibilities.
- Principle 2: Campaigns must be presented in an objective, fair and accessible manner and be designed to meet the objectives of the campaign.
- Principle 3: Campaigns must be objective and not directed at promoting party political interests.
- Principle 4: Campaigns should be justified and undertaken in an efficient, effective and relevant manner.
- Principle 5: Campaigns must comply with legal requirements and procurement policies and procedures.

The Finance Minister can exempt a campaign from compliance with the Guidelines on the basis of a national emergency, extreme urgency or other compelling reason. Where an exemption is approved, the decision is formally recorded and reported to the Parliament as soon as is practicable. No exemptions have been provided under the current Government. Campaign advertising relates to major public communications and advertising activities. It does not include job specific recruitment, tender or public notice advertising (non-campaign advertising).

Government Communications Committee

The Government Communications Committee (GCC) of Cabinet provides oversight and coordination of Government advertising campaigns valued above \$500,000.

- Chair: Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher.
- Deputy Chair: the Hon Jason Clare MP.
- Members: Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Senator the Hon Murray Watt, the Hon Patrick Gorman MP.

Independent Communications Committee

The Independent Communications Committee reviews advertising campaigns above the value of \$250,000 to advise relevant Accountable Authorities whether the proposed campaign is capable of complying with Principles 1 to 4 of the Guidelines.

The Committee reviews the proposed campaign's communication strategy, research and media strategy and plan. Prior to a campaign launch, the accountable authority considers the compliance advice from the Committee that certifies whether the campaign is capable of complying with the Guidelines – together with advice from their own entity with regard to Principle 5 (legal and procurement matters). This approach is consistent with the framework under the previous Government. The Committee does not review creative material.

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Current members of the Committee were appointed on 1 July 2023 after an open application process. The members are as follows:

- Chair: Meredith Fairweather.
- Members: Adam Davey, Allyson Warrington.

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) undertakes regular audits of the advertising framework. In an ANAO report released in February 2022, it stated that the ICC review process provides effective assistance to decision-makers.

Supporting information

Questions on Notice

- Estimates February 2024 (Hume QoNs):
 - F155 – Advertising and information campaigns
 - F166 – Market Research
 - F184 – Social Media influencers
 - Estimates November 2024 (Hume QoNs):
 - F102 – Advertising and information campaigns
 - QoN 3754 – (Senator Shoebridge), online advertising.
 - Estimates October 2025 (Hume QoNs):
 - F117 – Advertising and information campaigns
 - Estimates February 2026 (Hume QoNs):
 - F094 – Market Research

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- FOI 24-25/071 data on expenditure on advertising on X/Twitter from November 1 2022 until 14 November 2024, broken down by month. Response provided to applicant on 16 December 2024 and follow up review was responded to on 14 January 2025.
 - FOI 25-26/208 campaign certification documentation for the National Fuel Security Plan campaign (Infrastructure), correspondence between Finance and DCCEEW, and Finance’s consideration or approval of campaign expenditure. Response due to the applicant on 12 May 2026.

Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

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Relevant Media Reporting

[A \\$100m Big Tech blitz on taxpayer](#), Jack Quail, The Australian, 26 December 2025

[Agencies federal government ad spend of 2025](#), Jade Psihogios, AdNews, 5 January 2026

[Defence & Future Made In Australia Campaigns Power Government Ad Blitz; VML, Droga5 Win Biggest Contracts](#), Arvind Hickman, B&T, 6 January 2026

[Canberra agencies locked out of lucrative federal ad contracts](#), Ray Athwal, The Canberra Times, 15 January 2026

[Government launches multi-million-dollar fuel saving campaign](#), Lexie Jeuniewicz, ABC News 11 April 2026

Date sent to MO: 20/05/2026

Cleared by (SES): Sally Harris

Telephone No: 6215 2503

Group/Division: Business Enabling Services Group / Corporate Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone No: s22

Consultation: Nil

PDR Number: SB26-000064