

MEDIA RELEASE

12 February 2025

Territory Coordinator Radio Advertisement Review

The Auditor-General, Mr Jara Dean, tabled late yesterday his report to the Legislative Assembly on a review of a radio advertisement regarding the Territory Coordinator conducted under the *Public Information Act 2010*.

The review found that the content of the radio advertisement contravened the Public Information Act.

The Auditor-General noted that Territorians have the right to know the policies and activities of their government and the information provided by the government to the public must be sufficiently detailed, factual and free of political bias.

The review of the radio advertisement, which played 96 times on commercial radio stations during November 2024, was found to contravene the Public Information Act because it:

- tried to foster a positive impression of the Government and thus promote party political interests
- was misleading because it omitted important facts relating to the role of the Territory Coordinator
- did not state that further information can be obtained on the advertised website.

'Whilst a breach of one section means that the Public Information Act was contravened,' Mr Dean explained, 'I found that the part of the radio advertisement which called for feedback and raised awareness of the proposed legislation was in the public interest.'

'In reviewing the content of the radio advertisement, I not only considered the words but viewed those words in their context and considered the purpose for which the information was given,' Mr Dean said in response to comments that conclusions reached by previous Auditors-General were different, adding that the reasons for his conclusion are described in detail in the report.

'The public should be able to make informed choices based on the information given,' Mr Dean added, noting the role of the government to provide comprehensive information.

Because the advertising campaign has concluded, no recommendations were made in relation to the radio advertisement. However, the Auditor-General called for detailed guidelines to provide a framework for taxpayer funded information and advertising campaigns by the Northern Territory Government.

The Auditor-General is currently reviewing a further three cases referred to him under the Public Information Act, including a request from the Minister for Health relating to a poster placed in the ministerial wing of Parliament House.

The complete report is available at: <https://ago.nt.gov.au/publications.php>

The Auditor-General is a statutory position established under the *Audit Act 1995*. The Auditor-General and the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office assist Parliament in the oversight of the performance of the Northern Territory Government by providing independent analysis through the conduct of audits and reviews.

The *Public Information Act 2010* requires the Auditor-General, upon receipt of a written request of a member of the Legislative Assembly or on the Auditor-General's own initiative, to conduct a review of particular public information to determine whether the Public Information Act was contravened in relation to the information.

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