Helping Australians Have Their Say

The 1996 Federal Election Advertising Campaign

Australian Electoral Commission
Helping you have your say.
Introduction

At least every three years, a federal election is held in Australia to determine who shall govern the nation. In order to maximise effective participation in the electoral process, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) conducts an information campaign informing eligible Australians about their rights and responsibilities.

Advertising forms a crucial part of this campaign and the AEC has produced this booklet outlining and describing its campaign for the 1996 federal election.

The Australian Electoral Commission

The Australian Electoral Commission is charged with the responsibility of conducting federal elections and referendums, maintaining the permanent electoral roll, providing information and education programs and providing other electoral services. The AEC provides the Australian people with an independent electoral service. Its objective is to meet the needs of electors and to encourage them to understand and participate in the electoral process.

To clearly communicate this independent role, a positioning line was developed for the AEC's advertising. It was:

AEC – Helping you have your say.

This reflected the AEC's objectives and established its credentials as a non-political, independent supplier of information about the electoral process.

The 1996 Federal Election

The 1996 federal election was called by the Prime Minister, Mr Paul Keating, at 11 am on the morning of Saturday January 27. Following this announcement, the Governor General issued writs for the election of 148 members of the House of Representatives and half the members of the Senate to be held on Saturday 2 March.

Following the announcement of the election, the AEC immediately commenced its $8 million advertising campaign in conjunction with its appointed agency, Box Emery and Partners, Melbourne. The first advertisement in this campaign appeared on television at 2.10 pm on Sunday January 28 and the last on radio at 5.30 pm on Saturday 2 March.

In all, over the period of 34 days, five television commercials would appear on 5 nationwide networks and two pay-TV ethnic language networks, 15 separate press advertisements would appear in approximately 460 newspapers and 40 ethnic language newspapers, and 13 radio advertisements would be heard on over 130 radio stations across the nation.

This national coverage would also be supported by state-specific press advertising in local and suburban press and by the delivery of an information booklet to all Australian households.

The campaign resulted in a record number of 11.6 million Australians having their say, through the ballot box in a ten hour period in over 8,000 separate locations about who should govern the country.

To achieve this result, the AEC identified three key phases in its advertising campaign: Enrolment, Voting services and Formal voting.
Enrolment

Objective
Target Audiences
Media solutions: TV, press, radio, magazine
Media schedule
Results

Voting Services

Objective
Target Audiences
Media solutions: TV, press, radio, leaflet
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Formal Voting

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Enrolment

Objective

One of the AEC's primary objectives is to ensure that all eligible Australian citizens are enrolled to vote.

From the day the election is called, Australian citizens aged 18 years and over have 7 days to ensure that they are correctly enrolled to vote.

As a result of this advertising campaign, over 430,000 enrolment cards were received by the AEC in this period, approximately 100,000 of which were new enrolments.

Target Audiences

The AEC identified the target audience as being all Australian citizens, 18 years and over, who have lived at their current address for over a month.

Within this broad audience, those aged 18-24 who are more likely to have not enrolled, new citizens to Australia who may not yet have fulfilled their electoral responsibilities, and those who have recently changed address were identified as key segments.

Media Solutions

To reach such a broad audience in a limited period of time, a combination of different media was chosen.

National metropolitan and regional television and newspapers were utilised. Radio was particularly targeted for the youth market but was also used more extensively at the end of the enrolment week to target a wider audience.

Because of the uncertain date of the election, magazines could not be used as a main medium, but a pre-election youth magazine campaign was run.

All television, radio and press advertisements were translated into ethnic languages and appeared in the ethnic media.
The following magazine advertisement was placed in youth orientated publications in the months leading up to the expected election date in order to take advantage of this medium's reach into the youth market.

If you are 18 and an Australian citizen then it's compulsory to enrol to vote. But you don't have to wait until you're 18 - you can enrol at 16 and you will be automatically placed on the roll when you turn 18. So cut out the coupon or simply pick up a form from any Post Office or AEC office today. Remember, if you're not enrolled you can't vote and if you can't vote, you can't have your say.

You can't rock the country if you don't enrol.
AUDIO
A musical arrangement of the AEC theme.
Babies talking “Baby Talk”.
ANNOUNCER: “If you’ve turned 18, or if
you’ve moved since the last election . . .
the Australian Electoral Commission simply
asks that you enrol to vote now.”
BABY 1: “Why?”
ANNOUNCER: “Because if you don’t
enrol you can’t vote . . . and if you can’t
vote you can’t have your say. And at the
AEC we understand that from the time
we learned to talk . . . all we’ve really
wanted . . . is to have our say.”
BABY 2: “I want to say something.”

Federal Election Rolls close 8pm,
Monday, February 5th.

The television segment of
the enrolment campaign involved an
initial launch’ commercial. Designed
to appeal to the broad Australian
population, it utilised a scenario of
young children all attempting to ‘have
their say’. This commercial went to air
in 45, 30 and 15 second forms.
AUDIO

Daughter-in-law: "Thank you mama for everything."
MOTHER: "Bye bye."
SON: "We'll miss you."
ANNOUNCER: "If you've changed address since the last election, you must re-enrol to vote. Because if you're not enrolled correctly, you may not be able to vote."
MOTHER: "We love you very much."
DAUGHTER-IN-LAW: "Oh mama, thank you. (to kids) Say goodbye to Mama."
MOTHER: "Bye."
ALL: "Bye."

ANNOUNCER: "So please re-enrol whether you've moved to the next state... or just next door. Pick up an application form at any Post Office or AEC office."

The second television commercial was designed specifically for those Australians who had recently changed address. The 30 second commercial was created to show that whether you moved interstate or just around the corner, re-enrolment was necessary.
This series of press advertisements was developed in conjunction with the television campaign. Each ad appeared during the 7 day close of rolls period in all of the major metropolitan and regional newspapers.

If you’ve changed address, please drop us a line.

End Monday on a roll.

The following 2 appeared in the ‘Financial Review’ and ‘The Australian’ and were translated into 18 ethnic languages for appearance in a total of 44 ethnic newspapers.

From the time we could talk, all we really wanted was to have our say.

End tomorrow on a roll.

AEC
This commercial ran only on the close of rolls day.

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### Media Schedule

#### Media Appearances - Metropolitan Media Overview

| SAVE TO ELECTION | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | Polling Day |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| ENROLMENT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Television | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Babies 45 second | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Babies 30 & 15 second | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Babies Out - 10 second | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Press | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Babies 16 x 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Envelope - 10 x 15" | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Bulletin Paper - 28 x 28 (Ultimate only) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Rock The Country - 16 x 1 (Ultimate only) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - End Titles - 28 x 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Make Moves - 10 x 2 (U.S.A.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Radio | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Rock The Country - 5 x 48 second | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| - Last Chance - 30 second | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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*No charge ads, fill out at advertiser's discretion.  **Includes one national insert.

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### Results

Tracking research conducted at the end of the first week of the election indicated high recognition rates for the AEC's advertising. Respective recognition rates of individual creative materials were: Babies 38, Moving Out 30, Youth radio 35.

By the end of the first week, some 60% of eligible Australians indicated that they had seen some advertising relating to electoral enrolment. This was a significant increase from the 13% level recorded in a benchmark survey in the December prior to the election announcement. Enrolment levels in the community also increased. In excess of 430,000 enrolment cards were received in this phase.

Reported enrolment levels rose from 93% to 95% for the eligible population, but increases of 7% (78% to 85%) were recorded for the 18-24 year age bracket and 6% (90% to 96%) for those from non-English speaking backgrounds.
Voting Services

Objective

The second phase of the advertising campaign targeted voters who knew that they would not be able to get to a polling place on polling day.

The AEC developed a specific campaign that would ensure voters knew they could have their say using a variety of alternative voting services: pre-poll voting, postal voting and absent voting.

Target Audiences

From Day II of the campaign, voters can arrange for either a postal vote or a pre-poll vote. To vote using one of these services, a voter must fulfil one of the following conditions on polling day: be away from their normal electoral division but still within the same State or Territory; not be in their State or Territory; be seriously ill, infirm, approaching motherhood, unable to leave work, or because of religious beliefs be unable to attend a polling place.

At the 1996 federal election, in excess of 1.4 million voters elected to vote this way. 650,000 voted absent. 450,000 cast a pre-poll vote and 350,000 voted by post.

Media Solutions

As the information that needed to be conveyed to potential users of these services was fairly detailed, television was used to create awareness in the short time available.

Press ads carried more detailed information on the services and State based advertising provided specific information on locations and times when offices were open. Radio was used as an additional prompt.

Material was again translated for ethnic audiences and relayed to print handicapped through the Public Broadcasting network.

In addition, the elector leaflet was delivered to households 12 days prior to the election to promote these services. Television advertising was scheduled in two flights either side of the leaflet delivery date.
ANNOUNCER: "If you have a very good reason why you won't be around to vote in the normal way on election day, you can pick up an application for a postal vote at any post office ... or you can vote now at your local Electoral Commission office."

For more information call 13 23 26.
Federal Election, Saturday, March 2nd.
This advertisement appeared four times nationally, twice in over 450 regional publications and was translated for the ethnic media.

We have ways of helping you vote.

This second advertisement appeared two days prior to polling day when the postal voting service was no longer available and as a consequence, it highlighted the pre-poll and absent voting service.

State ads such as the following two were placed in metropolitan and suburban papers to provide people with additional information.
To communicate with people who would be outside their own electoral division but still within their home State or Territory, a specific ad was developed alerting them to absent voting. This radio commercial ran on the two days prior to polling day on a cross section of metropolitan and regional stations.

**RADIO SCRIPT**

**CLIENT:**

**PRODUCT:**

**DURATION:**

**AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

**PRE-POLL VOTING CAMPAIGN (Absent)**

**30 SEC**

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**SFX:**

The sound of a car’s engine revving along for a couple of seconds. Then it begins to sputter. It starts and suddenly goes BANG, BANG, BANG!!! Then it groans horribly as if something is desperately wrong. Then it dies a slow, crunching, wheezing death. It stops completely.

**V/O:**

"If you can't make it to your local polling place on election day, you can cast an absent vote at any polling place in your home state. There's a list of polling places in selected newspapers this Friday, or call 13 23 26 for details. If only everything was that easy."

**SFX:**

The desperate driver tries to unsuccessfully turn the engine over but it's no use, it won't start.

This leaflet was delivered to all seven million Australian homes two weeks before polling day and provided information on the range of services available.
Tracking research indicated that 50% of the eligible population recalled seeing the AEC's television advertisement and 13% recalled seeing its press material for this phase.

Awareness of AEC advertising relating to the various voting services rose from 6% in December 1995 to 68% by polling day.

Knowledge that postal voting forms were available from the AEC and from Post Offices remained consistent, rising only from 73% to 78% and 78% to 80% respectively.

46% of Australians recalled receiving the householder leaflet and of these, some 59% read some part of the leaflet and 80% judged it to be useful.
Formal Voting

Objective

In the seven days leading up to polling day, the AEC undertook an intensive campaign instructing and reminding voters how to correctly complete their House of Representatives and Senate ballot papers.

For the House of Representatives, voters were instructed to: Number all the boxes on their ballot paper and not to use ticks or crosses which invalidate their vote. For the Senate ballot paper voters were instructed to either: Number one box above the line or number all the boxes below the line.

The challenge of the campaign was to ensure that as many voters as possible voted formally, ie correctly. For this reason, this last phase had the largest allocation in terms of media and budget. As a result of this emphasis, the AEC recorded a turnout of 96.2% and the level of formal voting remained relatively stable at just over 3%.

Target Audiences

The target audience was all Australians enrolled to vote but a key segment were first time voters and those from non-English speaking backgrounds who, research has shown, may be more likely to cast informal votes.

Media Solutions

Research had shown that strong visual representations of the correct ways to complete the ballot papers were effective, so a combination of television and illustrative press material was used.

The television component of the campaign began on the Sunday night prior to polling day and ran heavily until election eve on major metropolitan and regional stations. The two commercials, which were translated into various languages, were scheduled to appear at the beginning and end of the ad break. Radio was used again to target ethnic and other special audiences. Press advertisements appeared in all major metropolitan and regional newspapers. Lists of polling places were also widely advertised in metropolitan, regional and suburban press.
AUDIO
A musical arrangement of the AEC theme.
ANNOUNCER: "To have your say on election day, make sure you put a number in every box on the House of Representatives ballot paper. If you use a tick or cross your vote won't count, or if you leave boxes blank, your vote won't count. So when you're voting on the House of Representatives ballot paper, ah ah ah, make sure that you put a number in every box, that's every box. It's your right, don't get it wrong."

House: This commercial used a simple demonstration to clearly show how to complete the ballot paper. It highlighted the key mistakes and ended with the claim "It's your right, don't get it wrong."
AUDI0
ANNOUNCER: (Whispering commentary) "When voting for the Senate, you can put a 'one' above the line or number all the boxes below (pause).
This woman's put a 'one' above the line. Yes . . . a perfect vote.
This woman has numbered all the boxes below."
SFX: Audience applause.
ANNOUNCER: "Another perfect vote. This man's gone below the line . . . but he hasn't numbered all the boxes."
SFX: Audible sigh from the audience off screen.
ANNOUNCER: "A wasted vote."
(Fade out on commentary.)
When voting for the Senate, number one box above the line or number all the boxes below. It's your right, don't get it wrong."

Senate: Once again, a simple demonstration was used to clearly explain the two choices voters faced when completing their Senate ballot paper. Voters were shown that to vote correctly, they had a choice of either numbering one box above the line or all the boxes below the line.
House: This advertisement focused on the message that to correctly complete your ballot paper; you must number every box. It ran in black and white as well as spot colour green.

Senate: The advertisement below focused on the choice offered to voters to number one box above the line or all the boxes below.

We draw the line
to give you a choice.
Federal Election, Saturday, March 2nd.
AEC
Helping you have your say.

Whether you have three, two, one or even none boxes on your House of Representatives ballot paper, remember to place a number to every box.

If you see a tick or cross, or have boxes black, your vote won't count and if your vote doesn't count you won't have your say. The secret ballot means your vote is your right. Don't let it wrong.

Only numbers count.

Federal Election, Saturday, March 2nd.
Australian Electoral Commission AEC
Helping you have your say.

We draw the line
to give you a choice.
Federal Election, Saturday, March 2nd.
AEC
Helping you have your say.
Radio was used to provide additional information to voters from non-English speaking backgrounds and other electors with specific needs.

Radio was also used extensively on polling day to remind eligible voters to vote before 6pm and that voting was available for those who were outside their home division.
The elector leaflet was delivered to all Australian households & included information on how to complete both the Senate and House of Representatives ballot papers, as well as details on the counting systems used for the two elections.
An additional leaflet was also sent to the four divisions ranking highest, at the 1993 election, in informal voting rates and in the number of voters from non-English speaking backgrounds and with low English fluency. These divisions were Fowler, Prospect, Grayndler and Watson.
Recall of the House and Senate 'how to vote' advertisements was high at 63% and 69% of the eligible population respectively.

By the conclusion of the campaign, some 84% of the population recalled seeing AEC advertising relating to the correct ways of completing the ballot papers.

Knowledge of the need to use numbers only on the ballot papers rose from 66% at the beginning of the campaign to 89% at its conclusion; from 64% to 88% for 18-24 year olds and 59% to 86% for audiences from non-English speaking backgrounds. The belief that use of ticks and crosses was valid, fell from 12% to 5%.

Knowledge of the need to fill in all the boxes on the House ballot paper rose from 42% to 60%, from 39% to 53% for 18-24 year olds and 35% to 58% for NESB audiences.

Knowledge of the need to complete only one box above the line on the Senate ballot paper rose from 36% to 71% (31% to 74% for 18-24 year olds and 31% to 62% for NESB audiences) and all boxes below the line from 44% to 74% (37% to 81% for 18-24 year olds and 36% to 67% for NESB audiences.)