

General Election Guidance 2023: Agency case studies

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Scenario 2: Advertising by a public sector agency of new products and services

During the pre-election period, an agency launches an advertising campaign to raise awareness of grants and loans available for purchasing electric bikes, vehicles and mobility scooters. The campaign forms part of New Zealand's environmental strategy.

Outcome

Generally, advertising of this nature will be appropriate where it is addressing an identified and justifiable need for information by the target audience at this time, and the content meets the standards expected of government advertising.

Principle that applies

Government advertising may inform the public of government policies, services available to them, and any entitlements or responsibilities. These may be proposed, new, revised or existing.

Practical guidance

During the pre-election period, there is a heightened risk of a perception that public funds are being used to finance publicity for party political purposes. It may be prudent to run advertising outside this pre-election period, either by delaying or bringing forward the advertising, unless there is an identified and justifiable need for the information during this period.

Government advertising must meet the following standards:

- deal only with matters that the Government has direct responsibility for
- be accurate, factual, truthful, fair, honest, and impartial
- use unbiased and objective language that is free from partisan promotion of government policy or political argument
- be lawful and proper, and
- be undertaken only where there is an identified and justifiable need for the information.

For further guidance, see Section 5: [Public sector advertising, publicity and the media](#).

