

4 May 2026

Tabatha Badger MP
Committee Chair
House of Assembly Select Committee on Caretaker Conventions
Parliament House, Hobart TAS 7000
By email: caretaker@parliament.tas.gov.au

Submission to the Select Committee on Caretaker Conventions

Dear Chair,

Pulse Media Group welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee's invitation to provide further clarity on the advertising matter referenced at item 1(d) of the Terms of Reference. We have set out below a factual account of the engagement between Pulse and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) in relation to the 2025-26 Tasmanian Budget advertising campaign.

Background and scope of the campaign

In early May 2025, DPAC approached Pulse Media Group for a proposal and quotation to advertise the Tasmanian Budget on Pulse Tasmania. This is a routine, annual procurement in which DPAC engages a range of media outlets, publications and other marketing providers each year to promote the budget to Tasmanians.

Pulse was one of several providers approved to form part of the 2025-26 Tasmanian Budget advertising campaign.

The advertising campaign initially approved on Pulse consisted of eight 24-hour Full Digital Takeovers across the Pulse Tasmania website and app, together with one Social Advertorial published on the Pulse Tasmania Facebook and Instagram accounts.

Both products are standard advertising offerings used by most major commercial news publishers in Australia, and are core pillars of Pulse's business model - enabling us to produce and freely publish local news read by more than 200,000 Tasmanians each day. These same products are routinely purchased by small and large Tasmanian businesses, not-for-profits and government departments.

What was published

DPAC used the Full Digital Takeovers on Pulse Tasmania to highlight different elements of the Tasmanian Budget across each 24-hour period. Takeovers provide 100% share of voice in industry-standard display units (MREC, Billboard, Half-Page, Leaderboard and sidebar skins) appearing around news content.

The Social Advertorial was a single Facebook/Instagram post published at 7pm on budget day (29 May 2025), headlined "What's in the latest Tassie budget for you", with an Instagram carousel highlighting key budget investments.

The post carried the disclosure label "In partnership with Tas Gov" in bold above the headline and a "Pulse Advertorial" label beneath it; the caption identified the investments as "key initiatives in the budget the government has outlined for Pulse's audience".

It followed three independently produced news articles by Pulse's editorial team in the four hours prior, covering net debt, public service cuts and the state opposition's response to the budget.

Extensions and the caretaker period

Following an interim post-campaign report showing the campaign's reach and engagement, DPAC requested a quotation for a 48-hour extension of the Full Digital Takeover product, which it subsequently booked.

DPAC then booked a further 24-hour extension, which went live at 12:01am on 11 June 2025.

Both advertising extensions consisted solely of Full Digital Takeovers, and the creative remained unchanged from the material originally supplied by DPAC at the start of the campaign in May 2025.

Following the Governor's decision to dissolve Parliament on the evening of 11 June 2025, Pulse took steps to immediately stop the remaining hours of the takeover. No DPAC advertising material was published on Pulse during the caretaker period.

Pricing and government discount

The 26% discount from standard rate card provided to DPAC is consistent with the standard government discount afforded to all Tasmanian Government departments, negotiated annually through the government's contracted master ordering agency.

The government discount provided by Pulse is, in some cases, of a lower percentage than the discounts offered to the government by other commercial media providers in Tasmania. No discount rate is provided by Pulse or other media outlets to political parties for advertisements during election campaigns.

Wider context

Full Digital Takeovers on Pulse Tasmania's website and app are routinely purchased by Tasmanian state government departments for important public awareness campaigns. During election campaigns, they have previously been purchased by the Tasmanian Electoral Commission and by various political parties.

Pulse remains willing to provide any further information or appear before the Committee if that would assist its inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Josh Agnew

Managing Director, Pulse Media Group

