

# Coercive Control Campaign Report

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February 2025

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# Introduction

In New South Wales (NSW), coercive control became a criminal offence in current or former intimate partner relationships on 1 July 2024. To support this legislative implementation, the NSW Government launched an awareness campaign aimed at educating the public about coercive control. The campaign was based on market research, which identified a low level of understanding regarding this term and associated behaviours.

The primary objective was to raise awareness and improve understanding of coercive control and its signs. The campaign successfully achieved this objective, with 1 in 2 people now claiming to have heard of coercive control and understand what it means.

This increased level of understanding is validated by a significant uplift in the proportion of the target audience who can also now correctly identify at least one behavioural aspect (including threats, manipulation or gaslighting) increasing from 21% pre campaign to 33% post campaign.

The campaign also demonstrated success among diverse groups, including First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

The impact of the campaign can be attributed to the extensive consultation, collaboration, and support from stakeholders and the community, who played a crucial role in informing and testing the campaign's resources. This collective effort ensured the campaign was not only impactful but also relevant, helping to drive meaningful change in awareness and understanding across NSW.

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## Legislative context

In November 2022, the NSW Parliament passed the [Crimes Legislation Amendment \(Coercive Control\) Act 2022](#) (the Act). The Act was passed following the NSW Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control recommending a criminal offence of coercive control, and after detailed and public consultation on an exposure Draft Bill.

The Act prescribes an offence of coercive control in current and former intimate partner relationships where an adult engages in a course of conduct of abusive behaviour that is intended to coerce or control the other person (the coercive control offence). The Act also provides for a definition of 'domestic abuse' for the purposes of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007.

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## Educating the NSW community

The NSW Government committed to running awareness campaigns about coercive control as part of its response to recommendation 9 of the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control. <sup>1</sup> The campaigns were developed in consultation with the Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce (the Taskforce), 10 Coercive Control Reference groups (Reference Groups) and several community organisations.

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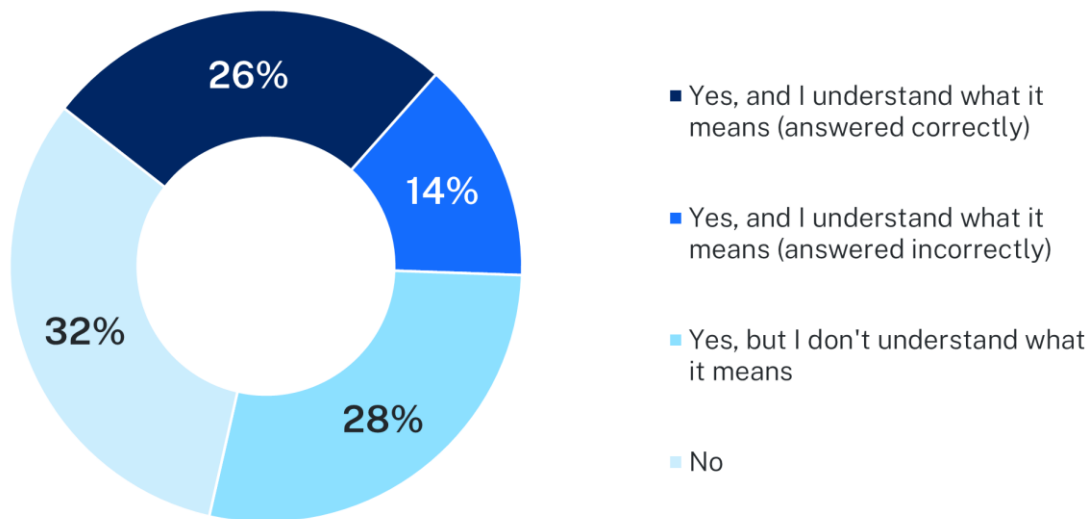
<sup>1</sup> NSW Government, NSW Government Response to NSW Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control (December 2021) 4.

## Formative research

In late 2022, DCJ commissioned independent market research with people in NSW aged 16+. The research was a critical step in identifying gaps in understanding the term coercive control and to inform the communications approach. The research highlighted that:

- 32% of respondents had never heard the term coercive control, and a further 28% had heard the term but did not know what it meant
- while 2 in 5 respondents claimed to know what coercive control meant, only 1 in 5 could correctly identify at least one aspect of coercive control
- participants were eager to learn more, including how they could support others experiencing this form of abuse.

Have you heard of the term 'coercive control' before?



## Communications approach

Consultation with sector representatives, Reference Groups and the community identified the need to educate people about the complexity of coercive control in an engaging, informative format. Communications equally needed to provide tailored information for priority audiences including First Nations and CALD communities.

A phased approach was identified as the most effective way to build momentum and awareness of coercive control among the NSW public. This approach also supported the need to introduce information to the community aligned with the implementation of the legislation, occurring on 1 July 2024.

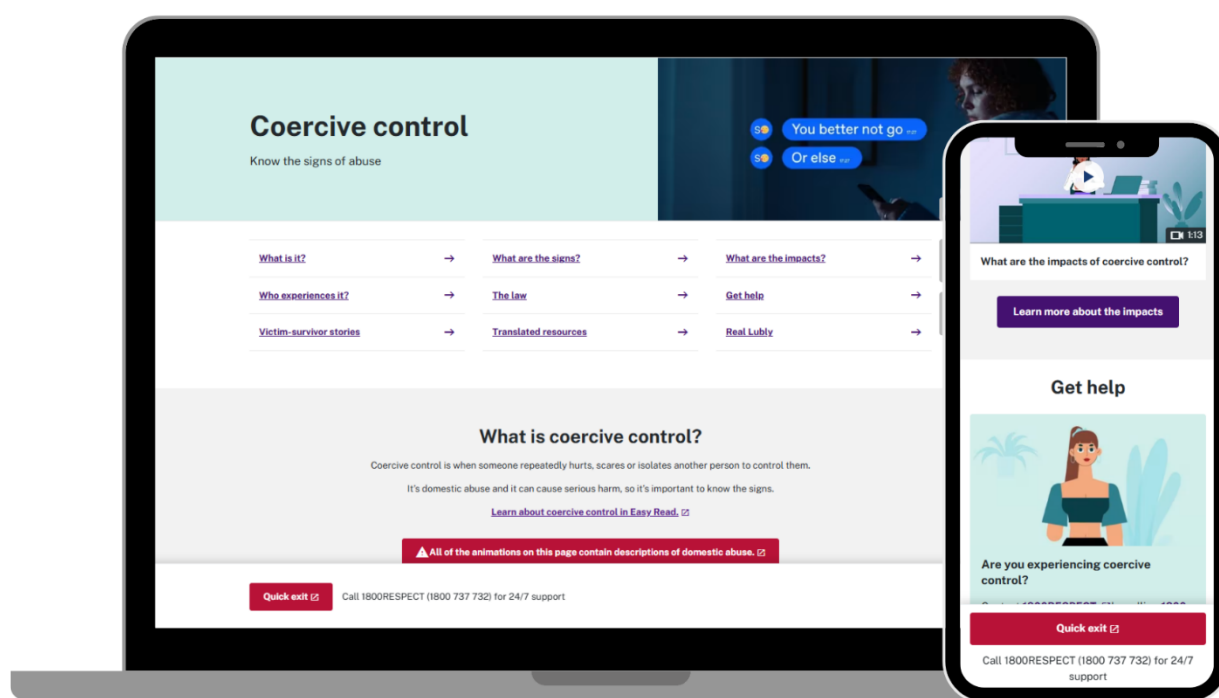
- **Phase one** – a dedicated website was developed to ensure the NSW public had access to credible information about coercive control, and a single source of truth.
- **Phase two** – an advertising campaign was developed targeting people aged 16-40 with a key objective to raise awareness and promote understanding of coercive control.
- **Phase three** – tailored campaigns were developed for CALD and First Nations audiences to supplement the public awareness campaign.

# Phase 1: Coercive control website

The [coercive control website](#) hosts a range of accessible information about coercive control. Resources were designed using market research insights, which found that users were interested to learn about coercive control, share information and find out where to get help.

Tailored resources were developed to educate high-risk communities, with relevant information and accessible information, such as an Easy Read factsheet and animated explainer videos reflecting the diversity of the NSW community, including older people, people with disability and LGBTQIA+. Independent market testing with the target audience was commissioned, with results showing 95% of respondents found creative materials clear and easy to understand. In addition, multiple rounds of stakeholder consultations informed the design and content of the website.

The website launched in August 2023. It was promoted on social media and digital channels, as well as through search engine marketing in 2023 and 2024.



## Results

The website continues to be available to the public and remains a key resource to promote ongoing, accessible information about coercive control. From launch until 31 January 2025 the website has had 630,848 total engaged views and reached the top position for most weekly views on nsw.gov.au.

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## Phase 2: Public awareness advertising campaign

The public awareness advertising campaign was developed to raise awareness and an understanding about the term coercive control and its associated behaviours. The campaign focused on coercive control in former or current intimate partner settings and highlighted the gendered nature of coercive control while avoiding the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. The campaign launched on 1 May 2024.

### Target audience

The primary audience for the campaign was people aged 16 to 40 years, with a secondary audience being all people in NSW. This audience segmentation was informed by DCJ's independent market research, which indicated younger cohorts are:

- less likely to claim they have heard of coercive control and to understand what it means
- less likely to recognise coercive and controlling behaviours as forms of domestic abuse
- more likely to agree with statements that excuse domestic abuse behaviours
- less likely to recognise the signs that someone else may be experiencing domestic abuse.

BOCSAR research also indicated that people under 40 were more likely to both experience and perpetrate domestic violence related to intimidation, stalking and harassment ([BOCSAR, 2022](#)).

### Campaign approach, consultation and testing

Stakeholder consultation and audience testing highlighted the need to include more subtle forms of abuse that may not typically be seen as serious, and to show the emotional impact on victim-survivors. These needs were echoed in consultation with experts in the Taskforce and Reference Groups.

#### Stakeholder consultation

- Multiple rounds of consultation
- 70+ stakeholders provided 95+ responses

#### Audience testing

- Multiple rounds of market research
- 854 online survey respondents
- 53 one-on-one interviews

#### Feedback highlights



Overwhelmingly positive feedback



Ads showed to resonate with target audience



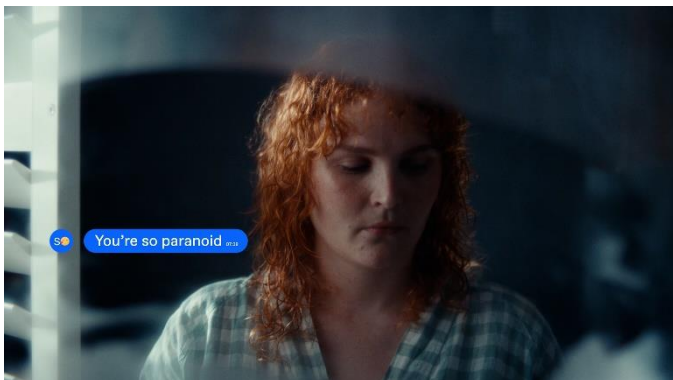
Ads showed to cut through, drive understanding and promote positive behaviour

## Creative direction

The campaign direction depicted a range of relationships and abusive behaviours (with a focus on non-physical abuse), and its impact over time. It focused on the experiences of coercive control from the victim-survivor's perspective, with two videos depicting a perpetrator.

A range of short form videos, static posters and social media tiles were developed to support appropriate content placement across a variety of media channels.

The campaign tagline 'it's not love, it's coercive control' was informed by market research and tested positively with the target audience, as it addressed misconceptions around non-physical forms of abuse and draws a direct line to the term coercive control. This was important in raising awareness about the term and associated behaviours.



## Media strategy and below the line promotion

The campaign was implemented via a targeted media strategy, while also working with people in the community to extend the reach of the campaign into communities. The media strategy included the following paid channels:

- Facebook, Instagram and TikTok
- YouTube and native video advertising
- Podcasts and radio
- Out of home placements in gyms, shopping centre and airport bathrooms
- Search engine marketing
- Paid editorial with Nine and Mamamia.

Paid advertising channels were selected based on the target audience's media consumption habits, the contextual relevance of placements and safety for people experiencing abuse or at risk of being re-traumatised.

A campaign toolkit including key information, campaign assets and resources was developed for organisations to share the campaign with their networks, clients and communities. DCJ also worked with a range of industries including finance, sport, health, hospitality and education to encourage promotion of the campaign via the campaign toolkit.

## Results

### The campaign met its primary objective

The broad advertising campaign achieved its primary objective of raising awareness and understanding about coercive control, and its associated behaviours. Post campaign research shows that **1 in 2 people now claim to have heard of coercive control and understand what it means**. This increased level of understanding is validated by an increase in the number of the target audience who can also identify at least one possible aspect of coercive control (including threats, manipulation or gaslighting), increasing from **21% pre campaign to 33% post campaign**.

### Message comprehension is empowering positive action

Additionally, message comprehension performed well. Key messages including “coercive control is when someone repeatedly hurts, scares or isolates another person to control them” and “it's important to know the signs of abuse” resonated with audiences.

The ads were seen to be clear, informative, and relatable. Additionally, among those aware of the campaign, over **3 in 4 took some form of positive action**, such as discussing the issue with others, visiting the website, or reflecting on relationships in their own lives.

### The media strategy successfully engaged the target audience

The media strategy indicates good performance, with social media proving to be an effective channel in reaching the target audience. Additionally, content partnerships with Mamamia and Nine performed well.

Overall, the campaign generated over 49 million total impressions exceeding the baseline target for impressions by 64%. There have been over 630,800 total engaged views to the website (as at 31 January 2025).

The campaign videos saw 4 million views to 100% completion, despite the videos being skippable on many platforms, highlighting that the content was engaging and resonated with the target audience.

The campaign launch was also promoted on major news outlets including Channel 7, 9, 10, ABC and SBS as well as key stories in the Daily Telegraph and The Guardian.

### Campaign results summary

Campaign measurement	Target	Result
<b>Increased awareness</b> % who claim to be aware of the term coercive control	68%	77%
<b>Increased understanding</b> % who claim to be aware of the term coercive control and know what it means	40%	50%
<b>Informative</b>	85%	87%



The ads are informative		
<b>Believability</b> I found the message of the ad to be believable	86%	87%
<b>Behaviour change</b> % who claim to have already taken some form of positive action in relation to coercive control as a result of seeing the campaign (among those previously aware of the campaign)	60%	76%

**Note:** these targets are informed by NSW Government advertising guidelines for campaigns over \$250k, as well as independent market research and audience testing prior to campaign launch.

## Phase 3: Tailored campaigns

### CALD campaign

As part of the phased approach to education, the third phase focused on developing tailored campaigns for CALD communities. Extensive consultation with sector experts revealed the need for a separate, tailored campaign designed to:

- highlight the different forms of coercive control experienced across various cultural groups
- communicate the complexity of coercive control in a culturally appropriate manner, using in-language resources to ensure accessibility and understanding.

Informed by these insights, a campaign was developed to address these differences and to ensure it resonated with multicultural audiences. The campaign launched in May 2024.

### Target audience

The campaign targeted people from Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic and Vietnamese communities. These communities were selected based on census data showing groups with the lowest rates of English language proficiency, as well as identified as being some of the largest cultural groups who reside in NSW. DCJ's independent market research also showed that these communities have key differences from the general population regarding their experiences of coercive control.

### Campaign approach, consultation and testing

The CALD campaign's messaging was shaped through extensive community consultation and testing, with a particular focus on identifying specific forms of abuse more prevalent in certain communities. One key insight from focus groups was the need to explicitly reference the new laws.

The campaign used the metaphor of a "web of abuse" to illustrate how various forms of control can entrap and isolate individuals. This approach avoided cultural stereotypes while delivering a clear, accessible message.

The campaign included one image and two audio clips per language, alongside tailored text for each community. Additionally, webpages with essential information from the coercive control website were developed in 15 languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, and Vietnamese, ensuring broad access and understanding. Assets were translated and tested by NAATI Certified translation providers to ensure messages were understood and relevant to the targeted communities.

### Stakeholder consultation

- Multiple rounds of consultation
- Feedback provided on messaging and campaign approach

### Audience testing

- Multiple focus groups per language with the community
- Facilitated by trained, bi-lingual facilitators

### Research insights



Participants said the materials were culturally appropriate, engaging and reflective of experiences in their communities.



Messaging was refined in each language over two rounds of community testing and through a translation panel.

## Media strategy and below the line promotion

The media strategy used well known and highly used channels frequently accessed by the community.

In addition, DCJ established a media partnership with SBS to gain greater reach of information into community. The approach involved a tailored resource comprising in-language assets and key messages explaining coercive control. It enabled trusted voices to share this information with their communities via the SBS platform, ensuring a consistent message was delivered across communities.

A campaign toolkit was also developed with campaign assets, key messages and resources. The toolkit was distributed to a range of community groups, religious leaders and sector organisations to further the message and reach of the campaign via their trusted networks.

## السيطرة القسريّة هي شبكة من الإساءة

السيطرة القسريّة هي عندما يقوم شخص ما بإيذاء شخص آخر أو تخويله أو عزله بشكل متكرّر للسيطرة عليه. هذه السلوكيات تشكّل مغًا نمطًا من الإساءة. وهي تجعل الشخص وكأنه عالق في شبكة.

اعتبارًا من تموز/يوليو 2024 هناك قوانين جديدة بشأن السيطرة القسرية في نيو ساوث ويلز؟

تحكّم في الاختيارات  
رصد  
عزل  
تهديدات  
تخويل

[dcj.nsw.gov.au/coercivecontrol-arabic](https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/coercivecontrol-arabic)

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى الدعم، اتصل بخدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفهية على الرقم 13 14 50 واطلب الاتصال بالرقم 1800RESPECT.



## 胁迫控制是施虐的邪恶之网

财务控制  
冷暴力  
监控  
孤立  
操纵

[dcj.nsw.gov.au/coercivecontrol-simplifiedchinese](https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/coercivecontrol-simplifiedchinese)



## Kiểm soát cưỡng chế là một mạng lưới ngược đãi

Thao túng tài chính  
Hăm dọa  
Làm cho bẽ mặt  
Giám sát  
Kiểm soát lựa chọn



## 强制操控 是一张虐待之网

侮辱性语言  
冷暴力  
操纵  
孤立  
财政控制

[瞭解詳情](#)



## Results

Results from the CALD campaign suggest a broad social media approach was effective in connecting with harder-to-reach audiences. This is evidenced by strong engagement results across Meta platforms (for example, Facebook) and Chinese-based buying apps.

Results show:

- Over 664,000 users reached across Chinese apps alone
- 7.6 million impressions through the Sydney Today App with the banner ad performing very well with people clicking through to the website
- Almost 246,000 Vietnamese and Arabic users reached via Meta platforms
- Radio and press achieving bonus activity that extended the reach of the campaign by 13%.

Media partnerships were effective in enabling trusted voices to deliver information to their communities (for example via SBS). Tailored materials for each language group provided local organisations with the opportunity to promote the campaign across their own channel, increasing the organic reach of the campaign.

# First Nations campaign




Research and consultation played a critical role in identifying the need for a bespoke campaign tailored to First Nations young people. Insights gathered from early consultations revealed the importance of creating a campaign that was not only culturally appropriate but also authentic, accessible, and able to address a complex issue in a clear and understandable way. Much like the CALD campaign approach, it became evident that information needed to be delivered through trusted voices within the community. The campaign had to be driven by First Nations people, ensuring it was grounded in cultural understanding. This campaign launched in June 2024.

## Target audience

The primary audience for this campaign was First Nations people aged 16 to 24 years. This was informed by consultation, which highlighted the importance of educating young people about abuse before it starts, and what healthy relationships look like.

## Campaign approach, consultation and messaging

A key component in the development of this campaign was for it to be centralised around the role of trusted voices. To achieve this, DCJ partnered with a highly respected Aboriginal-owned creative agency, as well as worked closely with key community representatives. This co-design process ensured the campaign direction remained culturally informed and authentically connected to the campaign and community's needs.

Audience testing	Research insights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Multiple rounds of concept testing with First Nations people</li></ul>	 Participants found the campaign materials engaging and relatable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participants aged 16-25</li></ul>	 They felt positive about the recognisable, respected faces and visual cultural elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Led by trained First Nations facilitators</li></ul>	 “the use of the word ‘real’ makes you know it's serious and ‘lubly’ softens it” – <i>consultation participant</i>

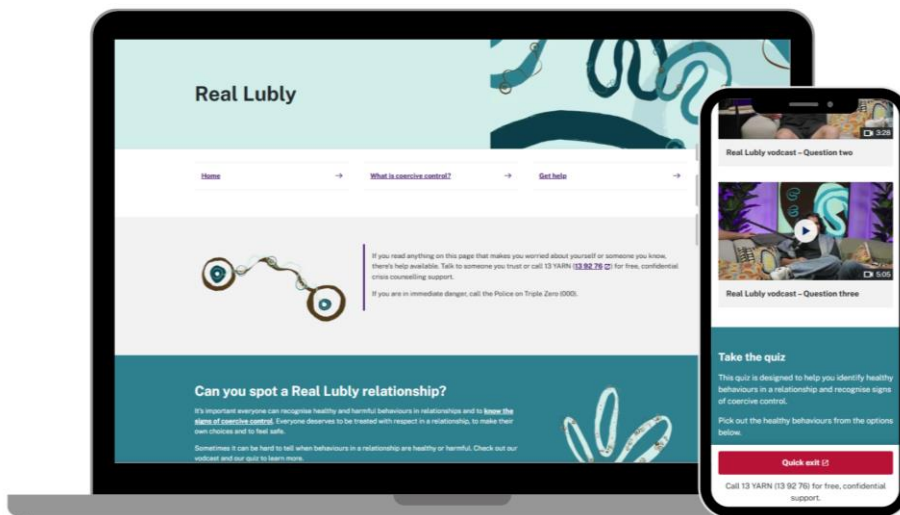
The campaign engaged high profile First Nations ambassadors who shared social media content and a vodcast discussing scenarios about coercive control to their followers. The ambassadors were Connor Watson (NRL player), Bianca Hunt (TV presenter) and Tom Forrest (TV presenter). This provided a platform where trusted, young First Nations people could engage in meaningful conversations about coercive control. It also allowed for a more natural use of culturally relevant scenarios and language.

A tailored website was also developed, housing user-friendly information including self-guided quizzes, yarning guides and the vodcasts. All campaign materials were designed and tested with First Nations communities with artwork developed by a local NSW-based Aboriginal artist.

## Media strategy

The Real Lubly campaign was promoted through social media and via key partner organisations and networks. Engaging known organisations to share the campaign was an effective way of reaching community outside of social media.

The campaign webpage featured the Vodcast and downloadable resources for young people and service providers. DCJ also promoted the campaign at Koori Knockout in October 2024.



## Results

Key to the success of this campaign was the co-design approach, which saw the campaign designed, supported and delivered by First Nations people for First Nations people. High views and engagement of content indicated the format was able to retain viewer's attention. Additionally, using engaging young First Nations people resulted in greater connection and authenticity of the campaign message, with positive sentiment from online comments indicating the content was well-received and relevant.

The First Nations targeted campaign achieved:

- over 135,000 total vodcast views
- reached over +78,000 social media accounts
- 163 total video shares, achieving 100% positive sentiment
- more than 392 organisations received the campaign toolkit.

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# DCJ commissioned independent market research and testing

DCJ commissioned a range of market research, audience testing and evaluations through various independent agencies that informed the approach to this campaign. The below outlines the various reports that have been referenced in this document.

- 2022, Independent website market research and testing (pre-campaign)
- 2023, Audience testing and research (phase 1 – coercive control website)
- 2023, CALD pre-campaign market research (phase 2 – tailored campaigns)
- 2024, Audience testing and research (phase 2 – public awareness advertising campaign)
- 2024, CALD community testing (phase 3 – tailored campaigns)
- 2024, First Nations community testing (phase 3 – tailored campaigns)
- 2024, post-campaign market research (phase 2 – public awareness advertising campaign)