

Feedback to SAPOL about the *Don't Stop by Accident* Campaign

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

COTA SA acknowledges Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the land of South Australia. We honour Aboriginal people's continuing connection to Country and recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to First Nations Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal people.

INTRODUCTION

This feedback is provided at our initiative in response to the SAPOL *Don't Stop by Accident* media campaign targeting older drivers, the families of older drivers and GPs.

COTA SA received a high volume of unsolicited feedback about the campaign. In addition we undertook several workshops with older people including through our COTA SA Policy Council, our staff group, our regular Salisbury Conversations and with our advisory groups.

COTA SA supports road safety initiatives, including awareness campaigns, that recognise the increasing significance of older people as a proportion of the population using the roads. The changing age profile of our community means that it is a fact that older people will continue to grow as a proportion and raw number of our road users, whether as drivers, passengers, cyclists or pedestrians.

FEEDBACK RECEIVED

SENTIMENT

The ads fuel ageism and negative stereotypes of older people

Many older people were furious about what they saw as the advertisement's use of ageist stereotypes. People told us the ads made all older people look like "ditherers" and they wondered whether, even if the ads change driving habits, fueling the ageism they feel every day is worth that.

Comments included -

Message lost because of the focus on negative imagery – older people are portrayed as dishevelled, confused and dodderly.

Portrayed older people as not being capable of knowing whether or not they should be driving.

This is an ageist campaign.

I am extremely upset at the discriminating advertisements on TV at the moment, encouraging family to stop their elderly parents from driving. I am sure that there are some elderly people who

*should not be driving, but to target ALL elderly drivers is discriminatory and unfair. Please attempt to have these ads removed. I am upset by this blatant discrimination of the elderly.
... it is stereotyping and taking liberties away from enjoying everyday life.*

No other demographic group is targeted in this way

We received feedback from people furious that no other age groups have ever been targeted in this way. According to this feedback, previous campaigns have targeted illegal or poor road behaviour rather than a broad demographic. Furthermore, because road safety advertising uses channels likely to reach their target audience, many older people see only this suite of road safety messaging because it is on free to air television and on radio. Many people said it looked and felt like they were being got at when they observe younger drivers are not targeted even though they may drink or speed or use drugs.

Comments included -

Try targeting the motorbike riders who have been caught doing 100 kms over the limit in 60 km zones, or the 20 year old who drove into a swimming pool, unlicensed and drunk, or the vast numbers of drink drivers, mobile phone users etc.

Focus on wearing seat belts as the target of the campaign – not older drivers.

Should be targeting behaviours that cause accidents (such as lack of concentration or using 'meth') and not target groups of people.

...who the hell decided that older people should give up their license. How about the immigrants that are here on international licenses that should have them changed to aus licenses and how about hoon women drivers or young drivers that can't drive. Don't you focus on the aged, they are careful drivers - in the main about these immigrants who don't have licences . Do not let me hear that ad again. Nothing has made me more angry nor all the other elderly that I know.

Take the message from the adverts to others.

SUV's are too large for road lanes and parking spaces so it makes it difficult and scary. Hard to see past SUV's on the road.

The data used refers to all older road users not just older drivers

The justification for the campaign to focus on older drivers is the disproportionate fatality rate of people aged over 70 – 24% against their representation in the population of 14%. Some of the feedback we received was that the data actually referred to all road fatalities involving people aged over 70 not just those caused by or involving older drivers. This was also our understanding of the data presented in the consultation draft Road Safety to 2030 Plan.

Comments included -

The data has been 'cherry-picked' – not accurate and no effort to break data down into sub-categories of ages.

Considered to be deliberately misleading. It claims that older people account for 23% of lives lost but do not differentiate as to whether they were the drivers or the passenger.

CAMPAIGN IMPACT

The campaign messages are received, especially when people have time to reflect on and discuss the ads

We undertook workshops with older people where we watched the ads and then discussed the messaging, including on one occasion with representatives from SAPOL. Feedback as part of a workshop was more positive and included -

To consider when you should reconsider driving. Times when it is best not to drive – dark, rain, peak hour, long distances etc.

Road awareness.

Main message – you can see it – it is in your face.

Makes you reinforce your own driving attitudes.

Driving safely.

Awareness of your own ability to drive safely.

Made me aware of my capabilities.

Look to the right, then left, then right again.

Safe driving.

Concentration.

Not driving when tired.

Be aware of surroundings.

Caution at all times.

Exercising patience.

Be observant.

The ads made people think about their own driving behaviour

Among the important messages for South Australian drivers is the importance of continually reviewing and taking responsibility of their fitness to drive including where medical or physical conditions impede judgement or capacity. Comments included -

The ads made you think about your driving – use common sense.

Good – important for three target groups to see the ads.

Ads do make you think and can help start a discussion.

Brilliant – makes you think.

Frightening – what can happen when not concentrating – slow reactions.

Not enough information to represent need.

It is a new advert, so I have not taken much notice of it.

Weak – > very good –> good.

They are great – they bring the message across.

Make you stop and think.

The adverts need more impact to make people more aware.

Use of different drivers and situations as it is very confusion using same driver.

The message is important, but it gets lost in its delivery

Many people conceded, including after a conversation with our staff or with others, that this is an important message for all of us as we age. It is important to plan ahead, not to take our licence for granted, to keep up to date with road rules and to keep assessing, modifying and considering other options for transport. However, even where people agreed with the message, there was considerable criticism about its execution.

Comments included -

Governments need to provide indicators for when older people should modify their driving and provide information as to where older people can go for help.

Need more programs to discuss modifying driving and to provide assistance in doing so.

Important message about need to take charge of decision-making about driving and alternatives

It makes me turn the television off all together. I get so furious that they are picking on older people.

Measuring the campaign

We were asked by several people to do our best to have the campaign stopped. When we advised that we would be collating feedback to provide to SAPOL as part of its review, people were very interested in how the campaign would be evaluated. We also asked in one of our workshops whether they thought the ads are effective.

Comments included -

How are they going to measure the success of the campaign?

Results of campaign shown in elderly driver statistics.

Yes, to an extent. Makes you aware.

Yes because they make you think.

Leaves power with seniors – asks them to consider options, not telling them.

Short term awareness and then easy to become complacent.

No! They are just ageist and don't recognise that so many older drivers drive well and carefully.

Adverts make you more aware at the time of viewing them.

I have been a driver for many years and have seen many changes in the driving environment.

Yes, but could be more informative.

Only if you watch Free-to-air TV.

Yes, but limited impact due to media overload.

THE CAMPAIGN HAS UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The feedback we received identified unintended consequences of the campaign which would have a negative impact on older people.

The campaign contributes to older people being targeted on the road

Some of the feedback we had was from people who were very concerned that they would be targeted by the police as a result of these ads. Others felt that the ads would invite road rage and discrimination from other drivers every time they saw a grey head.

Comments included -

Could result in older people being targeted by other road users and told to get off the road.

It makes me nervous that the Police will see that I have white hair and they'll be looking for what I am doing wrong

We heard from people who are very active volunteers in their local community. They believe the ads will undermine the confidence of older people and also cause others to judge them such that they will stop driving to their volunteer roles or stay home from other engagements they have each week.

Comments included –

Do you want me to stop volunteering?

Do you realise how many volunteers will be left if all of us oldies can't drive any more? Are you ready for that?

Targeting our children takes away our agency

Some people objected to the direct undermining of their agency and control of their lives by appealing to their children. They report that this happens in other parts of their lives and is part of a community trend to treat people like children as they age.

Comments included -

...I am 86 and I can tell you the number of elderly who are furious that you would encourage families to make the elderly to give up their licenses...

I am perfectly capable of making my decisions. I have already stopped driving at night. They don't have to involve my children.

The ad targeting GPs will have the effect of us not going to our doctor

We received feedback from both older people and from GPs that people would be reluctant to go to a doctor for fear of losing their license.

Comments included -

We are still considered by our GP as perfectly competent to drive, but have asked him to tell us when he considers it time to stop.

As a GP I am very concerned that this means people will stop coming to me and our opportunity to discuss their driving constructively as I already do with my patients will be impacted.

A MEDIA CAMPAIGN NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED BY OTHER STRATEGIES

Services need to support older people to use alternative modes of transport

People wanted the ads – and indeed information more generally – to focus on alternatives to driving. We note the incoming State Government’s announcement that it will make public transport free for all Seniors Card holders within its first year of office as an important opportunity although many older people will need to support to learn to use public transport including the digital platforms it relies on for ticketing and timetabling.

Comments included -

What are the viable alternatives to not driving your own vehicle?

Maybe we need more information about the choices we have.

I haven’t got a clue how to catch a bus.

I have never used public transport and I wouldn’t know how to find out.

We received considerable feedback especially from people living in regional areas that there are very few transport alternatives available. Thus reference in the ads to exploring alternatives was infuriating particularly as many have provided this feedback through endless consultations over time.

Comments included -

Should target driving in the country.

Without my car I would be lost.

I am not sure how I would get into town if I didn’t drive.

Programs that provide information need to accompany the campaign

Initiatives like the recent COTA SA pilot program, Seniors on Board program to teach older people to use public transport and Moving Right Along which was defunded by the last government support older people to learn about a range of other options including using public transport, using mobility scooters etc.

Comments included -

Some of the speed limits should be reduced as so many exceed the limits and cause accidents.

Makes you think of your own driving attitudes.

Repeat periodically to refresh memory and road rules.

You need to know yourself as to when you need to stop driving.

Not as confident but want to give it a go.

Find out more information if available.

Who is COTA SA?

COTA SA is an older people's movement run by, for and with older people. We represent the rights, interests and futures of more than 630,000 older South Australians. COTA SA reflects the diversity of modern ageing in terms of living arrangements, relationships, income, sexuality, culture, health, geography and aspirations. COTA SA connects with thousands of older people each year throughout SA. Our policy and advocacy are guided by the COTA SA Policy Council made up of older South Australians from a diverse range of backgrounds, along with a number of advisory groups. COTA SA's social enterprise, The Plug-in undertakes regular surveys with older South Australians in addition to its work facilitating access to older people for organisations, researchers and service providers. COTA SA is part of the COTA Federation with independent COTAs in each state and territory along with COTA Australia.

Prepared and authorised by:

Jane Mussared, Chief Executive

Email address - cotasa@cotasa.org.au

(08) 8232 0422

Level 1, 85 Hutt Street

Adelaide SA 5000

www.cotasa.org.au

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