

Surfboard Campaign - getting on board with sexual health promotion

Authors:

Farinella J¹

¹Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD)

Background/Purpose:

ISLHD stretches along the south coast of NSW from Helensburgh in the north to Durras in the south. The influence of the coast is strong in the lives of residents and is reflected in the large surfing population. Young people in coastal communities have been the primary target population group for the Caddyshack's Surfboard Competition which is now in its 11th year. The surfboard is purchased from local company SKIPP, with artwork inspired by "healthy relationships" provided by local Indigenous artists i.e., Zachary Bennet-Brooke from Saltwater Dreamtime.

Approach

Community members enter the free competition to win the board by texting Caddyshack's slogan - 'Share Affection Not Infection' and their postcode to the team's mobile phone. Entrants receive a reply text confirming their entry and a health promotion message directing people to Play Safe Programs and the Caddyshack Project website. In 2021 Caddyshack intended to launch the surfboard at NAIDOC events, and later have the board "tour" community services. When lockdown prevented this from happening, a virtual online competition was launched. The surfboard was promoted via email, Caddyshack Facebook, Instagram and caddyshackproject.com from July until the board draw on December 1st to acknowledge World AIDS Day.

Outcomes/Impacts

The average amount of surfboard entries from 2016-2020, when it was physically on display was 935 per annum. In 2021 and 2022, when the tour was completely virtual, the average entries per annum increased to 1,918 which is an increase of 105%

Innovation and significance

The need for targeted messaging that maintains and increases awareness of safer sex and provides motivation for the community to adopt healthier sexual behaviours remains essential to the work of Caddyshack. The surfboard has become an iconic and highly requested item amongst community services. Virtual promotion is not an impediment to any messaging and in fact demonstrates greater reach and outcomes.