

## **How to stay relevant: the evolution of the Play Safe brand**

### **Authors:**

JORDAN MURRAY<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *NSW Health, STI Programs Unit, Sydney, Australia*

### **Background:**

The Play Safe program was first developed in 2009 to deliver safe sex and STI prevention messages to young people aged 15-29 across NSW. Over the last 14 years, the Play Safe brand has undergone a number of changes to the look and feel of the program in order to remain relevant and effectively engage target audiences.

### **Methods:**

In collaboration with the NSW STI Programs Unit, creative agency, Tiny Hunter, analysed a range of quantitative and qualitative data from 2017 to 2022 to help inform the future direction of Play Safe. The analysis found that Play Safe's performance has been steadily declining in recent years and the brand was no longer relevant to the target audience who felt it was "out of touch" and looked "kinda old". To address this, a new brand strategy and implementation plan was developed to bring new life to a program with a rich history in the youth sexual health sector.

### **Results:**

Initial focus testing found that the new Play Safe brand was universally liked and felt "approachable", "really fun" and "relevant". A number of participants were pleasantly surprised to see a government brand that was "modern and cool" and a website that was "easy to use", "trustworthy" and featured images of "real people". These findings indicate that this brand refresh will effectively re-engage young people aged 15-29 across NSW and allow Play Safe to remain relevant in a highly competitive online environment.

Short term results including website metrics, audience feedback and behavioural insights will be presented at the ASRA conference and demonstrate the measurable impact that branding can have on sexual health programs.

Brand plays an important role in the success of sexual health programs and has been critical to the long-term success of Play Safe.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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