

**Evaluation of
Public Education Campaign
Phase 1: New South Wales**



ACTIVE AUSTRALIA
Evaluation of Public Education Campaign
Phase 1 New South Wales
February / March 1998

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Active Australia campaign (phase 1) was conducted in NSW during February and March 1998 with an implementation budget of \$700,000. The target group comprised people aged 25-60 who were 'motivated but insufficiently active'. The campaign comprised a General Practitioner mailing component to engage the support of all GPs in NSW; paid television advertising (2 x 15 second television commercials); paid print advertisements in metropolitan and rural press; a multilingual component for NESB men and women (print resources in 30 languages, advertising and PR in the ethnic press, ethnic radio interviews and advertisements); a mainstream public relations strategy to optimise unpaid media coverage; community level support from Area Health Service and Sport and Recreation Regional staff (including a '13' telephone line); and campaign merchandise.
- NSW Health was principal sponsor, supported by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS), NSW Sport and Recreation, and the National Heart Foundation (NSW). Similarities between the NSW Physical Activity Task Force and the National frameworks for Active Australia, especially in their respective directions for public education, allowed the NSW campaign to benefit from the expertise and resources of an intersectoral partnership spanning both State and National levels. This feature required careful coordination but was an important factor contributing to the success of the campaign.
- Extensive formative research was conducted enabling the management team to set communication objectives, segment target audiences, develop and pre-test campaign concepts and advertising materials.
- The evaluation provided evidence of positive campaign effects occurring in NSW that were absent in other Australian States where the campaign had yet to occur. Campaign evaluation was funded by NSW Health. It was undertaken in conjunction with a national Active Australia survey funded by ASC, DHFS and participating States.
- Process, impact and outcome measures are reported. For outcome measures, it is important to note that these were tracked over a six month period only, from November '97 to April '98 and that in general, there were background trends for a decline in sufficient activity during this period, perhaps due to seasonal influences on participation.

- Evaluation findings for campaign awareness and impact show gains for the NSW population. Analysis of individuals who changed their behaviour between baseline and follow-up surveys showed that the positive changes were confined largely to the campaign target group of “motivated but insufficiently active” people. Findings for knowledge, and physical activity participation rates showed improvement or maintenance in the NSW population, while they showed slight declines in the comparison population during the same period.
- The results indicate that the objectives for phase 1 of the campaign were largely achieved. They also point to the need to consider the likelihood of seasonal effects on participation rates when evaluating physical activity campaigns and other interventions.

Campaign Objectives

The campaign objectives were to:

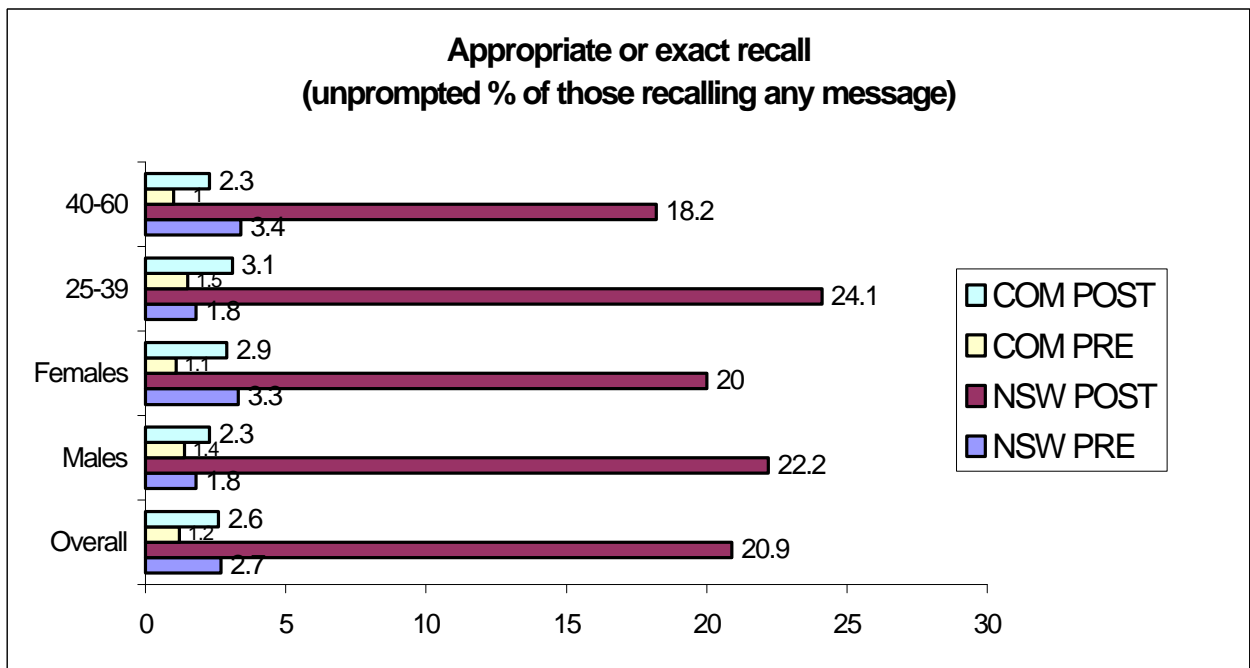
- (a) Increase awareness of the benefits of regular, moderate physical activity among:
 - General Practitioners (and other health professionals, sport recreation & fitness professionals)
 - Men and Women aged 25 - 60 who were MOTIVATED but insufficiently active.
- (b) Maintain motivation (avoid alienation) amongst people who were already sufficiently active and amongst people who may participate in vigorous activity through organised forms of sport and recreation.
- (c) Increase target population awareness of the 30 minutes, moderate intensity, accumulated message through an emotional appeal to the target audience and through appropriate portrayal of incidental physical activity.

Impact measures

Unprompted awareness

There was a substantial increase in exact recall of advertising (unprompted) after the campaign, which was statistically significant and confined to the NSW population only — clear evidence of a direct campaign effect. Among those who, unprompted, recalled any message about physical activity, there was a substantial post campaign effect in NSW (2.7% increasing to 20.9% Figure 1.) with only a modest increase in the comparison region (1.2% to 2.6%). Evidence for the source of unprompted changes was strongest for television, newspapers and magazines – reflecting the media schedule purchased for the campaign. There were slight increases in the general recall (unprompted) of any messages about physical activity both in NSW and in the comparison region comprising other Australian States;

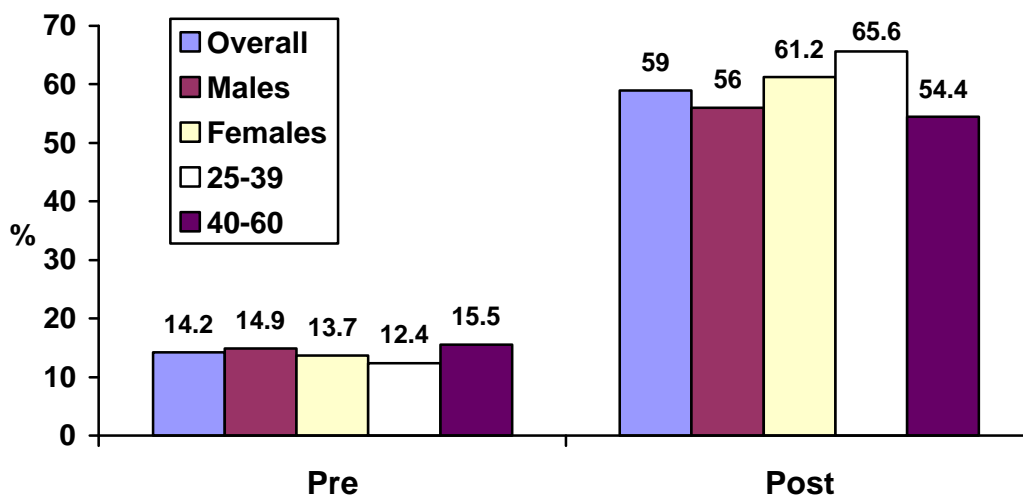
Figure 1 Unprompted recall of appropriate or exact campaign messages (of those recalling any message) – NSW and Comparison Region



Prompted awareness

Prompted recognition of campaign messages and strapline showed very large increases. From NSW cohort data, 6 out of every 10 adults recalled the strapline after the campaign with exact commercial or message recalled by 1 in 4 (Figure 2). The comparison survey data also showed an increase in prompted recall in NSW (12.9% to 50.7%) with no change in the comparison region. Additional theme recognition (strapline prompted) increased substantially in NSW (from 2.3% to 28.0%) with only marginal increases in the comparison region (1.6% to 3.7%).

Figure 2. Prompted recall of campaign by age and gender, NSW



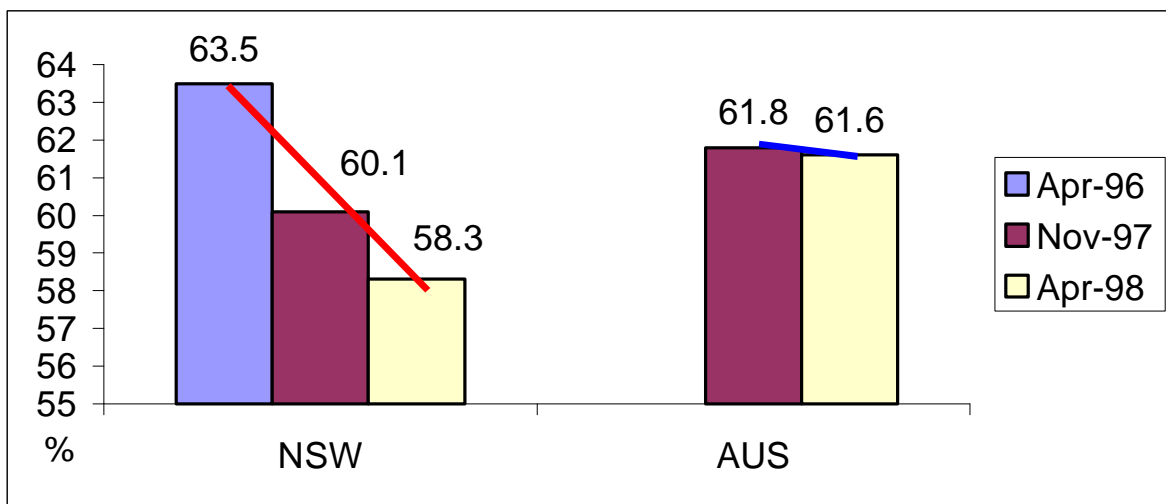
Knowledge

Mean scores for knowledge of appropriate physical activity messages increased significantly after the campaign in NSW but not in the comparison region. Statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) increases occurred for three knowledge items reflecting key messages of the campaign. These were:

- “Taking the stairs at work or generally being more active for at least 30 minutes each day is enough to improve your health”;
- “Half an hour of brisk walking on most days is enough to improve your health”;
- and
- “Exercise doesn't have to be done all at one time - blocks of 10 minutes are okay”.

In April 1996 almost 2 out of 3 (63.5%) NSW adults incorrectly believed that vigorous exercise for 20 minutes, three times per week was necessary for health. By November 1997 (pre campaign), this indicator showed favourable reductions to 60.1%, and post campaign, by April 1998 it showed a further favourable reduction to 58.3%. The same indicator showed little or no improvement in the comparison region (61.8% to 61.6%) – Figure 3.

Figure 3. Prevalence of incorrect knowledge about vigorous physical activity, NSW and Comparison Region



Intention – motivational readiness

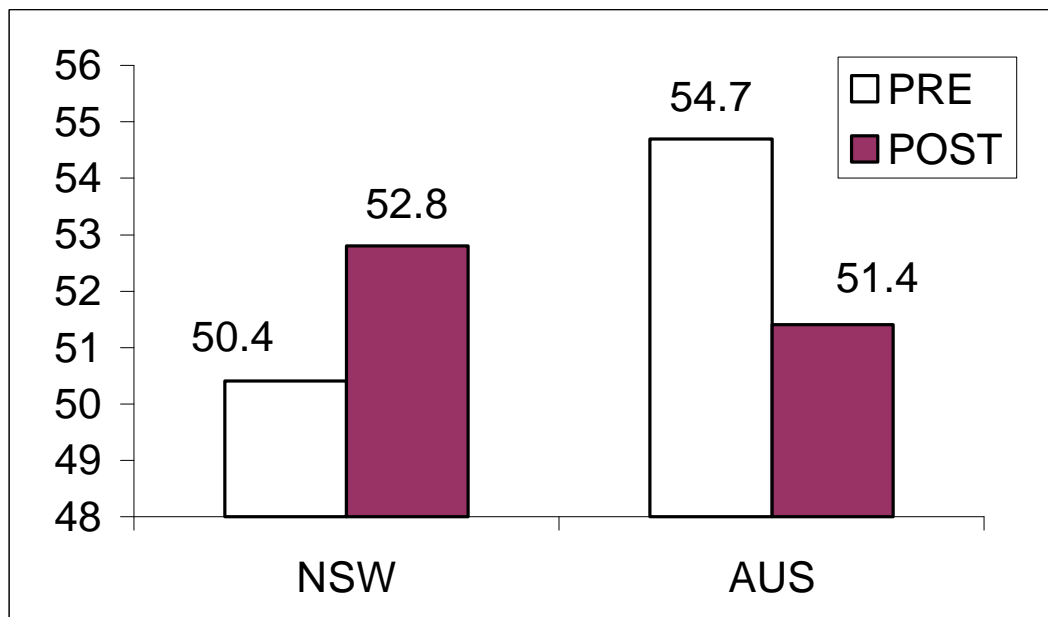
The comparison region showed a slight decrease in the measure of ‘intention to be more active’; there was no such decrease in the NSW population. There was a statistically significant increase in mean self-efficacy score (confidence to exercise) post campaign, for NSW but not for the comparison region. The converse was true for mean social support scores where an observed increase was confined to the comparison sample. Stage of change measure showed a decline for the comparison region, but no such decline was noted in NSW.

Outcome measures

Adequate physical activity

Categorical measures of sufficient physical activity showed increased participation rates after the campaign, this increase occurring only in NSW. ‘Adequate PA’ increased from 50.4% to 52.8% (Figure 4); ‘686 MET-minutes’ increased from 50.9% to 52.4%; ‘5 sessions plus 150 minutes’ increased from 45.4% to 46.1%. A decrease in participation rates was noted in the comparison region over the same time period, for all three measures.

Figure 4 Prevalence of adequate physical activity, November 1997/ April 1998; NSW and Comparison Region



Walking hours

Mean time reported for walking (during the week prior to survey) increased slightly in NSW (2.14 hours to 2.34 hours, $p=0.03$), while it decreased slightly but not significantly in the comparison region (2.41 to 2.23).

Moderate-intensity physical activity hours

Mean time reported for moderate-intensity physical activity (during the week prior to survey) increased slightly in NSW (0.83 to 0.88), but decreased slightly in the comparison region over the same period (0.87 to 0.73).

'No occasion' of reported moderate-intensity physical activity

The proportion of people reporting 'no occasion' of moderate-intensity physical activity showed slight (but not statistically significant) improvement in NSW (69.7% dropping to 68.8%), but deterioration was seen in the comparison region during the same period (71.3% increasing to 76.4%, $p=0.045$). Vigorous activity declined slightly, but not significantly in both samples.

Usual pattern of weekly physical activity

Survey respondents were asked about their 'usual pattern of weekly activity' in the six months prior to the survey. In NSW, total hours of activity, walking hours, moderate physical activity hours and vigorous activity hours were significantly higher post campaign ($p=0.01$). This suggests that there may have been some change in regular habit (especially for total hours of activity) following the baseline survey. The comparison region showed a decline in total hours and walking hours.

Physical activity among the 'Motivated but Insufficiently Active':

Cohort analysis of individuals who changed their activity status confirmed that the more positive effects were confined to the least active people. Those who were insufficiently active at baseline (below 686 MET-minutes) were more likely to increase their total activity; 41.3% increased their activity by at least an hour, compared to only 22.9% of more active people. The "motivated but insufficiently active" group were significantly more likely to show any increase in total time, 1 hour or more increase in total time ($p<0.001$), or 1 hour or more increase in walking ($p<0.01$), with no differences for vigorous and moderate activity. For decreases in total time, the "motivated but insufficiently active" group were significantly less likely to decrease total time ($P<0.001$). Multivariate analysis examined the likelihood of behaviour changes in this group, compared to all others, after adjustment for age, gender, (dis)ability and education. The "motivated but insufficiently active" group was significantly more likely to increase their total hours of activity, to increase their total activity by at least an hour per week, and to increase their walking by at least an hour per week compared to all others. The insufficiently active but motivated group were two and a quarter times (2.79) more likely to increase their total time by at least an hour, compared to all others, and were almost three times as likely to report any increase. This target group were also 43% more likely to increase their walking by at least an hour, but did not differ on changes in moderate or vigorous activity participation.

Process measures

Paid Media

The campaign media launch was implemented (as planned) on 4th February 1998. Media analysis revealed that the television component of the campaign achieved planned TARP weights. Projected TV audience ratings for the winter Olympics and summertime programming did not meet expectations, leading to some modification in placement and therefore a likely under-delivery on reach and frequency projections for the television advertisements. (Despite this, the measures of campaign recall and impact were very positive).

Unpaid publicity

An independent public relations agency was engaged in October 1997 to manage a NSW/ACT media relations campaign, including the launch event in February 1998, through to March 1998. The value of unpaid media coverage generated (TV, print and radio) is estimated at \$300,000.

Telephone line

The previously established '13' telephone line received 8362 calls during February '98 and 4151 calls during March '98. The campaign had some impact on the number of calls to the '13' number. Note that this service was already in existence pre campaign.

Analysis suggests that the nature of calls did not differ greatly from those received routinely and may not be attributable purely to the effect of the Active Australia campaign.

Community level support

Local level initiatives across NSW during the campaign period were variable. Much of the reported activity had a focus on 'planning' activities and 'briefing' allied health professionals or potential physical activity partners from other sectors. Several areas focussed on internal promotion of physical activity to Area Health Service staff. Some of the more high profile activities included the Mount Annan Challenge Walk that drew a field of nearly 1300 entrants and obtained local level media. In several areas promotional flyers were attached to health employees payslips. A number of local level activities occurred during April and May – after the mainstream media activity.

Distribution of Campaign products to General Practitioners

More than 120,000 Campaign products were distributed to General Practitioners in NSW in the period February to June 1998. The majority of this was achieved through the proactive distribution in February. Nonetheless, over 24,500 products (almost 21% of total distribution to GPs) were distributed reactively as a result of GPs using order forms in their campaign kits. The campaign brochure was the single most popular, making up 42% of the products ordered by GPs in this way. GPs ordered some re-badged products among which a guide to exercise during pregnancy was notably popular.

Recommendations

On the basis of these findings it is recommended that:

1. Priority be given in phase 2 (NSW) to the target groups identified in the 4-year communication strategy - i.e. 35-55-year-olds and older people (especially 55+);
2. Specific awareness and examples of incidental/ accumulated activities receive greater emphasis in phase 2 (35-55-year-olds), building on the general awareness already established in phase 1;
3. Particular attention be devoted in the formative research for phase 2 to guard against any inadvertent 'lowering of the standard' for exercise among people who are already sufficiently active and among participants in vigorous forms of physical activity;
4. Campaign elements for General Practitioners be maintained for Phase 2 and expanded to Allied Health Professionals if budget permits;
5. When available the National Physical Activity guidelines for all Australians be integrated appropriately within campaign messages;
6. Substantial lead-time be allowed for planning community level activities in support of media campaigns; where lead-time is reduced, intensive efforts be undertaken for local briefing and planning;
7. NSW Health work in partnership with appropriate State and Federal Agencies in addressing the campaign to the needs of older people, taking advantage of State and National coordinated activity for the International Year of the Older Person; and
8. Rigorous formative, monitoring and evaluation research using consistent measures be maintained through successive phases of the Active Australia campaign; those involved in the design of evaluation research studies consider the likelihood of seasonal effects on the measurement of physical activity.