



# **Convenience Advertising**

# **Harm Reduction and Stimulant Drug Use On The Highways:**

**An Evaluation Of Convenience  
Advertising Of Information For  
Long Distance Truck Drivers**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report details an evaluation study of a campaign organised by the Australian Drug Foundation (ADF) with the support of Convenience Advertising.
- The campaign dealt with delivering messages about stimulant drug use to long distance truck drivers, those messages having a harm reduction thrust (eg. how to use safely, warning signs, precautions, etc.).
- The material was delivered in the form of posters displayed in showers in truck stops and in postcards. The two forms had identical content.
- The evaluation was based upon a survey of an availability sample of truck drivers exposed to the messages by virtue of using truck stops where they were displayed. The truck drivers were interviewed using a formal interview schedule.
- Contact was made with 101 potential respondents. The drivers who were interviewed varied in age from 20 to 55 years, with a mean of 37.6 years and a standard deviation of 8.6 years. They had been driving from under 1 year to 39 years, with a mean of 16.9 years and a standard deviation of 8.9 years. Most had entered the industry in their late teens or early 20s, and clearly this was a sample of career drivers.
- Of the sample of 101, 91 had seen the posters alone or both the posters and postcards (no one had seen only the cards) and 10 had not.
- Of those who had not seen the material, 5 had not really been exposed, so the effective recall rate is about 95%.
- The data reviewed in this report strongly indicate that the campaign undertaken by ADF on this issue was highly successful. A very high proportion of drivers (90%+) recalled the material. Very large majorities of these thought that

the campaign was worthwhile;  
the material was displayed in the right places;  
messages were relevant to the industry and issues;  
the hotlines were a good idea and a proportion would consider calling; and  
the campaign had generated some discussion of the topic among drivers.

- The central thrust of the program as a harm reduction measure to cope with existing and prevalent use was well understood and generally was supported.
- There were two principal caveats, expressed by minorities of drivers.
- The first concerned whether the campaign might generate negative PR for the drivers. It seemed that this reflected general anxieties within the truck driving culture than actual experience of such problems.
- The second was whether, by coping with use rather than seeking to oppose it and reform the industry, the campaign might not indirectly support the exploitation of drivers by the industry, in that it taught drivers to use 'safely' rather than removing the causes of use (deadlines and pressure). This caveat raises an important ethical question that must not be neglected.
- The view that the campaign condoned use by drivers *per se* was expressed, but only by a tiny minority.
- A few drivers expressed the view that people would not use the hotlines, but data from hotline use shows that when 20-30 signs were up in the last week of October, only 36 calls were received, but in November when all signs were up there were 376 calls. This offers strong support for the view that desirable behavioural change flowed from the successful information campaign.

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## Background

This report details a study undertaken to evaluate a program of advertising to long distance truck drivers, based upon the display of posters and postcard materials in selected truck stops. The theme of the advertising, which was organised by the Australian Drug Foundation with the support of Convenience Advertising, was the safer use of stimulant drugs by truck drivers. The material was developed over a period of time and evaluated by Elliott & Shanahan Research in July 1993. The underlying assumption of the program was that the (illegal) consumption of stimulant drugs by long distance truck drivers remains a conspicuous feature of the transport industry and that such use creates a variety of risk for drivers and other road users.

The central aim of the program was not to challenge the existence of such drug use, but rather to accept it as a fact of the industry and instead focus upon messages that would encourage drivers who use, or might use, such drugs to do so in ways that are least likely to produce collateral harm – either directly to the user's health or indirectly to road safety. In short, the effort was clearly a harm reduction effort and as such fits into the broad aim of harm reduction that constitutes a central plank of the drug policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia.

The present study was envisaged as an evaluation of the campaign, to be executed soon after the early stages, when posters and postcards were displayed at selected truck stops on two major highways—the Hume and Newell highways.

The approach employed was to devise a simple research program that would ask some direct and central questions about the material, its location and content, as well as about the supporting hotlines that were developed by ADF that drivers could call for information or counselling support. The material was developed in conjunction with an informal pilot, a formal procedure (described in the next section) was developed, and the study carried out in December, 1993. The material was gathered and passed to Qualitative and Quantitative Social Research, where it was analysed and the report written during early January

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## Method

The basic method employed for this study was a survey, using a formal interview schedule (see Appendix 2). This schedule employed both quantitatively oriented and qualitatively oriented questions which were developed to cover the various aspects outlined in the previous section, as well as a couple of general questions designed to ensure that important aspects of the topic were not missed. These, along with a couple of additional questions (see 18 and 19) developed out of concerns raised during informal pilot enquiries in late November, were organised into the schedule, along with questions about the age of the driver and length of driving experience – questions designed to ensure that the study contacted a full range of ages and that the sample was of professional, career drivers.

Convenience Advertising provided four interviewers who worked at several different stops, interviewing an availability sample of drivers, following the instructions shown in Appendix 1. It is important to emphasise that the sample was not, and for practical reasons could not be, a random sample. This was partly because of reasons of time and cost, but mainly because to design a random would have been extremely difficult in the absence of any obvious population which could constitute a proper sampling frame. This limitation, however, is of little practical significance because the thrust of this project is neither to develop population estimates nor to test between sample differences to see whether they are statistically significant – the two issue where randomness becomes of cardinal importance.

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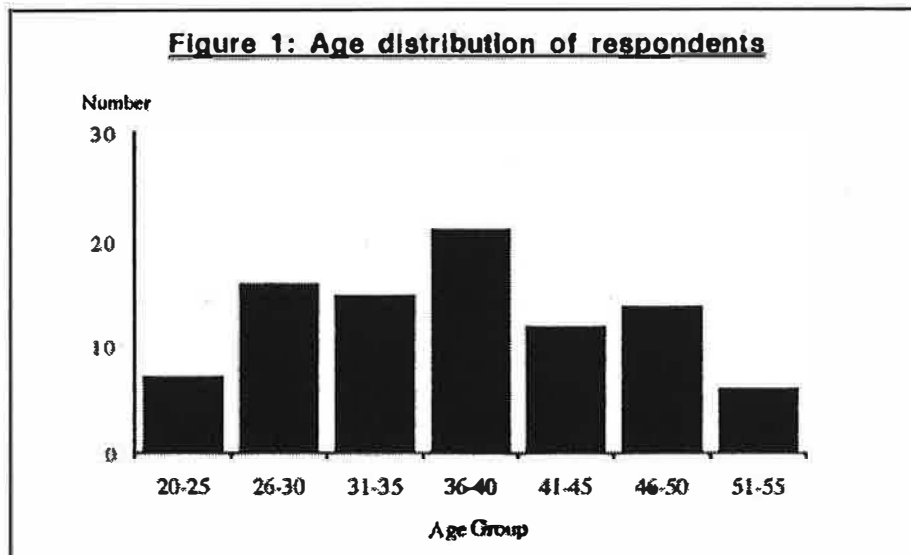
## Findings

In all, contact was made with 101 potential respondents. Of these, 91 had seen the posters alone or both the posters and postcards (no one had seen only the cards) and 10 had not. The exact breakdown on reported recall was that 46 (50.5%) reported that they had seen both and 45 (49.5%) the posters only. Those who had not seen the material included several who were in some way or other 'special cases' (one weekend driver, one relief driver, two who rarely used these highways, one who had been off sick for some weeks), one who didn't wear his glasses in the shower areas and so had not really seen the posters properly, along with four who claimed they simply hadn't seen them (in one case the interviewer felt that the driver was in a hurry and was simply using this as an excuse). Thus at minimum, we can say that 90% of drivers contacted recalled the posters and that if we confine ourselves to regular drivers who were routinely exposed to the posters the figure is nearer 95%. In addition, another 50% had also seen the postcards. This indicates that the campaign had been highly effective in reaching its target audience.

The rest of this report details the responses of those 91 who had seen either the posters or the posters and postcards and hence could respond about their feelings on the campaign. With one exception, the presentation follows the sequence of the questions asked, in each case presenting the quantitative data on any item followed by an overview of the qualitative data. The exception concerns question 21 – age and years driving – which is dealt with first, so that a picture can be established of the respondent group.

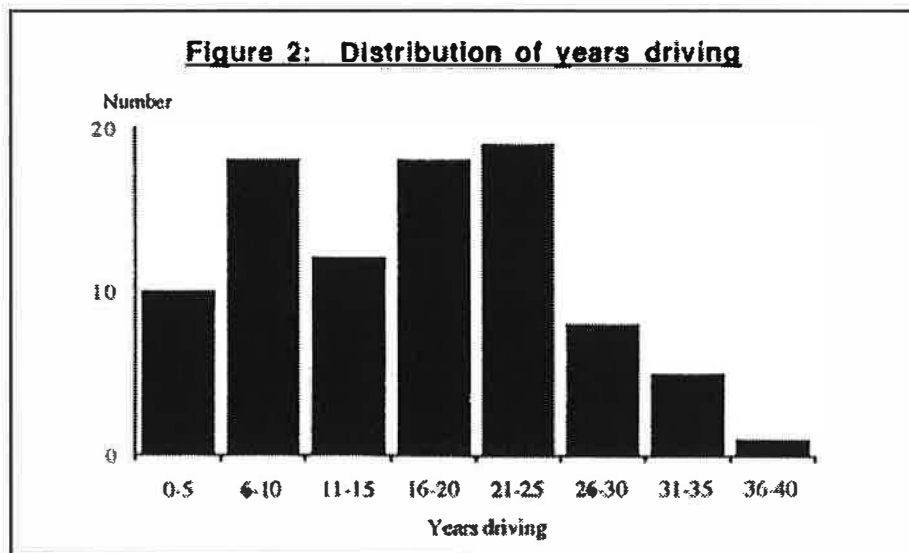
Age: The range of ages of our respondents was from 20 to 55 years, with a mean ('average') of 37.6 years and a standard deviation (a measure of 'spread' of the ages) of 8.6 years. The distribution across the age range is shown in Figure 1.





As we see from this figure, there is a wide spread of drivers of all ages in the sample, with no particular group heavily over or under-represented.

Years driving: the length of driving career was from under 1 year to 39 years, with a mean of 16.9 years and a standard deviation of 8.9 years, Again, as Figure 2 shows, this was well spread across the various groups.



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As we see from these data, the idea of the campaign was overwhelmingly well received, with less than 5% saying that this was a bad idea. The large majority of respondents answered in the second group, which might best be thought of as "Yes, but..." That is, they strongly supported the general concept despite some idea that it might be improved slightly.

### **(3) Why is that?**

When asked why they felt this way about the campaign, the majority of respondents (80) offered an answer that elaborated their approval or disapproval, or sometimes both. Six themes emerged, these were – an issue that needs to have attention directed to it (14), a need for increased awareness, communication and education (36); a need for reform of the drug laws to make the use safer again (9); a need for increased safety (5); a need for reform of the industry and other actions to prevent drug use (7), and comments critical of the campaign in some way (6).

The distribution of these comments generally reflects the nature of the campaign in a way that realistically fits the issues and the way that they were raised. That is, the large majority saw the campaign as a harm reducing measure which addressed a real problem in a realistic way that neither approved of drug use nor condemned it in simplistic and moralising terms. Indeed, as the material cited below shows, while a few respondents voiced criticism of the industry for creating conditions in which drugs were used, only a very few criticised this campaign. Such criticisms were along the lines that, by not actively condemning such use, the material either actively supported or passively connived at the use of drugs.

It is a very important that there were so few comments along these lines, since a common complaint about harm reduction strategies is that by failing to send a

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A need for increased awareness, communication and education:

- Awareness (5)
- Awareness and safety information
- Educate younger drivers
- Education and safe usage
- Education and safety
- Get the rubbish out; give education
- Gets attention, tells people how to use drugs correctly
- Gives a good idea of what is good and what is not good for you, what to have and what not to have
- Gives information for drivers
- Good for young drivers
- Good idea for younger drivers
- Good idea, but does not go far enough
- Helps to find out information
- Improve knowledge
- Improves communication
- Information about stuff that is out there now. Low life people selling it, criminal element.
- Information is important
- Let some people know what they are taking
- Makes people aware
- Makes you think
- Making people aware of what is about
- May convince a few people to stop taking drugs, or at least reduce what they use
- May prevent younger drivers getting into that sort of habit
- Most follows don't understand enough about them
- Need better education about drugs
- Need to educate people about what they are doing
- People are not really aware of what they are taking
- People need to know what is going on, how to take them safely, etc
- Provides knowledge where needed
- Raises awareness
- Some drivers are not educated enough about what they are doing
- To teach younger drivers about safe use

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### A need for reform of the drug laws to make the use safer again

- We need to make pills more accessible to drivers through prescriptions not black market stuff. I knew of a case where a driver took what he thought was speed and it was actually battery acid and burnt his stomach.
- We're regulated on everything else, the hours we can drive, shit like that. Why can't we have some regulations for drug use? I mean, there should be an allowance for it, but set limits on what you can and can't use.
- ... especially for people who can't get hold of tablets and are buying bags of speed
- Because pills have been outlawed and are hard to get, creating black market problems. Drivers still have to try to meet tight schedules.
- Get rid of the shit that's floating around
- Legalise the drugs, provide more education, let doctors prescribe
- Most truckies take something – the money pressure to make tight ETAs, etc. They don't all realise the side effects.
- Pills should be subscribed to get away from powders; doctors should supervise

### A need for increased safety

- Anything to make it safer on the roads
- Help to stop accidents
- Help with safety
- Safety
- Staying awake is a bit of a problem

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### A need for reform of the industry and other actions to prevent drug use

- Feel that truck drivers ought to have more rest periods
- If you are taking drugs you can't be doing the job properly
- I mean, people doing their job shouldn't have to take drugs, illegal, even ... uh ... any drugs, but especially illegal drugs ... shouldn't have to take drugs to do their job. And the sooner we can get to a situation where it doesn't happen, the better it's going to be for everyone.
- Nobody wants to take drugs to earn a living. Help stop drug use
- Somebody has to help stop the drivers taking drugs
- Stop abuse of some drugs
- Too many blokes abusing everything

### Comments critical of the campaign in some way

- A lot of it's just a bit overboard, you know, it's a bit out of control. I mean, there's probably drivers around that use needles, say, but I don't know any that use needles, or that are that serious into drugs. That's more kids on the street. I've been involved with them too, so I know what it's like. There's a need for it I suppose [the campaign], and there's need for regulation. But the public see this sort of thing, and you know, they're looking for track marks! And I know, friends, and my wife and that now ... they're at a friend's party and they're looking for track marks and wondering "Is he a drug addict?"
- A few misgivings about the implications for public concern – what if other drivers see them and get the wrong messages?
- Because promoting drug use
- Only helping drug use by talking about it in that manner
- People who take drugs will continue to take them
- Telling you to have a break – unrealistic

**(4) Were the posters in the right place or could they have been better located?**

Right place	80	87.9%
Don't know	1	1.1%
Could be better	10	11%

Almost 90% of the respondents felt the material was displayed in the right place. Some elaborated on this while those few who felt that it was not in the right place were asked why.

**(5) If could be better – where else should they have been placed?**In favour of current location

- Well, everybody has go to go to the shower!!
- Everybody sees them
- ... it's a good spot
- Toilets are good, everyone goes there
- It certainly gets people's attention
- Yeah, precisely. You know, the first time I saw it was in Narrabri. You know, I was caught up there one night and I went in the toilets and I come out and I said to this other bloke that it's the first time I saw something decent about it.

In favour of different location

- Need more displayed, including in the restaurant areas
- Cards need to be better located
- Billboards
- Road transport depots
- Restaurants
- Get more out into the open
- Beside telephones, in toilet cubicles
- But only a small percentage see them in the toilets/showers
- Tables in the drivers areas
- Windows in roadhouses

Not in favour of any display

- Don't put them up at all
- Not needed at all

These results suggest strongly that the placement was close to ideal. The large majority thought the placement correct – and several elaborated why – and of those who were critical, the main thrust was towards more publicity. While their suggestions are sensible if that direction were to be taken, we shall see later that over-exposure of the material is a concern, with many drivers not wanting the general public to see the messages. Since most of the alternative suggestions concerning placement would increase the likelihood of such inadvertent exposure, we may be confident that greater publicity would lead to greater unease.

**(6) Based on your experience, were the issues raised in the postcards and posters things that are relevant to truck driving work?**

Yes, very much so	16	17.6%
Yes	68	74.7%
Don't know (+missing)	3	3.3%
No	3	3.3%
No, not at all	1	1.1%

These data again indicate a very high level of approval of campaign material, with over 90% agreeing that the issues are relevant to the work of truck drivers.

- Most drivers take them
- Part of industry, pushed hard by companies
- Part of the industry (10)
- Pressures the drivers are under-they must use drugs some of the time
- Schedules cause the pressure for taking drugs
- Someone out there is trying to do something constructive
- Stimulant use is part of the industry
- The drugs are being taken, so this is relevant to the industry
- This is part of the industry
- Use is part of the industry, needs to be dealt with

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Education and related practical issues (19)

- ... it tells you to keep away from the backyard stuff and if you're going to take 'em, take the proper, you know, the good stuff
- A lot more education is needed
- All relevant to what truck drivers go through
- Awareness of safety issues and of the bad publicity that drivers can receive
- Because they emphasise looking after yourself and give fair warning of what is out there
- Combating fatigue is important
- Drugs are a problem and it is important to address that, especially harder drugs
- Education of driver
- Gets to the heart of the issue, lets everybody know how to use safely and what the dangers are
- Helping with safety
- Information is relevant to drivers
- Make drivers realise their responsibility and not take things which endangers other people's lives. Some users are bloody idiots – "overnight cowboys".
- Message is very clear and gets to the point the beauty of this it is logical and realistic
- Need to take them to cope with the long hours
- Needed in the industry
- Relevant to some extent – some will take drugs and may need to know
- Try to get message across properly
- Understanding fatigue
- You should be able to get them off your doctor by prescription



Critical or offering qualifications (8)

- With my experience with stay-awake drugs – no. Basically, 90% of the drivers who use any sort of substance to keep themselves awake are aware of the effects and are aware of their limitations while they are under the influence of any substance they use. Therefore, I don't think the truck driver needs educating.
- Against drugs being used
- Depends on the individual
- Don't see what it's going to do for me
- I don't need the information, tho' perhaps some do.
- Some relevant, some not, because not everyone takes drugs
- The general public's opinion seems to be that every driver takes drugs. That is not true, probably only 50% do so. This program tags everybody as taking them.
- Very relevant for those drivers who do use, not for the others.

**(8) Did the postcards and posters have useful and practical messages for truck drivers or should they have said something different?**

Right messages	81	89%
Don't know/missing	3	3.3%
Should be different	7	7.7%

Again, the overwhelming response here is positive. About 90% say the messages are useful and practical and less than 10% disagree.

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hotlines, the reasons they offered for their support are a little 'obvious'. They argue that some people might need information and this is a good way to offer it – which is likely true but tells us nothing much we could not have guessed in advance.

#### Useful because of advice and counselling (27)

- Advice and counselling a good idea
- Can ring and get help if you're at risk of going overboard
- Drivers need counselling, need someone there to talk to
- For counselling with people who have a problem
- For people who need help
- For the 10% who use and don't know what they use, or what the effects of whatever substance they use has on them. Or anyone who wants to further their knowledge about them.
- For those that need them
- Good to have counselling or information there if you need it
- Good to have people to talk to
- Got to have somewhere where people can talk
- If a bloke recognises he has got a problem, he might be on the way to fixing himself up a bit.
- If people get hooked, there is somewhere to get counselling
- If you had problems, you would ring up
- It means help is there it needed
- People can find out what is happening to them. Some people don't know until they start asking questions.
- People need access to information and help
- Practical solution if you do need to talk
- Some people need information and counselling
- Someone to talk to if needed
- Somewhere you can contact and talk to
- There for anyone who wants them
- There for people who need them
- There for people who want to use it
- There if someone needs counselling

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- To provide counselling
  - Useful into for people with problems
  - Well, there's a lot of people using stuff that they shouldn't be. Into big time stuff, you know, you just don't know how far you can go with some of that stuff.

#### Advice and counselling for the irresponsible (4)

- I think because a lot of drivers are not responsible enough to know. If they want more info they can ring that number. Most drivers are experienced most of the ratbags have left the industry.
- For people who didn't know what they were getting themselves into
- Some people have no idea about what they are taking – they just take what they can get
- A lot out there don't know how far gone they are – maybe this would help to wake them up to themselves.

#### Anonymity (4)

- Can get information and remain anonymous
- Can see someone anonymously
- Good that you can access using mobile phones. Postcards are handy also.
- People need somewhere to ring in confidence

**Access to information (21)**

- If you needed information, you could get it easily
- Puts you in touch with the right people
- Dial direct for information – very good concept
- Drug searching
- Good idea but should be addressed to companies
- Is that to dob 'em in?
- Good idea, but the depictions in the posters are trucks in isolated areas where phones aren't always accessible
- Well, not the 0055 number, that's just making money for someone, where's the money going? I know that sounds a bit.... [cynical] ... but there it is. I mean, if you really need help, why should have to pay for it? There should be, like, more counsellors and that around, people that have worked in the industry and that know what it's all about.
- Sensible within the program but against what the respondent believes right

**(12) Have you used either of the hotlines yourself and if not, do you think you might in the future?**

Yes, used the 0055 line	0	0
Yes, used the 008 line	0	0
Yes, used both lines	0	0
Haven't but might	14	15.4%
Don't know	5	5.5%
No, won't use it	72	79.1%

The result here fits with the comment made earlier about support for hotlines being based on slightly 'obvious' grounds. That is, many people thought them a good idea but in practice not one of our respondents had used a hotline and only 15% thought they might do so. This figure does not, of itself undermine the concept, since in providing such a service one imagines that a minority of drivers would ever call, and most of those only a few times.

But since no one had called, we could offer no comment, no matter how slender, on what drivers thought of the service. More informative, is the reasons why they say they would not call.

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**(14) If would not use a line, why is that?**

Over half of the respondents (57) offered a clear reason as to why they would not use the hotlines. Of these, nearly half (27) were specific that they would have no need because they did not use drugs. Another 20 said they thought had no need, but it was not specified whether this was because they did use drugs or because their use was not, in their own eyes, problematic. On the other hand 10 respondents – that is, about 18% of those who answered this question – admitted that they used drugs, but saw their use as under control (for varied reasons) and hence saw no need to call the hotlines.

**No need because no use of drugs (27)**

- Don't take them and haven't in the 7 years I've been driving
- Could not see myself getting to that point
- Dead against drugs
- Doesn't believe in drug use
- Doesn't relate to my driving
- Don't do enough driving
- Don't have much use for drugs
- Don't intend to use any drugs
- Don't need them
- Don't need to use
- Don't need to
- Don't need to
- Don't take drugs (8)
- Don't take drugs. My own view is that if you can't do the job on your own ability, you should give it away.
- Don't use drugs (6)
- Don't use drugs anymore – it doesn't pay to
- Don't use drugs. If you can't do it by your own ability, give it away.
- Don't take drugs – don't need to as the company I work for does not force the pace as badly as some
- Has stopped using drugs after previous health problems related to drug use
- I don't use any stay awake drugs

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- No intention of using
  - No need for drugs
  - No need to use
  - No need to use them
  - No need, don't take drugs
  - Used to take them, but the job I have now I don't need them. I'd rather have someone driving towards me in a truck who has been taking drugs than someone who is asleep.
  - No reason to use

No need – not certain if because no use or use controlled (20)

Don't have a drug problem.

- Don't have a problem and don't think I will
- Don't need to (5)
- Haven't got the need to
- Irrelevant to my situation
- No need (5)
- No reason to
- No reason to
- Not relevant to me
- Personally, no necessity
- Will not need it myself
- Won't have to

No need because my drug use is under control (10)

- I've got it [my drug use] under control
- What I use is prescribed to me by my doctor and I use it under his guidance. I have a medical examination once a month.
- I hope not, hope I don't get that bad ever
- ... I'd give the job away before I got that far into it [drug use]
- Doctor advises me
- Don't use hard stuff, so no need

- I saw my doctor and found out what drugs do to you
- I would go to talk to a chemist or doctor [instead]
- I would only take things when I know what I am taking. I would never take 'speed' but I would use NoDoze.
- If I can't get drugs on prescription, I won't use anything, so it doesn't really apply to me

If we assume that at least some of the middle group of answer here are people whose idea that they had 'no need' was based upon control, rather than merely upon lack of use, we might imagine that somewhere around 20-30% of the drivers we interviewed were using some form of stimulant (rarely amphetamines, one would guess) for stay awake purposes, but that few of these saw the hotlines as necessarily relevant to their situation at this time.

**(15) Before today, have you talked with other truck drivers about the postcards and posters at all'?**

Yes, a lot	3	3.3%
Yes, a little	29	31.9%
Don't know	0	0
No	59	64.8%

Recall and other measures concerning content and placement are useful, but the measures of the effectiveness of a campaign are actions in the real world that result from the information transmitted. Did placing the posters and postcards result in any action outcome?

On one dimension – calling the hotlines – the answer from our small sample is no, but that is not really very significant when the sample is small. One would only expect a few drivers to call per 100 drivers, so with a sample of 91, getting a zero on this measure is not surprising (not to mention that the problematic minority might call the hotlines but dodge the interviewers).

But for the majority of drivers, one would hope to put the issue 'on the agenda'. The best measure of this is 'has anyone talked about the poster material with other drivers?' The answer to this question is moderately positive. Just over one third of drivers had talked about the material with their peers. Especially when one considers the small scale of the initial campaign, this can be taken to be a reasonable indication that the material is having a useful effect.

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**(16) Overall, what is the best thing about this campaign?**

Asked what was best about the campaign, two fifths of drivers (39) mentioned aspects that focused upon helping drivers – themes concerned primarily with awareness, information and education (26) and safety (13). A second large group (25) were more focused upon the aspect that the campaign got the issue out into the open, 14 concentrating upon the fact that it was useful to be honest about the problem, another 11 emphasising more that fact that it highlighted the linked need for some active reform – of drug policy, of the industry or whatever.

These two groups of answer address different dimensions. The first group an 'internal dimension' – that is, given the existence of the campaign, seems best about its content. The second group focuses more upon an 'external dimension' – that is, given that the campaign exists, what seems to be the aspect of the complete issue that you feel most linked to the campaign.

Other than these two groups, there were few other comments – two focused upon the hotlines, and three made sceptical comments that questioned whether there was anything good about it.

**Awareness, information and education (26)**

- Awareness is raised about what you should and shouldn't do
- Awareness
- Awareness and information
- Educate people
- Gives you an idea of what you should take and who you should go and see
- Educate people so if they are going to do something, they know how to do it
- Education
- Education, especially of younger drivers
- Education about what happens if common sense does not prevail – there's been an epidemic of drug deaths
- Education and prevention
- Education and prevention of danger
- Education of the younger drivers



- 
- Get people thinking about their body and their limits
  - Getting a message across for people that need it
  - Giving useful information
  - Good if people take notice
  - Good info for young or inexperienced drivers
  - Good information
  - Good information important for those using them
  - Information providing
  - It helps people who are in difficulty
  - Not preaching, just providing sound information about safer use
  - Providing information
  - Raise awareness
  - Raising awareness
  - Raising awareness of the issues

#### Safety and reducing use (13)

- Contributions (small) to road safety and driver awareness and health
- May make people more health and safety conscious
- Safety related information
- The safety aspect
- To stop people going overboard and realise their limits
- Trying to get drivers to stop using and warning of bad effects
- The information makes blokes stop and think about the issue. It made me stop and think, that's for sure.
- Does something to help prevent drug abuse
- Drivers straightened out
- Get some sense back into the industry
- Stop 'speed' use
- Teach drivers about health and financial implications and that it doesn't pay to use drugs
- Well, it's got to enlighten everybody about the dangers of taking the stuff that is on the market today. I think that it's pretty dangerous, isn't it? The stuff we used to get years ago was alright – I can't see there was any big-deal about that stuff.

- 
- Most of the drivers I talk to agree that it is a very good idea. It gets to the point of the problem and also the fact is that the ADF money is doing something useful.
  - Possible to get the message to government that something needs to be done to get the drugs back on the market safely
  - Put safe drugs back on the market
  - Sensitivity to issues. Should be sent to companies to make them aware of the issues.
  - Should have vending machines
  - Something might be done about it. Have doctors looking after the situation.

#### Hotlines (2)

- Having a phone number so people can explore what they need to know
- Hotlines, highlighting effects of drugs, good information

#### Sceptical comments (3)

- If it does some good, carry on with it.
- Nothing good
- If something comes out of it, it'll be good

#### **(17) Overall, what is the worst thing about this campaign?**

While one assumed that the campaign was well conceived and well constructed, it is important not to presume an absence of faults, so we asked what the worst aspect of the campaign might be. Reassuringly, there were few respondents prepared to nominate any bad aspect. Indeed, almost two thirds (57) specifically said that there was nothing bad about the effort, while another 3 made the point that the campaign was very good but needed to go further.

- Some might misunderstand
- The worst thing about the campaign, I think, is that by inference – not so much what it says, but by inference – the public, who already have problems with truck drivers, inasmuch as they don't identify with us ... by this they are likely to think we are all, or most of us, mad bastards who drive trucks full of drugs. And I think the poster could have stated that "we know not all truck drivers take drugs, but if you are one of the few ... or if you are one of those that do ... " and then go into talking about it [the topics they did cover]. It should state clearly that not all truck drivers take drugs, because nowadays most the truck drivers do not take drugs, and that is a fact. ... You know, just prior to doing this interview, I was only just thinking, not ten minutes before, that I ought to ring them up and make this point. So it's just opportune that you turned up at the right time.

#### Miscellaneous negative (5)

- I think it's about four steps in front of itself. I think there's a lot more work to be done before we get to this stage.
- Cost of campaign
- Promotion of drug use
- That it is needed
- Won't really achieve anything because people will not heed the messages.

The material gathered for question 17, along with that collected in response to question 16, clearly points to a highly successful campaign that is very well received by the large majority of drivers.

**(18) Some people have said that they were worried that the general public might see the postcards or posters and think that all truck drivers are drug addicts. Have you heard that view at all?**

Yes, definitely	12	13.2%
Yes, a bit	11	12.1%
Don't know	4	4.4%
No	64	70.3%

As noted in respect of question 17, an issue that concerned some drivers, one that we found emerging in the piloting phase, was that of bad publicity. Some people felt that members of the wider public would see this material and draw conclusions about widespread drug use.

Was this view commonly held? When we asked this question directly, we found that only about one quarter of respondents said that they had heard this view expressed, equally split between those who had heard the view expressed very definitely and those who had heard it to a limited extent. This does not suggest a widespread concern, but it does not suggest that this is a major problem.

**(19) What do think of that – do you think many people would see the postcards or posters and get the idea that tots of truck drivers are drug addicts?**

Yes, very much so	13	14.3%
Yes	44	48.4%
Don't know	12	13.2%
No	18	19.8%
No, not at all	4	4.4%

If people other than truckies saw the posters, would they be likely to draw the negative conclusions that concerned some respondents? Note that this is a hypothetical question, so what we measure here is not what would happen, but what people fear might happen. When we ask it, we discover that this is a fear held by a majority of respondents, over 60% of whom thought this some kind of possibility, while another quarter thought it would not happen.

It is important to note here that while we did not have a space for comments to be recorded here, a number of schedules had interviewer comments written in to the effect that "the public think this anyway".

This, and a smattering of other comments throughout the study about the need for the public to see the truck driver's points of view and give drivers a 'fair go', leads one to the view that this may tell us more about the controversial aspects of truck driving than the campaign *per se*. That is, while the concern is important to note, the sensitivity seems to arise from general issues rather than from shortcomings created by the campaign. As several drivers said, in reality, very few members of the general public will actually enter the shower blocks of a truck stop ...

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**(20a) Do you have any ideas of anything else people should do to help truck drivers use drugs safely?**

The last pair of questions – 20a and b – were designed to 'mop up' the study and ensure that we had not missed anything important by failing to ask some central question.

In respect of 2a, two broad themes seemed to emerge. On the one hand, 39 respondents raised matters of drug policy directed towards better conditions for use. The larger group of 32 respondents wanted the availability rules for drugs, and the monitoring of use, to be changed. In this, they suggested a reversal of some recent restrictions and a move towards a system of prescription, medical supervision, etc. The system said to operate in the USA received a number of positive comments. Along similar lines, another 7 respondents wanted a concentration upon education for safe drug use. These 39 respondents can sensibly be understood to want to further harm reduction policies applied to the use of drugs in the industry.

- ... where it's publicly addressed that there is a problem, and that problem is getting way out of hand And its got to be addressed that the government and the police have gone about attacking the problem in the industry arse-about-face, attacking the driver, not the etc]. I mean, we don't use for the hell of it, for the fun of it, we use because of the working conditions we work with and that's got to be addressed. It's like trying to stop slavery, and saying "Anyone that's caught being a slave, we'll prosecute 'em, not the person who's working the slave", you know. You know, we'll get the slave and whip them – it's all arse-about-face. The problem's being attacked from the bottom, the one who can least afford to wear the ramifications of the whole thing, well, they're ending up in court, or ending up in divorce or whatever at home. It's not solving the problem.

This quotation poses a key dilemma of harm reduction policies, which is that in any harm reduction effort, one must not overlook pressures towards drug use that may lead a user to use in ways that are unwise or unsafe, not because s/he accepts the risks freely in search of the benefits s/he imagines that use will bring but because the use is adaptive to pressure outside the users control. When that happens, the policy is open to serious the moral criticism that in pursuit of harm reduction overall, one simply ignores the harm suffered by the user and in so doing implicitly supports exploitation.

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To say this, is not to say that the ADF is unaware of this problem or that it implicitly supports the way that the transport industry exploits drivers by setting unrealistic targets and ignoring the fact that all too often, a driver's only practical adaptation is to break rules (on log books, on drug use) to make the deadlines set. But it is to make sure that this issue is on the agenda and to remind everyone involved that the simplest possible harm reduction measure in this industry would be the one that removed the pressure to take drugs.

#### Change the availability rules to re-allow safe use (32)

- Shakers used correctly were good, then they removed them. Need a controlled supply. In the USA, can buy off the shelf.
- Should be available from doctor on prescription; also as in USA
- Reintroduce prescriptions
- Should be prescribed, bring back legal markets and get rid of black markets
- Should make drugs freely available
- Supply should be regulated, not prohibited. Less dangerous drugs should be available on prescription. People should see their doctor, get regular cheek ups.
- Taking drugs sensibly; need to say that different drugs affect different people differently
- They should be available on prescription, then it is up to the driver and his doctor. Don't want to see people buying on the black market.

#### Concentrate on education for safe use (7)

- Bring out a little booklet or something, so that truckies can read up about it, and only give it to truck drivers that are in this kind of industry.
- Doctors need to be more involved to offer counselling and advice. Nobody really knows what the right stuff is.
- Education and medical advice
- Education is needed
- Encourage people to talk to chemists and doctors
- How to use safely
- Need clinics with counselling on 24 hr basis

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### Change the stress via industry reform to remove the cause

- Oh, that's such a long, long question, or such a long, long answer! I mean, the reason people use drugs is because they don't have sufficient time to get from point A to point B. Their bosses and the freight forwarders aren't giving them sufficient time, and that comes back to our competitiveness, that we are having to compete against government subsidised rail and we are just not in a position to allow more time. We're under pressure from government subsidised rail and that's the major problem. This run here, that I'm doing, Brisbane-Melbourne, it's the best run of the lot of them because you get sufficient time to sleep and to rest. But the blokes who run Sydney-Melbourne and the blokes that run Sydney-Brisbane and even now, Sydney-Adelaide, Adelaide-Melbourne, those sorts of runs, they're the shorter runs and those blokes are under a lot of pressure and they are the blokes who are really taking drugs. But not us up this inland road.
- It all gets back to ETAs and pressures
- Make companies more aware, pressure them to change ETAs. Most drivers still don't know anything much about the drugs.
- Need to educate companies about deadlines
- People sending the goods out should rearrange the schedules so that the fatigue factor is reduced along with the pressure
- Remove pressure for deadlines
- Shouldn't have to use them – reduce pressure
- Stop the companies pushing so hard
- Why should they be used?! We need to fix the cause of the problem.

### Prevent drug use and cope with stress properly (91

- Discourage use
- Do not use them, you do not need to
- Don't take them
- No drugs are entirely safe that keep you awake, when you are tired you should sleep
- People they know who sell the drugs should be doxxed in.
- Shouldn't teach them how to use them, because they ought not use them
- Shouldn't use drugs at all
- Stop driving and go to sleep when tired
- Doctors should prescribe and regular control

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**(20b) Is there anything important about this issue that we haven't talked about but that you would like to mention?**

The final mop up question produced a mixture of points, most of which had emerged in relation to other questions. The relevant material is shown below. The important finding here is mainly that it does not seem as if we had missed something with our questions that only emerged by chance in this 'mop up'.

- I think it's gotta be addressed by the bodies that govern the transport industry, the government and our own bodies. It's no good the Drug Foundation – and when I say it's 'no good', everything that is done is good – but, the achievements of the Drug Foundation in this will be minimal, I think, unless they work together with some sort of transport forum, where it's publicly addressed that there is a problem, and that problem is getting way out of hand. And it's got to be addressed that the government and the police have gone about the problem in the industry arse-about-face, attacking the driver, not the [companies, etc]. I mean, we don't use for the hell of it, for the fun of it, we use because of the working conditions we work with and that's got to be addressed. It's like trying to stop slavery and saying "Anyone that's caught being a slave, we'll prosecute 'em, not the person who's working the slave", you know. You know, we'll get the slave and whip them – it's all arse-about-face. The problem's being attacked from the bottom, the one who can least afford to wear the ramifications of the whole thing, well, they're ending up in court, or ending up in divorce or whatever at home. It's not solving the problem.
- It's a necessary part of the industry in terms of who the industry is organised at the moment
- Well, drivers are going to keep taking drugs, so you need to look at making them available on prescription so there's a chance of getting something decent and where it can be monitored through the local doctor and get regular medical check ups. Then you'd have some notion of who's using what, when where and how.
- Against the campaign – wrong to do it
- Big companies should not push drivers as much and then drug would not have to be used
- By passes have helped to reduce times and related problems, especially in NSW
- Drugs should be made readily available that are designed to keep drivers awake but safely and they should be quality controlled



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- Education on drug taking for drivers
  - Effects of drug use on the truckies health in general, also the impact of use on their family life and family members
  - Everyone slams the driver but it's the companies that are the problem with their deadlines. So they are the ones that need re-education.
  - Financial pressure – \$3000-4000 a month to service costs of the truck – schedule is shit
  - Get the shit off the street – it will kill you
  - Gov't much change its views. People will not completely stop using, rather they'll switch to harder drugs if they cannot get the ones they are used to and that makes it worse. There may be very serious implications from this.
  - Need for prescription – GPs, chemists
  - Need more driving education; companies should have more management training; the industry needs to become more professional – management and drivers
  - Need to work on companies and their time slots
  - Qld log book laws make it difficult to avoid breaking the rules
  - Should be able to get the drugs freely
  - There has been an increase in accidents since they removed them from the legal market
  - Time slotting needs to be more reasonable
  - Transport industry is fragmented and being exploited from many angles.

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## CONCLUSIONS

The data reviewed in this report strongly indicate that the campaign undertaken by ADF on this issue was highly successful. A very high proportion of drivers (90%+) recalled the material. Very large majorities of these thought that –

- the campaign was worthwhile;
- the material was displayed in the right places;
- messages were relevant to the industry and issues;
- the hotlines were a good idea and a proportion would consider calling; and that
- the campaign had generated some discussion of the topic among drivers.

The central thrust of the program as a harm reduction measure to cope with existing and prevalent use was well understood and generally was supported. Principal caveats, expressed by minorities of drivers, concerned whether the campaign might generate negative PR for the drivers and whether by coping with use the campaign might not indirectly support the exploitation of drivers by the industry, in that it taught drivers to use 'safely' rather than removing the causes of use (deadlines and pressure). The view that the campaign condoned use by drivers *per se* was expressed, but only by a tiny minority.

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## APPENDIX 1 – INSTRUCTIONS TO INTERVIEWERS

### Instructions sheet for truck project

This project will collect brief, face:face interviews with truck drivers about a poster campaign concerning the safer use of stimulant drugs while driving. It would be useful to make sure you have seen the various posters and messages.

Interviews will be ANONYMOUS and CONFIDENTIAL. Be sure to stress this to respondents.

Selection of respondents does not need to be random. On the other hand, if you get the sense that there are clear groups of 'mates' do not let yourself get 'captured' into interviewing several in a row, lest we get swamped with only one point of view.

Check out the location and arrangements on arrival and work, out where you can interview people in confidence. If someone else tries to get in on the act, it is important that you tell them very politely but firmly that the interviews are confidential and ask them if they would please move away. If the respondent says he would like his mate to be part of it, use your common sense as to what to do. Mentioning that you should follow instructions could be helpful but in the end it is better to let a third party stay than blow a useful interview.

You will be provided with blank interview schedules and a tape recorder. The recorder is principally to back up on the open ended questions so that you only need to jot key points on the schedule.

Make sure that you tick the relevant boxes for all closed ended questions.

Each interview needs a unique, four digit ID code. ID selection is easy. Each interviewer will be allocated a single number that is 'his'. That should be the first digit. After that, start at 001 and go from there. So, if you are 4, your numbers will go 4001, 4002, 4003, and so on.

Put the number on the schedule (top right) and speak it into the tape to match.

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In practice, you might want to number a bunch of schedules ready and speak the number into the tape before you select a respondent. That is, say "Interview number 4003" (or whatever number it is), stop the recording and then, when you start, just record away.

At the end of an interview record the phrase "End of interview". Then run the tape for 5-10 seconds without recording before you start again on the next.

Label the tapes "Interviews, such-and-such to so-and-so" and when a tape is completed, break out the recording tab so they cannot accidentally be erased or recorded over.

If someone comes up with useful afterthoughts, scribble them on the back of the schedule so we don't lose them.

Above all else, this project will need common sense and flexibility. Truck drivers will not put up with what they see as bullshit, but if you are straight with them, they will be will very helpful.

**FOLLOWING THREE PAGES MISSING**

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(4) Were the posters in the right place or could they have been better located?

- Right place  1  
Don't know  2  
Could be better  3

(5) If could be better – where else should they have been place? *Basic points only.*

.....  
.....  
.....

(6) Based on you experience, were the issues raised in the postcards and poster things that are relevant to truck driving work?

- Yes, very much so  1  
Yes  2  
Don't know  3  
No  4  
No, not at all  5

(7) Why is that? *Basic points only.*

.....  
.....  
.....

(8) Did the postcards and posters have useful and practical messages for truck drivers or should they have said something different?

- Right messages  1  
Don't know  2  
Should be different  3

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(9) If should be different – what else should they have said? *Basic points only.*

.....

.....

.....

(10) What about the hotlines that the postcards and posters advertised where you could ring up and get information and advice. One was an information line (0055 number) and the other a counselling line (a 008 number). Was it a good idea to have these hotlines or not?

- Yes, very much so       1
- Yes                               2
- Don't know                 3
- No                                 4
- No, not at all               5

(11) Why is that? *Basic points only.*

.....

.....

(12) Have you used either of the hotlines yourself and if not, do you think you might in the future?

- Yes, used the 0055 line       1 – Go to 13
- Yes, used the 008 line       2 – Go to 13
- Yes, used both lines         3 – Go to 13
- Haven't but might          4 – Go to 15
- Don't know                     5 – Go to 15
- No, won't use it               6 – Go to 14

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(21) Finally, just to help us analyse our results, would you tell me how old you are and how many years you have been a professional driver?

Age           

Years driving

**Thank you very much for your help and co-operation in this project and for giving us your time out of your busy schedule.**