

OUTDOOR MEDIA ASSOCIATION – DRIVER BEHAVIOUR RESEARCH LAUNCH MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

The importance of the OMA-ARRB research

There are many international studies, but most are not naturalistic and that is why the OMA-ARRB research is invaluable.

Many existing reports rely on secondary research to establish a link between dwell time and safety. A literature review canvassing studies on the connection between dwell time and driver safety found that only 13 per cent relied on “original, empirical research, conducted roughly within the past decade, that directly or indirectly address the potential for driver distraction from outdoor advertising signs.” (*Wachtel, J. (2009). Safety Impacts of the Emerging Digital Display Technology for Outdoor Advertising Signs. Submitted Under NCHRP Project 20-7 (256).*) Consequently, these papers present a skewed point of view and disproportionate bias against short dwell times.

Inconsistent Government regulation across Australia

Dwell time is the time one ad is displayed on a digital sign before changing to the next.

Currently, the dwell time regulation for digital roadside signs varies markedly across Australia, from 8 seconds to over one minute. Government-owned digital signs about road works usually operate at a four second dwell time.

Like all businesses, the Out of Home (OOH) industry needs certainty and consistency when it comes to government regulation. Reasonable, evidence-based and consistent regulations allow the OOH industry to sell a more attractive product to advertisers, and with 50% of industry revenue returned to Governments and other landlords, good results for the industry mean more revenue for government and more jobs for Australians.

Tens of thousands of dollars are invested in a proposal for a digital sign – on traffic engineers, heritage consultants and lighting experts. Then, hundreds of thousands are invested to build a sign that is safe, weather resistant and fits within the urban landscape. With investments like this, it does not make sense for the Out of Home industry to propose signs or regulations that are not safe. Apart from our responsibilities to the community, government stakeholders, and company shareholders, advertisers won't advertise on an unsafe sign.

The OMA advocates for reasonable, evidence-based regulations. For the last decade, we have had a program of research into driver behavior in the presence of digital signs to ensure we provide a strong evidence base for any regulatory change. The OMA has put its money where its mouth is to fund research with a view to busting some of the myths around digital signs and driver distraction. The OMA is dedicated to ensuring any dwell time standards that are adopted are evidence-based and driven by best practice, while honouring our commitment to working in partnership with authorities to ensure road safety requirements for outdoor advertising.

The range of current dwell times across Australian States is captured here: http://www.oma.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/20554/OMA-Digital-Signage-Policy.pdf

The ARRB West Australian driver behaviour study - results

This study was conducted in at the Bull Street Station Bridge on the Kwinana Freeway (northbound).

Crash and near-miss incidents: No single or multiple vehicle crashes or near-miss incidents were observed across any of the trial dwell times (60, 40, 30 and 25 seconds)

Vehicle headway: No change in road safety risk due to the billboard display or trialled dwell time rotation periods

Vehicle Lane drift: Drivers experienced less lane drift occurrences for the 60 and 40sec dwell times and no change for the lower dwell times

Overall conclusion: Considering the three distraction risk indicators together, the results provide considerable confidence that the digital billboard does not increase road safety risk. Furthermore, the hypothesis is that a visual stimulus in the roadway could be improving driver performance by getting drivers to look up from in-car distractions such as their mobile phone.

Australian road statistics

Each year on Australian roads, 1,300 people are killed and 33,000 seriously injured. Lane drift and stopping over the line combined are responsible for 75% of serious accidents.

(Development & Evaluation of an evidence-based parent coaching guide for learner teen drivers, Transport & Accident Commission (TAC), 2015.)

In addition, 88% of driver distractions occur inside the car with drivers checking their phones, eating, adjusting controls, personal grooming or grabbing an item for children.

(Australian Naturalistic Driving Study (ANDS), Accident Research Centre, Monash University, 2018.)

Australian road safety advertising campaign successes

Out-of-Home advertising is a highly effective medium for safe driving advertising campaigns reaching drivers with targeted messages to make them think about their actions behind the wheel when it's most important. Successful road safety campaigns using outdoor advertising include:

WA: The 'Time with Mum' campaign (2016) addressed concerns young men have of losing licence points and the right to drive, and achieved positive results:

- 30,000 fewer speeding incidences across the state.
- 70% of those surveyed said the campaign worked because it made them think about the embarrassment of losing their licence.

NSW: The 'Pinkie' campaign (2007) ran in partnership with the NSW RTA, receiving global accolades for its message to young male drivers who ignored the speed limit. Billboards messaged "Speeding. No one thinks big of you" delivering outstanding results:

- 97% Campaign awareness
- 56 fewer deaths in target group of 17 to 25-year-old males within two years of the campaign.

VIC: Various Victorian Transport Accident Commission campaigns using outdoor advertising targeting speeding, motorcyclists, and drunk drivers.

- 'This is why you're photographed when you speed' campaign resulted in the lowest speeding offences on record.
- 'This is 3 standard drinks' campaign saw drink driving drop 20%.
- 'What's between you and the operating theatre?' campaign saw a 16% drop in two-wheeler fatalities across Victoria.

The Victorian Government alone spends \$8.7 million on OOH advertising campaigns, and \$4.2 million of that was spent by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). Of all Australian states, Victoria consistently has the lowest road toll.

Out of Home audience and industry growth

Out of Home audiences have increased for the 8th consecutive year, growing by 2.2% in 2018 and reaching 12.7 million Australians each day, according to the MOVE (Measurement of Outdoor Visibility and Exposure) annual update, released in February this year.

OOH audience growth is representative of urbanisation and the channel's presence in our public spaces where people live, work, and socialise.

The industry ended 2018 with a net media revenue increase of 10.8% year-on-year, up from \$837.1 million in 2017, to \$927.2 million in 2018.

Industry campaigns and other relevant research

We know that device usage is increasing globally. New research is pointing to a change in our cognitive functions because of this — we are scatterbrained, more prone to lapses in memory, and more anxious.

What if we looked up? Neuroscience research shows that looking up and out can significantly change the way people think and interact with the world around them. It's good for our brains, our bodies, our relationships and our experience of the world.

The Outdoor Media Association worked with Australian neuroscientist Dr Fiona Kerr to compile the many benefits of this one simple action, and published a report, *The Art & Science of Looking Up*. Great things happen to your brain and your life when you look up and out, and Dr Kerr details the various actions and states of brain engagement that can come with connecting with others, daydreaming, and looking to the horizon.

To engage the public around this simple message, the Outdoor advertising industry ran a campaign nationwide. The first phase was dominated by the single image of a woman looking into the sun and the words, Look Up. Phase two introduced secondary creative showing the sky, moon, trees, and various other visuals one would see when they look up, along with the words Look Up and the URL to the website: www.lookup.org.au

This campaign supports the Driver Behaviour research which shows that driver distraction is caused by activities inside the car, particularly looking at mobile devices. The message to Look Up, encourages drivers to look away from their devices, and up at their surroundings and what is happening around them.

Bio - Charmaine Moldrich - Chief Executive Officer, Outdoor Media Association, Australia

Charmaine joined the Outdoor Media Association (OMA) in 2010 and has more than 30 years' experience specialising in management, leadership, marketing, communications and business development. She started her media career in Adelaide, South Australia, and at 24 years of age found herself working as the Station Manager of a public radio station, her first management position. Charmaine's career has been varied with one common theme: working with diverse groups of stakeholders negotiating and wrangling, and finding the common goal to join forces. The majority of her career has been spent working in the arts - theatre, film, music, festivals and museums - which taught her to do a lot with limited resources. Charmaine is enjoying being back in media, especially in this rapidly changing, technology-infused environment. Charmaine believes that outdoor advertising is not just an integral part of the media mix but an integral part of the vibrancy of cities.