

Interpreting and Applying the Guidelines for Government Advertising



Scenario: Public sector agency advertising upcoming legislative reform

A public service agency hires an external consultancy firm to create an advertising campaign about upcoming legislative reform on a politically contested topic. The consultancy firm proposes a series of short advertisements with the first focussed on the message that there is a problem, and the reforms will solve it. They suggest follow up advertisements can then provide more specific information.

Framing a campaign on a contentious topic around a problem being solved could be seen as advocating for a policy, which is the role of the Minister, not the Public Service. It would be more appropriate for each element of the campaign to be clearly focussed on the information the public needs to understand about the upcoming changes.



Practical guidance

Public service agencies can inform the public about the work of government but must be careful not to advocate for particular policies or be drawn into political debate. Government advertising must be focussed on what the public needs to know and each element of a campaign must be able to stand alone.

