

New approach to road safety advertising in NSW supporting Towards Zero

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Abstract

Road safety advertising, alongside other measures, has helped reduce the NSW road toll over time. To support implementation of the new Road Safety Plan 2021, which includes a vision of zero road trauma by 2056, a new road safety advertising strategy is being developed. NSW's traditional approach of focusing mostly on road users' behaviour will evolve to the use of greater positive appeals that focus on all parts of the 'Safe System'. This will help provide the community an understanding of all factors that reduce road trauma on NSW roads and position road safety as a shared responsibility.

Road Safety Advertising in NSW

NSW has had great success in encouraging safer road user behaviour through public education campaigns. Examples of successful campaigns are the 2006 'Pinkie' campaign 'Speeding. No one thinks big of you', which challenged young male speeding drivers by leveraging the social unacceptability of speeding. And the 2012 'Plan B' campaign, which took a humorous approach to encourage drivers to separate drinking and driving, and think about other ways to get home after drinking out. Along with other initiatives, these campaigns helped push the NSW road toll down to a record low of 307 in 2014.

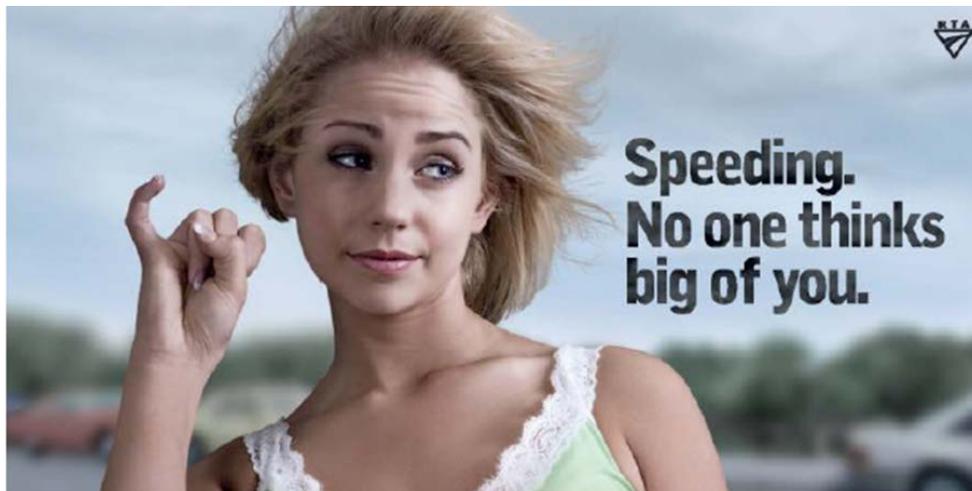


Figure 1. 'Pinkie' campaign 'Speeding. No one thinks big of you' creative



Figure 2. 'Plan B' campaign creative

However, in 2015, there was an increase in the number of lives lost on NSW roads which continued into 2016 and 2017. In 2018, the NSW Government launched the Road Safety Plan 2021 (the Plan) to reset its road safety priorities in line with its Towards Zero vision. Underpinning the Plan is the Safe System approach, which will guide the delivery of countermeasures to reduce death and injury on NSW roads.

Road safety communications in NSW have traditionally focused on behaviour change and education, directed at specific groups of individuals and issues. To support the Plan and the broader range of measures that are used to address road safety in NSW such as road safety infrastructure, safer vehicle technologies and appropriate speed limits, a new approach to road safety advertising is being developed. This approach will seek to educate the community about the Safe System to improve understanding, encourage engagement and advocacy for the range of road safety measures employed, and promote personal responsibility. It also aims to better connect with road users and influence behaviour, through better use of audience data and insights.

Research investigating community understanding of the Safe Systems approach found many do not understand and therefore do not see a safe system in operation, rather the management of road safety is seen as reactive (Senate SHJ, 2018). Conversely, when explained, the reaction to the Safe Systems approach was largely positive, with the concept implying greater alignment and coordination of road safety efforts, as well as creating a narrative that supports a better understanding of the full range of measures that are implemented to address road safety.

The new strategy will shift advertising to an audience segmented approach, where appropriate. This will facilitate more effective targeting and messaging for specific groups, and will underpin a step-change in broader community support for road safety.

Conclusion

A new approach to road safety advertising will demonstrate NSW's holistic approach to reducing road trauma through the proven initiatives under the Safe System and build community confidence in NSW's approach to improving road safety. It will also provide an opportunity to highlight to all road users in NSW the role they play in the Safe System and Towards Zero.

References

Senate SHJ (2018) *Audience Segmentation for Road Safety*. Unpublished report prepared for Transport for NSW