



POLICY TITLE

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## **Guidelines for Government of Western Australia Advertising and Communications**

### **Basic Principles**

These Guidelines operate from the understanding that advertising and communications have a clear role to assist in the efficient and effective pursuit of public policy goals.

Government generally has the obligation to inform Western Australians about their rights, duties, responsibilities and entitlements.

Government also has the responsibility of ensuring equity, fairness, appropriateness and accountability in all of its communications with Western Australians.

These guidelines represent basic principles that should be observed by all Government agencies in the planning, development and ongoing management of Government communications.

These guidelines apply in addition to any applicable statutory requirements relating to broadcasts of political matter or advertising of electoral material.

### **Objectives of Government communications**

Public funds may be used for Government communications in the pursuit of any of the following objectives:

- To maximise compliance with the law;
- To achieve awareness of a new or amended law;
- To raise awareness of a planned or impending initiative;
- To ensure public safety, personal security or encourage responsible behaviour;
- To assist in the preservation of order in the event of a crisis or emergency;
- To promote awareness of rights, responsibilities, duties or entitlements;
- To encourage usage of or familiarity with Government products or services;
- To report on performance in relation to Government undertakings;
- To encourage social cohesion, civic pride, community spirit, tolerance or assist in the achievement of a widely supported public policy outcome;

## **Avoiding misuse of public funds**

Public funds should not be used for Government communications where:

- The party in Government is mentioned by name;
- A reasonable person could misinterpret the message as being on behalf of a political party or other grouping;
- A political party or other grouping is being disparaged or held up to ridicule;
- Members of the Government are named, depicted or otherwise promoted in a manner regarded as excessive or unreasonable;
- The method or medium of communication is manifestly excessive or extravagant in relation to the objective being pursued;
- There is no clear line of accountability, appropriate audit procedures or suitable purchasing process for the communication process;
- The Government is in caretaker mode, unless the purpose of communication is related purely to achieving compliance with the law, ensuring public safety, personal security, encouraging responsible behaviour or the preservation of order in a crisis or emergency.

## **Maintenance of high standards**

Government communications should comply with the highest standards of fairness, equity, probity and public responsibility, taking particular care to ensure:

- Compliance with all relevant state and federal privacy, electoral, broadcasting and media laws throughout every stage of the development, production and dissemination of the message;
  - Accuracy and objectivity in the presentation of all facts, statistics, comparisons and other arguments, ensuring that the source of all data is indicated or that a means for identifying the data source is provided within the communication;
  - Compliance with all relevant Government purchasing policies;
  - Sensitivity to cultural needs and issues when communicating with people from diverse ethnic or religious backgrounds;
  - Awareness of the communication requirements of groups of people who possess a disability;
  - The maintenance of the highest standards of decency and good taste in the portrayal of gender and sexuality;
  - Respect for all people, regardless of social standing, employment status, educational attainment, age, gender or any other attribute;
  - Access by groups who might otherwise be disadvantaged or disenfranchised by means of location, language or economic factors;
  - Communications are produced and disseminated by the most appropriate and environmentally responsible means taking into account the characteristics, location and size of the intended target audience;
  - All statements, claims and arguments included in the communication are able to be substantiated;
  - The target audience has a convenient means of contacting the originating Government agency so that complaints, questions, comments or requests for further information may be dealt with promptly; and
  - Compliance with all quotas, targets and policies which may be set by Government in respect of communications with groups such as culturally and linguistically diverse, rural and regional and other communities of interest or special need.
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