effie Awards Australia

2026
Case Study

NATIONAL STI CAMPAIGN 2025 OUTCOMES

CAMPAIGN

A national STI awareness campaign targeting Australians aged 18-34. Core message: "Many STIs Are Hidden. All Are Treatable." Campaign channels included paid social (TikTok, Meta), Google advertising, podcasts, and outdoor placements (street and bathroom posters).

MEASURABLE SERVICE IMPACT

Exceeded all agreed performance targets, which were set as realistic measures in consultation with client and agency.

- 121.6M impressions (+67% above target)
- 166,104 landing page visitors (+119% above target)
- 37,037 'Book an Appointment' clicks (+723% above target)

Entry ID Number
1469

Agencies
Sexual and Reproductive Health Australia

Client
Sexual and Reproductive Health Australia

Title
The STI Campaign Algorithms Tried to Ban. The Results They Couldn't Ignore.

Category
A10. Not-For-Profit Organisations

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

Young Australians are among the hardest audiences to engage in sexual health communications, particularly men aged 18–34. At the same time, digital platforms increasingly restrict sexual health advertising, limiting the reach of medically accurate public health messaging through the very channels younger audiences use most.

The campaign “Many STIs Are Hidden. All Are Treatable.”, aimed to increase STI awareness and testing among young Australians aged by reframing sexual health messaging in a way that felt native, conversational and culturally relevant.

Rather than relying on fear-based messaging, the campaign reduced stigma through podcast integrations, mobile-first experiences, creator-style content, and contextual outdoor placements that normalised conversations around STI testing.

However, during the campaign, multiple digital ads and placements were repeatedly censored or restricted across Meta and Google platforms despite being medically approved public health information. Instead of scaling back activity, the campaign adapted in real time; redesigning creative, shifting optimisation strategy and prioritising behavioural conversion over passive reach.

The campaign achieved:

- 121.6 million impressions (+67% above target)
- 166,104 landing page visitors (+119% above target)
- 37,037 “Book Now” clicks (+723% above target)
- 13.2% national increase in STI-related appointments
- 19% increase nationally excluding Victoria (if treated as an outlier due to multiple STI campaigns already operating in the state across 2024 including the testing of this campaign)
- 80% increase in the Northern Territory
- 37% increase in Western Australia

Importantly, the campaign successfully engaged young men aged 18–34, a demographic consistently identified as difficult to reach in sexual health communications.

This campaign deserves recognition because it transformed a highly restricted and heavily stigmatised category into measurable behavioural change at national scale.

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MEASURABLE SERVICE IMPACT

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- 121.6M impressions (+67% above target)
- 166,104 landing page visitors (+119% above target)
- 37,037 ‘Book an Appointment’ clicks (+723% above target)
- +13.2% average national increase in STI-related appointments
- Highest engagement was among men aged 18–34, the primary target demographic.
  $13.51 cost per click on our website book now buttons

WHY IT WORKED

- The national alliance model enabled consistent messaging, supported by strong local amplification through member organisations
- As sexual and reproductive health organisations delivering the campaign, we had direct access to accurate, evidence-based clinical advice
- Ongoing monitoring and optimisation meant messaging and creative could be refined in real time to prioritise high-performing content
- A multi-channel approach supported both awareness and meaningful action
- Clear, stigma-reducing messaging helped normalise testing and emphasise that issues are treatable

STRATEGIC VALUE

This campaign demonstrates that coordinated, evidence-based health promotion can drive measurable behaviour change, effectively engage priority populations, and offer a scalable, cost-effective model for future national initiatives. It also reinforces the value of the organisation and its network of sexual and reproductive health organisations as trusted partners to deliver consistent, high-quality campaigns across both state and national contexts.

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Q2. WHAT WAS THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE?

Australia continues to experience rising STI rates among younger Australians, particularly people aged 18–34. Despite increasing public health concern, STI testing remains heavily impacted by stigma, avoidance and low engagement, especially among younger men, one of the most difficult groups to reach through preventative health messaging.

At the same time, the digital communications environment had become increasingly hostile toward sexual health advertising. Medically approved public health content was frequently flagged, restricted or rejected by major advertising platforms under "sexually explicit" moderation policies.

This created a significant strategic challenge: the campaign needed to drive behavioural change within a category already impacted by stigma while simultaneously navigating algorithmic suppression across the exact platforms younger audiences use most.

The challenge extended beyond awareness. Young Australians are exposed to thousands of pieces of content daily across TikTok, Instagram, podcasts and streaming platforms. Traditional health advertising often struggles to compete because it feels overly clinical, institutional or disconnected from platform culture.

The campaign therefore faced four major barriers:

- stigma around STI testing,
- declining engagement with traditional health communications,
- restricted media delivery caused by platform moderation,
- and limited public health budgets compared to commercial advertisers competing for attention in the same environments.

This challenge intensified throughout the campaign period. Multiple campaign assets were rejected or censored across Meta and Google despite containing medically accurate public health information. Several states experienced repeated boosting restrictions, while Western Australia was unable to boost content at all due to historical sexual health advertising flags placed on their account.

To succeed, the campaign needed to:

- cut through an oversaturated digital landscape,
- reduce emotional barriers around testing being difficult and time consuming,
- engage hard-to-reach audiences,
- operate effectively within censorship restrictions,
- and convert awareness into measurable health-seeking behaviour.

The degree of difficulty was exceptionally high because success depended not simply on reach, but on changing behaviour within one of Australia's most sensitive and algorithmically restricted health categories.

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THE STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

Reaching young Australians with STI messaging had become increasingly difficult.

The campaign faced four major barriers:

1. Stigma
2. Platform Censorship
3. Attention Competition
4. Low engagement with traditional health advertising

THE CHALLENGE:

DRIVE MEASURABLE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE IN ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST STIGMATISED AND ALGORITHMICALLY RESTRICTED HEALTH CATEGORIES.

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Q3. WHAT WERE YOUR OBJECTIVES? State specific goals.

The campaign was designed to deliver measurable communications, behavioural and public health outcomes among Australians aged 18–34.

Business Objectives

The primary objective was to increase STI-related testing intent and service uptake nationally.

Specific objectives included:

- Increase STI-related appointments during the campaign period compared to 2024
- Increase engagement among men aged 18–34
- Drive users toward appointment booking nationally

Marketing Objectives

The campaign aimed to increase awareness around asymptomatic STIs and reinforce that testing is the only way to know your status.

KPIs included:

- 73 million total impressions/views
- 76,000 campaign landing page visitors
- Strong engagement and click-through performance above healthcare benchmarks

The campaign significantly exceeded all communications targets:

- 121.6 million impressions/views (+67%)
- 166,104 landing page visitors (+119%)
- Google CTR of 8.77% versus healthcare benchmark of 0.59%

Behavioural Objectives

The campaign's primary behavioural objective was to convert awareness into testing action.

KPIs included:

- 4,500 "Book an Appointment" clicks
- Increased STI-related service uptake nationally
- Increased engagement among younger male audiences

The campaign dramatically exceeded behavioural expectations:

- 37,037 "Book Now" clicks (+723%)
- 13.2% national increase in STI-related appointments
- 19% national increase excluding Victoria
- 80% increase in NT
- 37% increase in WA

Importantly, the campaign moved beyond awareness metrics and demonstrated measurable behavioural action and service uptake within the eligibility period.

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Key Campaign Success Metrics

Success Metrics	Target	Result	Variance
Total Impressions / Views	73M+	121.6M	+67%
Total Campaign Landing Page Visitors	76,000+	166,104	+119%
Total Clicks to 'Book an Appointment'	4,500+	37,037	+723%

Success Metrics by Paid Media Channel

Channel Breakdown	Target	Result	Variance
Google Display Network	7.8M	1.75M	-78%*
Paid social media	1.62M	4 M	+147%
Above-the-Line media (Street Posters, Bathrooms, Podcasts)	63.6M	115.9M	+82%

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

The strategy was built on a critical insight:

Young Australians do not engage with sexual health messaging when it feels like traditional health advertising.

Early signals showed that audiences aged 18–34 responded more strongly to content that felt native to the platforms they already used and not not like medical advice; podcast-style conversation, fun creative assets, short-form video and simple steps to appointment booking.

The target audience was Australians aged 18–34, with a specific focus on young men, who historically demonstrate lower engagement with STI testing and sexual health services.

These insights led to the campaign: “Many STIs Are Hidden. All Are Treatable.”

The strategy reframed STI testing away from fear and stigma and toward clarity, reassurance and action.

The approach combined:

- podcast integrations within trusted environments
- mobile-first behavioural journeys
- contextual outdoor placements
- conversion-focused digital optimisation
- short-form video content

Creative was deliberately designed to feel native to digital culture rather than institutional or clinical. Messaging was short, direct and conversational, reducing resistance and increasing engagement among younger audiences.

As platform restrictions increased during the campaign, the strategy evolved in real time. Creative and copy was refined to improve deliver efficiency and reduce moderation risk.

Media strategy also shifted from pure awareness to behavioural performance, prioritising clicks, booking intent and measurable health actions over passive reach.

This adaptive approach ensured the campaign remained effective despite censorship constraints, while aligning with how younger Australians naturally consume content and make decisions.

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Q5. HOW WAS YOUR STRATEGY BROUGHT TO LIFE?

The campaign was executed through an integrated ecosystem of digital, audio, outdoor and owned media touchpoints designed to move audiences from awareness to action.

Early optimisation showed that concise, conversation assets significantly outperformed traditional public health messaging on TikTok and Meta.

Content was designed to use direct, stigma-reducing language, avoid negative framing, prompt action, and mirror creator-style delivery on video-heavy platforms.

This approach improved engagement and reduced resistance among the 18–34 audience.

Paid social channels across TikTok, Instagram and Facebook delivered strong performance, generating millions of impressions and high-volume click-through activity, supported by highly efficient CPCs across platforms.

Podcast sponsorships extended the campaign into trusted cultural environments. Integrations across youth-oriented and sex-positive podcasts helped normalise STI conversations and increase relevance among younger audiences.

Podcast activity delivered over 1.6 million impressions and reached more than 415,000 listeners.

Above-the-line media played a critical role in ensuring broad national reach beyond algorithm-controlled platforms. Street posters and bathroom placements provided high-frequency exposure in everyday environments.

Bathroom placements were particularly effective due to private, high-dwell-time engagement contexts and delivered measurable interaction.

Street posters extended reach at national scale, reinforcing message consistency across physical environments.

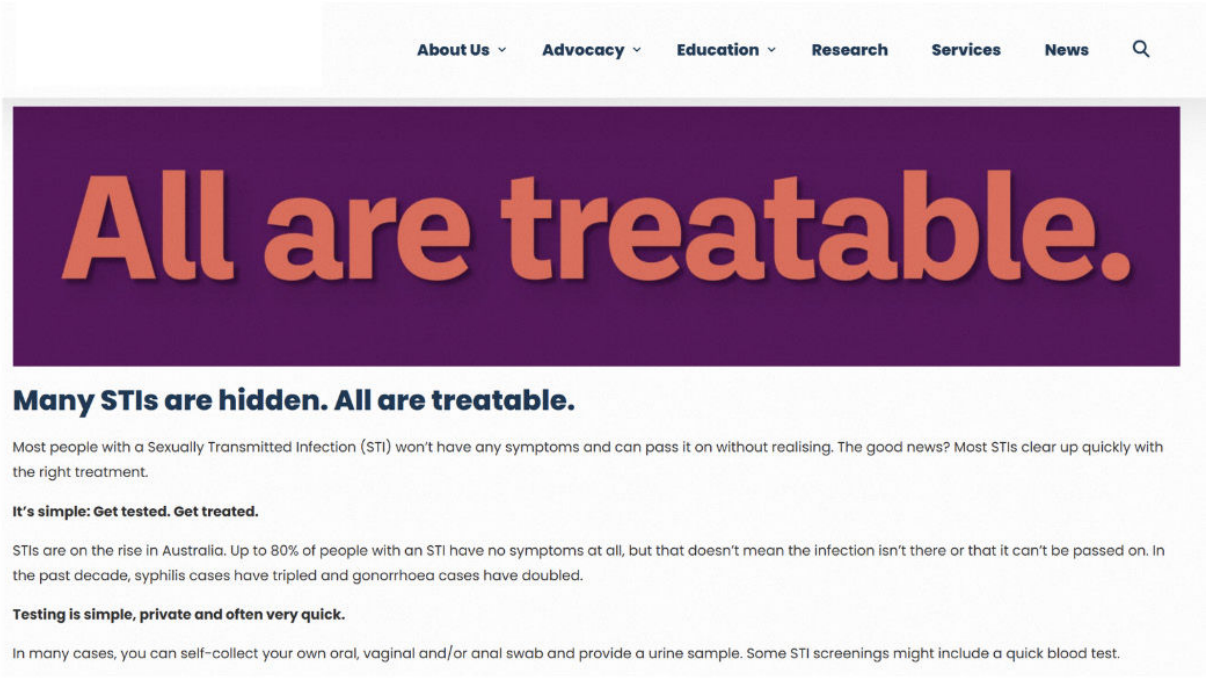
QR codes were also integrated across all assets to reduce friction and enable audiences to move directly from awareness to action via a simple, mobile-first pathway, aligning with young people's preference for fast, low-effort engagement.

The campaign landing page was designed for mobile-first conversion, with simplified navigation and clear "Book Now" pathways to reduce friction between awareness and behaviour.

As censorship restrictions intensified, optimisation shifted toward behavioural outcomes rather than impressions. This improved conversion efficiency and strengthened action-based results.

The integration of creative, media and behavioural design ensured the campaign could operate effectively despite platform constraints while still driving measurable public health outcomes.

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

The campaign exceeded all major objectives across awareness, engagement and behavioural change, demonstrating clear national public health impact.

Most importantly, it delivered measurable real-world behaviour change.

National STI-related appointments increased by:

- 13.2% during the campaign period compared to 2024
- 19% nationally excluding Victoria, which had prior campaign activity affecting baseline comparison

Strong regional uplifts were recorded:

- Northern Territory: +80%
- Western Australia: +37%

These results demonstrate impact across both high-volume and priority regions.

The campaign significantly outperformed all communication KPIs:

- 121.6 million impressions/views vs 73 million target (+67%)
- 166,104 landing page visitors vs 76,000 target (+119%)
- 37,037 “Book Now” clicks vs 4,500 target (+723%)

This demonstrates not only reach, but exceptional conversion from exposure to behavioural intent.

Digital performance exceeded healthcare benchmarks significantly:

- Google CTR reached 8.77% vs 0.59% industry benchmark
- Google delivered over 154,000 clicks at $0.54 CPC
- TikTok achieved $0.11 CPC
- Meta delivered 1.95% CTR and 36,136 clicks

Importantly, the campaign successfully engaged young men aged 18–34, one of the most difficult demographics to reach in sexual health communications. This group emerged as the highest-engaging audience across Google activity.

Behavioural signals aligned with campaign design decisions, reinforcing the focus on mobile-first delivery and timing content for social and leisure use windows:

- 89.2% of traffic was mobile
- Peak engagement occurred Friday–Sunday evenings
- High engagement occurred during social activity windows

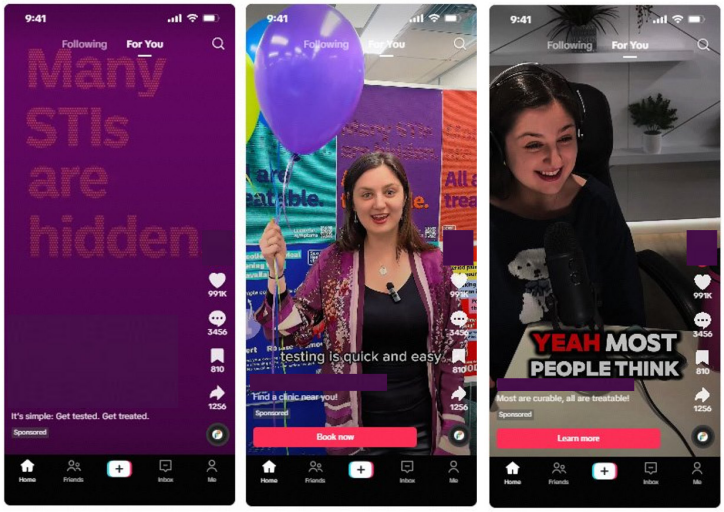
Despite repeated platform censorship across Meta and Google, the campaign maintained strong performance by shifting optimisation toward behavioural outcomes, improving conversion efficiency over time.

Above-the-line media supported national awareness at scale:

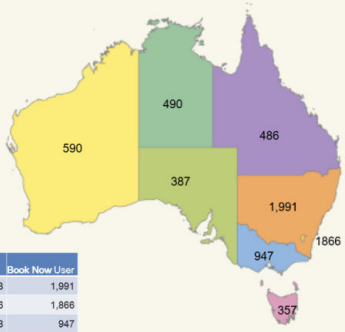
- Bathroom advertising: 15.3 million impressions
- Street posters: 98 million impressions
- Podcasts: 1.6 million impressions

The combined impact of digital efficiency, behavioural conversion and national reach demonstrates that the campaign successfully transformed awareness into measurable action.

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'BOOK NOW' CLICKS BY UNIQUE USERS



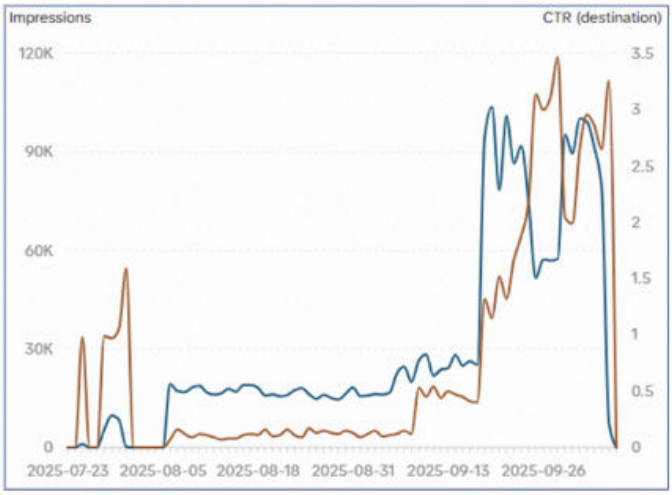
State	Book Now Clicks	Book Now User
NSW	2,953	1,991
ACT	2,726	1,866
VIC	1,203	947
WA	836	590
NT	661	490
QLD	565	486
TAS	505	357
SA	473	387

Source: Google Analytics, Events, Outbound Clicks per FPO, 1 Aug – 31 Aug '31

GOOGLE CAMPAIGN DISPLAY, SEARCH, PERFORMANCE MAX

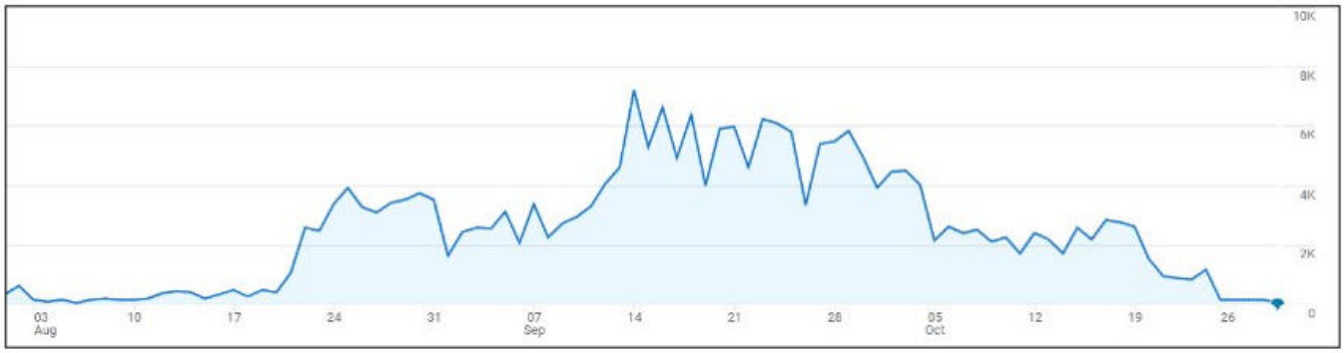


Social Media



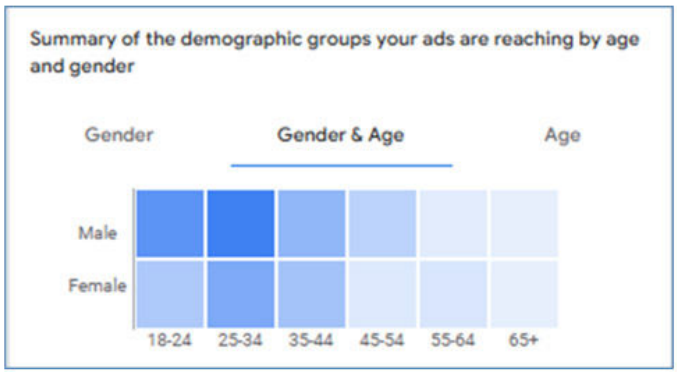
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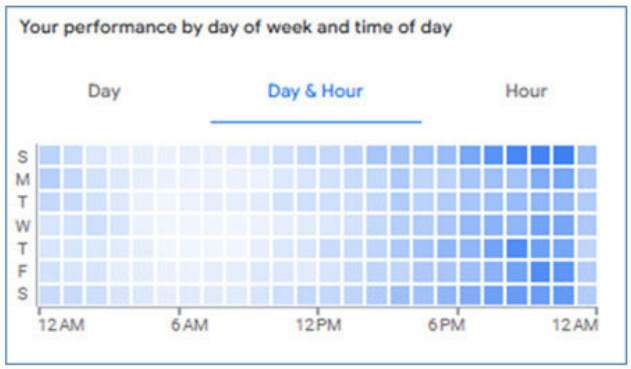
Campaign Landing Page Results



Google Campaign Display & Performance Max









Source: Google Analytics, Campaign Page, 1 Aug – 31 Aug '31

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Q7. WAS THE CAMPAIGN A GOOD INVESTMENT?

The campaign delivered exceptional value relative to both investment and category complexity.

Operating within one of the most heavily restricted public health advertising categories, the campaign exceeded every major KPI while maintaining highly efficient media performance.

Google generated: over 154,000 clicks, at an average CPC of $0.54, TikTok achieved: $0.11 CPC, while Meta delivered: $0.37 CPC.

These efficiencies are especially significant given platform moderation restrictions and the stigma associated with sexual health engagement.

The campaign also achieved substantial behavioural outcomes: 37,037 “Book Now” clicks, and significant national appointment uplift.

The average cost per booking click was: $13.51.

Approximately 75% of investment supported above-the-line activity, helping maintain broad national visibility independent of algorithm-controlled platforms.

The campaign also created broader long-term public health value through:

- increased normalisation of STI testing,
- stronger engagement among younger men,
- earlier testing intent,
- and improved awareness of asymptomatic STIs.

Given the scale of behavioural outcomes achieved despite platform censorship and category stigma, the campaign represented an exceptionally effective public health investment.

Meta Business (Facebook and Instagram)	
Clicks	36,136
Average CPC	$0.37
Average CTR	1.95%
Impressions	1.8 Million

TikTok	
Clicks	33,153
Average CPC	$0.11
Average CTR	1.47%
Impressions	2.2 Million

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

Several factors confirm the campaign was the primary driver of observed outcomes.

First, performance uplift closely tracked campaign activity periods (August–October 2025), with increases in landing page traffic, booking clicks and STI-related appointments occurring during periods of active media delivery and ongoing optimisation.

Second, behavioural changes closely tracked strategic adjustments within the campaign itself. When platform censorship reduced display delivery, optimisation shifted toward click-based outcomes. Following this change, "Book Now" interactions increased significantly, ultimately exceeding target by 723%.

There were no major national policy changes, pricing shifts or large-scale concurrent STI awareness initiatives during the same period that would independently explain the scale of uplift observed.

To ensure accuracy, Victoria was excluded from national comparisons due to previously active STI campaigns in 2024 that affected baseline performance. After removing Victoria, the campaign delivered a 19% national increase in STI-related appointments.

Regional results further support attribution. Western Australia faced severe platform restrictions and was unable to boost paid social content, yet still recorded a 37% increase in STI-related bookings. The Northern Territory recorded an 80% increase during the same period.

Audience behaviour also aligned directly with campaign targeting:

- 18–34-year-olds were the highest-engaging group
- 89.2% of traffic was mobile-driven
- peak engagement occurred during targeted evening and weekend periods

While broader public awareness may have contributed marginally, the scale, timing and alignment of behavioural change strongly indicate the campaign as the primary causal factor.

Q9. GIVE CONTEXT TO BUDGET IN COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS.	Budget is less
Q10. GIVE CONTEXT TO THE BRAND'S OVERALL BUDGET.	Brand budget is more

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Q11. MEDIA BUDGET ELABORATION

The campaign used a diversified paid, owned, earned and shared media model designed to maximise reach while reducing reliance on any single platform or channel.

Paid media included:

- Google Display Network,
- Google Performance Max,
- TikTok,
- Meta advertising,
- podcast sponsorships,
- street posters,
- and bathroom placements.

Approximately 75% of overall media investment supported above-the-line channels, helping maintain broad national visibility independent of algorithm-controlled platforms.

Owned media included:

- campaign landing pages,
- SRHA and SRHO social channels, websites, newsletters
- and organisational communications.

Shared media was driven through:

- SRHO amplification across states and territories,
- reposting,
- audience engagement,
- and community sharing.

The diversified media mix ensured the campaign remained resilient and effective despite repeated moderation restrictions affecting digital delivery.

Q12. DESCRIBE OWNED MEDIA ACTIVITY

Owned media played a critical role in reinforcing campaign messaging, maintaining continuity and supporting behavioural conversion pathways.

The campaign landing page acted as the central owned conversion environment. Designed with a mobile-first behavioural approach, the page simplified navigation and reduced friction between awareness and action through clear “Book Now” pathways.

The landing page generated:

- 228,652 total visits,
- 747,439 interactions,
- and 166,104 unique visitors.

Owned social media channels across SRHA and participating SRHOs also formed a key part of campaign delivery. Facebook, Instagram and TikTok accounts distributed campaign creative and testing information nationally. Organic owned activity became especially important when platform restrictions reduced paid amplification opportunities in some states. Western Australia, for example, relied heavily on owned and organic communications after being unable to boost sexual health content due to moderation restrictions.

SRHO websites and organisational channels also supported campaign visibility through website mentions and newsletter updates within their broader networks.

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Q13. OUTLINE ANY SPONSORSHIPS

Yes. The campaign included strategic podcast sponsorships targeting younger Australian audiences.

Sponsored integrations ran across:

- "It's A Lot" with Abbie Chatfield
- "Call Her Daddy"

These podcasts were selected because they aligned strongly with the target audience and already operated within open, conversational and sex-positive environments.

Rather than interrupting audience behaviour, the sponsorship strategy embedded campaign messaging within trusted content experiences audiences actively chose to consume. This helped reduce stigma and normalise conversations around STI testing.

The sponsorships delivered:

- more than 1.6 million impressions,
- and reached over 415,000 listeners nationally.

Podcast integrations also strengthened the campaign's broader strategic objective of behaving more like culturally relevant content than traditional health advertising.

Q14. OUTLINE COMMUNICATION TOUCHPOINTS

The campaign used an integrated national communications ecosystem combining digital, outdoor, audio and owned media touchpoints to move audiences seamlessly from awareness to behavioural action.

- TikTok paid advertising
- Meta advertising (Facebook and Instagram)
- Google Display Network
- Google Performance Max
- SRHA organic social media
- SRHO organic social media
- Campaign landing page
- SRHO websites
- Podcast sponsorships
- "It's A Lot" podcast integrations
- "Call Her Daddy" podcast integrations
- Street posters
- Bathroom posters
- QR-enabled outdoor placements
- Social sharing and reposting
- Mobile "Book Now" pathways
- STI clinic booking environments

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