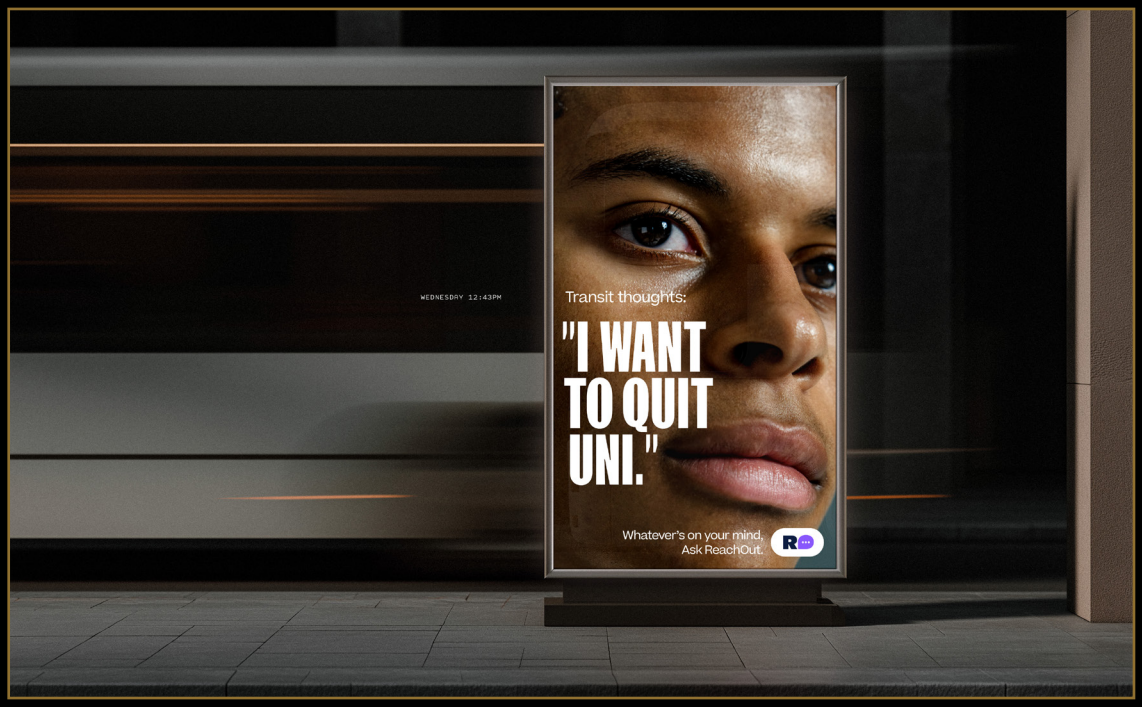
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Q1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & WHY DOES THIS CASE DESERVE AN AWARD?

In youth mental health, the real barrier isn't brand competition. It's hesitation, stigma, and the instinct to keep difficult thoughts to yourself.

Nearly 2 in 5 Australians aged 16–24 experienced a mental disorder in the previous 12 months[1]. Yet in a category defined by high need, few young people instinctively turn to mental health organisations for support. Most prefer to self-manage or confide in people they know[2]. For **an audience defined by lack of action**, awareness alone was not enough. We had to make ReachOut feel like the right next step – before young people were ready to ask for help.

Our strategic breakthrough came from looking at the questions already being asked. De-identified search behaviour on ReachOut.com revealed that while young people often feel alone, many share the same worries and ask the same questions. While thoughts about failure, identity, relationships and loneliness might seem unique, they follow predictable patterns – by time of day, and day of week. Looked at collectively, a different picture emerges: **young people were carrying the same burdens, just alone**.

This led to a clear strategic direction: turn ReachOut.com inside out. Instead of waiting for young people to find ReachOut and realise they're not alone, the campaign brought their worries out into the world in a way that felt safe and emotionally true. Using a flexible system, real worries were paired with contextual triggers – subject matter and time of day – so ReachOut could show up, not with generic reassurance, but with a thought that felt relevant in that exact moment.

In its first month, the campaign drove 81,333 page views on ReachOut.com by 69,179 users and prompted 979 active engagements with ReachOut's support tools[3]. [redacted]

This case deserves recognition in Youth Marketing because it didn't just reach a young audience – it was built from one. Real searches. Real moments. Real worries – reflected back to young people in a way that made support feel less distant. **In a category where inaction is the true competitor, "Trending Thoughts" did more than perform well in-market – it made support feel possible**, demonstrating that emotional precision – not volume – is what moves young people to act.

***Footnotes ***

1. *Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2020-2022*
2. *ReachOut Brand Health & Communications Update 2025, Market Calculus*
3. *ReachOut Campaign Performance Dashboard, March 2026*, Reborn
4. *ReachOut Monthly Report, March 2026, Reborn*

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Q2. WHAT WAS THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE?

ReachOut entered 2025 needing to grow from a significantly weaker position than every major competitor **in one of Australia's most emotionally sensitive categories**.



But ReachOut wasn't just up against larger, better-known services. It was also competing with the dominant behaviour in the category: inaction. Most young people who experienced a tough time said they would rather try to manage it themselves or talk to someone they knew, while only 7% said they would contact a mental health organisation directly, rising to just 10% among 22–25 year olds[2].

Self-reported distress rose again in 2025, especially among 18–21 and 22–25-year-olds, and usage increased across most support brands. **Yet ReachOut did not enter that environment with the same brand salience as its competitors** – young people were more likely to become aware of ReachOut through school than through advertising, suggesting the brand was less commercially visible than the scale of need warranted[2].

These challenges were compounded by a sharp tension with ReachOut's own audience. The young people with the greatest need – 22–25-year-olds – were also the most likely to find ReachOut's communications patronising or irrelevant - having grown up seeing the brand as one aimed at younger people[2].

This was not a standard awareness task. ReachOut had to grow from a weaker brand base while earning the trust of an audience that had already dismissed it – and it had to do so in the moments young people were least likely to seek formal support.

Footnotes
2. *ReachOut Brand Health & Communications Update 2025, Market Calculus*

Q3. WHAT WERE YOUR OBJECTIVES? State specific goals.

We had three clear objectives.

1. **Business objective**
   Drive more young people into ReachOut's support ecosystem. With ReachOut starting from a lower awareness base than every major competitor, the priority was volume – getting more young people through the door. The campaign needed to increase under-25 traffic to ReachOut.com and grow the number of young people entering the brand's support journey.
   KPI: 100,000 page views on ReachOut.com

2. **Behavioural objective**
   Shorten the distance to help-seeking. Rising prevalence of mental health difficulties among young people, combined with low propensity to seek formal support meant the campaign had to do more than generate traffic – it needed to prompt real action. To reduce the gap between recognising a problem and seeking support, the campaign needed to help young people feel recognised and less alone, reducing stigma so they felt ready to take a first step.
   KPI: Engagement rate on ReachOut.com, measured as the proportion of sessions where young people actively interacted with support content.[3]

3. **Marketing objective**
   Increase brand recognition and salience. Given the perception gap identified among older cohorts, the campaign needed to shift how ReachOut was seen – not just how often it was seen. The campaign needed to increase brand recognition and create strong memory hooks so that young people could recall ReachOut when support was needed.
   KPI: Uplift in prompted brand awareness, brand appeal and media-attributed awareness among 16–21 year olds, tracked via the ReachOut Brand Health & Communications Update 2026[5]

***Footnotes ***
3. ReachOut Campaign Performance Dashboard, March 2026, Reborn
5. ReachOut Performance Analysis 2026, Market Calculus

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Q4. WHAT WAS YOUR STRATEGY AND HOW DID YOU GET THERE?

Our strategy began with the data ReachOut already had – and the pattern hiding inside it.

De-identified search behaviour on ReachOut.com showed young people were asking the same questions – about relationships, failure, identity, self-worth and loneliness. Individually, each worry felt private and isolating. Collectively, a different pattern emerged: **young people were not only sharing the same concerns, but they were experiencing them at the same times and days of the week.**

The data was specific:

- Bullying queries spiked after lunch on weekdays.
- Study stress and procrastination queries spiked on Thursdays and Sundays.
- Dating and sex queries spiked on weekends and late at night.

This reframed the audience – from a broad 13–25 demographic to young people in specific moments of need. It also changed the job: from building general awareness to **making ReachOut feel immediately relevant and safe enough to act on**, especially among older cohorts where need was rising fastest but the brand risked feeling too young.

We now had a clear strategic goal: **transform ReachOut from a place young people visit when they recognise they have a problem, to a brand that meets young people where they are, in the moments they feel most vulnerable.**

Instead of waiting for young people to come to the platform and discover they're not alone, our strategy was to put their collective worries out into the world in a way that felt safe and emotionally true.

To bring the strategy to life, we needed more than a campaign – we needed a flexible, context-responsive communications system. One that could match real worries to time-of-day triggers, so that **ReachOut could appear with a thought that was relevant in the moment it was encountered**. Only this could shift the brand from static awareness messaging to something situational – present not just when young people searched for help, but before they knew they needed it.

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Q5. HOW WAS YOUR STRATEGY BROUGHT TO LIFE?

"Trending Thoughts" took its name and its logic from the same place: **the real, de-identified searches that young people were already making on ReachOut.com**. If those worries were shared but felt private, the creative idea was to make them visible – in a way that felt safe, relevant and emotionally true.

Searches were grouped into recurring categories – Shower Thoughts, Late Night Thoughts, Relationship Thoughts – each named for the moment worries tended to surface, not just the subject matter. Every execution followed the same disciplined structure: **Thought Category, Validating Descriptor, Rotating Worry and ReachOut call to action.** That gave the campaign both coherence and flexibility: each execution could feel specific to the moment while remaining recognisably ReachOut. Variation did not dilute the idea; it made it more personal.

Creatively, we were deliberately restrained. Contemplative close-up portraiture, neutral expressions and uncluttered compositions created a calm, non-judgemental space. Pared-back typography let each thought land large, direct and unavoidable, in the same way a thought arrives in your head. Every execution resolved with the same invitation: **"Whatever's on your mind, ask ReachOut."** The result was a visual language designed to create recognition before persuasion.

Media and creative were built as one system, structured across two distinct layers. Performance channels – Meta, TikTok, Google Demand Gen, PMax and Reddit – drove traffic directly to ReachOut.com, matching specific worries to specific moments of need. Reach channels – Spotify, TikTok Reach and Meta out-of-home digital – extended awareness beyond social platforms and into everyday youth environments, reaching audiences including under-16s who are less reachable through performance formats alone. That separation mattered: performance delivered measurable action while reach built the broader recognition needed to make ReachOut feel familiar before young people needed it[4].

Just as importantly, the system was **built with strong ethical guardrails**. A human-approved library of real worries ensured nothing identifiable or unsafe was used. In a category where trust matters as much as cut-through, governance is essential. It allowed the campaign to scale without becoming exploitative, sensational or generic.

The result was a creative system built specifically for the way young people experience worry – privately, repeatedly, and in predictable moments. By meeting them there, with thoughts that felt true rather than instructive, ReachOut made support feel less like an intervention and more like recognition. In a category where inaction is the real competitor, that distinction is what made the work effective for this audience.

Footnotes

4. ReachOut Monthly Report, March 2026, Reborn

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Q6. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOUR CAMPAIGN WAS SUCCESSFUL?

In its first month alone, "Trending Thoughts" delivered 81.3% of a two-month page views target – with just 25% of the performance budget spent. That ratio tells the essential story: **the campaign was working well ahead of schedule, and at a fraction of the expected cost.**

Against the business objective, the campaign generated 81,333 website page views in March 2026 – real visits from young people actively exploring ReachOut's support content, not passive impressions[5]. Direct site visits – a stronger proxy for brand-driven response – rose 93% year-on-year in March 2026, well above the prior trend and closely correlated with the campaign's media investment[6].

[redacted] In this context, an engaged session reflects meaningful behaviour: completion of key events including uptake of ReachOut's AI-enabled chat tool, sessions longer than 10 seconds, or sessions including two or more page views – all indicators that a young person moved beyond passive exposure and into ReachOut's support ecosystem. [redacted]

The range of questions matters as much as the volume. Alongside practical queries like "How should I study for exams?" and "How much sleep do I need?", young people asked "How do I break up with someone respectfully?", "What causes anxiety?" and "I want to talk to someone." That spread suggests the campaign reached young people across a genuine range of emotional and practical needs. Notably, Spotify alone drove 200 of those 979 interactions – a strong result for an audio channel, and evidence that the creative system translated effectively across very different media environments[3].

The channel pattern reinforced the strategy. Among performance channels, Google drove the greatest scale – 38,392 page views and 32,050 users to ReachOut.com – at an [redacted] Among reach channels, Spotify recorded the highest engagement rate of any channel at 39.58% among those who clicked through to ReachOut.com. Across all channels, reach activity delivered 3,650,528 impressions across 1,043,263 unique users[4]. Across 195 individual creative executions, the modular system maintained consistent performance – evidence that the idea scaled without losing its impact[3].

Against the marketing objective, brand health tracking confirmed a meaningful uplift among the core target audience. [redacted] Most tellingly, the share of young people who became aware of ReachOut via social or offline media rose from 25% to 47% – also statistically significant – directly attributing awareness growth to media exposure rather than organic factors[5]. Across the broader 14–25 audience, overall brand appeal rose from 31.5% in April 2025 to 36.2% by March 202 [6].

Taken together, these results demonstrate that "Trending Thoughts" delivered against all three objectives: volume into the support ecosystem, meaningful behavioural response, and measurable brand uplift. For a brand starting from a significantly weaker competitive position, the combination of media efficiency, direct site visit growth and statistically significant brand health gains is the clearest evidence that the strategy worked – and that it worked specifically for this audience.

Footnotes

3. ReachOut Campaign Performance Dashboard, March 2026, Reborn
4. ReachOut Monthly Report, March 2026, Reborn
5. ReachOut Performance Analysis 2026, Market Calculus
6 ReachOut Brand Health & Communications Update 2026, Market Calculus

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Q7. WAS THE CAMPAIGN A GOOD INVESTMENT?

It's impossible to put a price on helping young people in distress. However young people found "Trending Thoughts" to be relevant, validating and reassuring, while its efficiency is the clearest measure of the campaign's investment value.

The campaign ran for one month within the qualifying period. In that time the campaign delivered 81,333 page views – 81% of the 100,000 page view target – having spent just 25% of the total performance budget. On current trajectory, the campaign was on course to exceed 100,000 page views within the next seven days[4].

[redacted] For a brand starting from a significantly weaker awareness base than every major competitor in the category, that is a strong return – and one that compounds the case for the flexible creative system as an efficient long-term platform.

Beyond efficiency, the investment generated quality response and measurable brand returns. [redacted] Brand appeal among the core 16–21 year old audience rose from 22% to 40% and the share attributing their awareness to media doubled from 25% to 47% – both statistically significant results that demonstrate the investment built lasting brand value, not just short-term traffic[6].

The longer-term investment case rests on the creative system itself. Rather than a fixed set of assets with a limited shelf life, "Trending Thoughts" is a reusable, modular platform – capable of generating contextually relevant executions at scale, across channels, as long as young people's worries remain the source material. The 195 executions delivered in month one demonstrate that capacity. ReachOut does not need to rebuild from scratch for the next campaign; it needs to refresh the content within a proven system.

Evaluated on cost-efficiency, page view targets and engagement rate, "Trending Thoughts" delivered on all three – ahead of schedule, under budget, and with a creative platform built to keep delivering beyond this campaign.

Footnotes

3. ReachOut Campaign Performance Dashboard, March 2026, Reborn
4. ReachOut Monthly Report, March 2026, Reborn
6 ReachOut Brand Health & Communications Update 2026, Market Calculus

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Q8. DEMONSTRATE THAT THE RESULT WAS NOT DUE TO OTHER FACTORS

We do not claim that "Trending Thoughts" operated in a vacuum. ReachOut launched into a category where need was already rising. A pre-campaign brand health study showed the prevalence of mental health difficulties among young people had increased again in 2025, especially among 18–21s and 22–25s, and usage had increased across most support brands. It also showed that only 7% of young people said they would contact a mental health organisation directly, rising to 10% among 22–25s[2]. **That context matters. It means some underlying demand for support pre-dated the campaign, but it does not explain ReachOut's specific pattern of response.**



The answer lies in the specificity of the response. **Ask ReachOut interactions were directly attributed to campaign media sources** – Google, Facebook, Spotify, TikTok and Reddit – meaning the pathway from ad exposure to support action was tracked, not assumed[3]. **A generalised lift in category need would not produce that pattern of attribution.** It would produce diffuse traffic across all brands. Instead, "Trending Thoughts" converted broader need into ReachOut-specific action, through a creative system designed to meet young people in the exact moments they were most likely to need support.

The contextual trigger logic built into the campaign also supports attribution. The strategy was deliberately designed to match specific worries to specific moments – bullying queries after lunch on weekdays, study stress on Thursdays and Sundays, and relationship queries late at night. If background noise were driving results, we would expect undifferentiated response regardless of time or subject. Instead, the campaign was engineered to produce a patterned response – and it did. That alignment between strategic design and observed behaviour is itself evidence of campaign contribution.

The brand health data adds a further rebuttal. The share of young people who became aware of ReachOut via social or offline media rose from 25% to 47% – a statistically significant result that directly attributes awareness growth to media exposure[5]. Direct site visits also rose 93% year-on-year in March 2026, well above the prior trend and closely correlated with the campaign's investment period[6]. Rising category need cannot account for brand-specific attribution of that kind. The fairest conclusion is also the most supported: "Trending Thoughts" made a distinct and measurable contribution – across traffic, behaviour and brand health.

***Footnotes ***

2. ReachOut Brand Health & Communications Update 2025, Market Calculus
3. ReachOut Campaign Performance Dashboard, March 2026, Reborn
5. ReachOut Performance Analysis 2026, Market Calculus
6. ReachOut Brand Health & Communications Update 2026, Market Calculus

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Q9. GIVE CONTEXT TO BUDGET IN COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS.

Budget is less

Q10. GIVE CONTEXT TO THE BRAND'S OVERALL BUDGET.

Brand budget is about the same

Q11. MEDIA BUDGET ELABORATION

100% paid media

Q12. DESCRIBE OWNED MEDIA ACTIVITY

No owned media activity

Q13. OUTLINE ANY SPONSORSHIPS

N/A no sponsorships

Q14. OUTLINE COMMUNICATION TOUCHPOINTS

The campaign ran across paid performance and reach. Performance activity used Meta, TikTok, Google Demand Gen, PMax and Reddit to drive young people directly to ReachOut youth content. Reach activity used Spotify Audio, TikTok Reach and Meta Reach to build broader awareness and familiarity.

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