



# ENTRY FORM

THE EFFIE AWARDS AOTEAROA IN ASSOCIATION WITH TVNZ – ENTRY FORM

<b>ENTRY ID</b>	<b>623</b>
<b>ENTRY TITLE</b>	<b>Making safety the hottest feature for Kiwi car buyers</b>
<b>CLIENT</b>	<b>NZ Transport Agency</b>
<b>PRODUCT</b>	<b>Transport / Social Marketing / Public Service</b>
<b>FIRST MEDIA APPEARANCE DATE</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> February, 2024</b>
<b>CAMPAIGN START DATE</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> February, 2024</b>
<b>CAMPAIGN FINISH DATE</b>	<b>Still running</b>
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>A12 – Social Marketing/Public Service</b>
<b>CATEGORY DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Includes campaigns to promote social or behavioural change. Typically involves government departments, local bodies, or community service campaigns.</b>

**WORD COUNT: 2500 MAX**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [0%]**

Give the judges an understanding of the case they are about to read by providing a brief summary for each of the items below. A one-sentence summary is recommended for each line.

(Maximum: 100 words in total – not included in total word count)

The Challenge:	Make safety a priority for a nation of car buyers conditioned to value capability, performance and aesthetics.
The Insight:	People undervalue safety ratings because they assume their cars are 'safe enough'.
The Strategic Idea/Build:	<b>Car safety is deceiving.</b> Safety isn't determined by look, size, age or a warrant of fitness - it exists where regular car buyers can't see.
Bringing the Strategy & Idea to Life:	<b><i>What if it's not as safe as you think?</i></b> A life-sized cardboard car dramatised how deceptively unsafe Kiwis' cars can be.
The Results:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salience of safety ratings <i>more than doubled</i></li> <li>• <b>54%</b> YOY increase in total users to <a href="http://rightcar.govt.nz">rightcar.govt.nz</a></li> <li>• Increased Trade Me searches/watchlists featuring 4/5 star rated cars</li> </ul>

Why is this entry an outstanding example for effective marketing in this Effie entry category?

(Maximum 90 words – this is not included in total word count)

'The Last Line of Defence' led to the highest ever increase in Kiwis prioritising safety ratings when buying their next car.

By pairing a simple question with a powerful metaphor, the campaign sparked an irresistible urge for people to discover their current and/or potential car's safety rating.

You might even feel the urge to visit [rightcar.govt.nz](http://rightcar.govt.nz) while reading this entry.

If that's the case, consider it another sign of the campaign's impact.

More importantly, it could save your life.

01.	<p><b>Challenge, Context &amp; Objectives [20%]</b></p> <p>This section covers your strategic context for your marketing activity, alongside your key challenge and objectives.</p> <p>Please provide the necessary context for the environment you operate within, competitors or barriers to success, and organisation so the judges, including those unfamiliar with your organisation, can evaluate your entry. Outline the degree of ambition represented by your objectives. Including historical data may be useful here to provide judges with a clear picture of the situation the organisation found itself in.</p>
01A	<p>Before your effort began, what was the state of the organisation's position and the barriers it faced to achieve its objectives? What was the strategic challenge that stemmed from this situation? Provide context on the degree of difficulty of this challenge.</p>

**Choosing a car with a high safety rating is a matter of life and death**

Your car protects you in a crash.  
A safety rating is the single best way to know how well it will do it.  
Better yet, it can help you avoid getting in a crash in the first place.  
It should therefore be the number one priority when buying a car.

But it wasn't.

Consumers prioritised price, reliability, and practicality.<sup>1</sup>

This was killing New Zealanders:

- **1,200** people were killed/seriously injured in 1 and 2 star cars each year.<sup>2</sup>  
\*These vehicles account for **65%** of all injuries but only make up **45%** of the vehicle fleet.
- It's twice as dangerous to crash in a 1 star safety rated car vs. a 5 star one.
- If all drivers switched to 5-star rated vehicles, **930 deaths/serious injuries** would be prevented annually.

In 2007, NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) launched [rightcar.govt.nz](http://rightcar.govt.nz) so Kiwis could find out their safety rating and make informed decisions.

But a website is only as useful as the number of people who use it.  
And people will only use a website if they care enough to do so.  
Most Kiwis didn't.

**Decades of car brand advertising had trained car-buyers to care about everything but safety**

Car brands understand that a car purchase is an emotional decision.  
Advertising sells the dream of freedom, performance, comfort, space, status, luxury, and style.  
We were up against a category spending **\$46,937,999** every year priming people to care about the wrong stuff.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Getting people out of 1-and 2-star cars, WSP research report commissioned by NZTA, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Getting people out of 1-and 2-star cars, WSP research report commissioned by NZTA, 2022

<sup>3</sup> Nielsen, Ratecard Spend, Feb 2024 – April 2025

Overlay New Zealanders' high appetite for risk and over-confidence in their own driving ability <sup>4</sup>, and you've got buyers giving more attention to the colour of their next car vs. how well it would protect them in a crash.

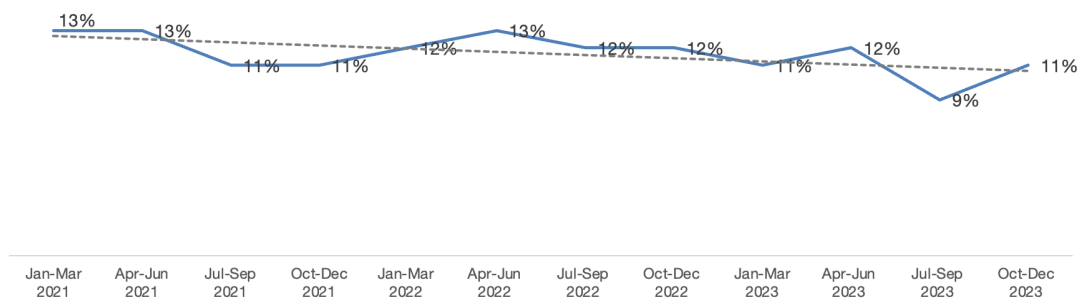
### The old approach wasn't working

NZTA has tracks salience of safety ratings by asking Kiwis 'How do you know if your car is safe or not?' and measured whether 'safety rating' comes up unprompted.

Previous NZTA campaigns had not achieved any long-term sustained behavioural shifts in how New Zealanders buy cars. <sup>5</sup>

Since 2021, mentions of safety rating were in decline.

% unprompted mentions of 'safety rating' as a way of knowing whether a car is safe or not



- Source <sup>6</sup>

We needed a new approach.

But we were up against the same difficult challenge.

New Zealanders were:

- Overwhelmed with the process of buying a car <sup>7</sup>
- Distracted by a long list of decision-making factors
- Under the assumption that their car will be 'safe enough'.

And here we were giving them one more thing to worry about.

<sup>4</sup> *Understanding Speed, The Navigators, 2023*

<sup>5</sup> *IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2023*

<sup>6</sup> *IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2023*

<sup>7</sup> *An exploration of factors influencing car purchasing decisions, 2013*

01B

What were the objectives you set to address your challenge? For each objective, include: KPI, benchmarks, previous outcomes and the rationale for why it was selected.

Please outline one organisational objective and a maximum of 3 marketing and 3 advertising/comms objectives.

To reduce deaths and serious injuries on New Zealand roads, NZTA's objective is to get Kiwis into the safest car they can afford.

To achieve this, we were set three objectives.

Objective:	Measured by:
<p>1. <b>Build awareness</b> Make safety ratings front of mind</p>	<p>1.1 Reverse decline in unprompted mentions of 'safety rating' as a way of knowing whether a car is safe or not</p> <p>1.2 Ensure creative lands 'check the safety rating of your car' as measured top message outtake*</p>
<p>2. <b>Create importance</b> Get people prioritising safety ratings</p>	<p>2.1 Outperform previous campaign 'relevance' benchmarks</p> <p>2.2 Increase perceived importance of safety ratings* <i>Higher for seen vs not seen campaign</i></p>
<p>3. <b>Change behaviour</b> Influence people's next car purchase decision</p>	<p>3.1 Positive influence on claimed behaviour* <i>'It will make me check the safety rating of my current/future car.'</i></p> <p>3.2 Increase usage of rightcar.govt.nz</p> <p>3.3 Increase number of people who know their current car's safety rating*</p>

\*No previous benchmark available

**02.** **Insights & Strategy [25%]**  
 This section covers the key building blocks of your strategy. Explain to the judges how you arrived at your strategy and clearly articulate that strategy. Focus on the thinking or insight(s) that unlocked your solution and tied it to successfully addressing your objectives.

**02A.** Explain the thinking that led you to your strategy. Explain how any insights discovered were directly tied to your organisation/brand, your audiences behaviours and attitudes, your research and/or situation.

**INSIGHT 1**

***Kiwis were relying on unreliable indicators of safety***

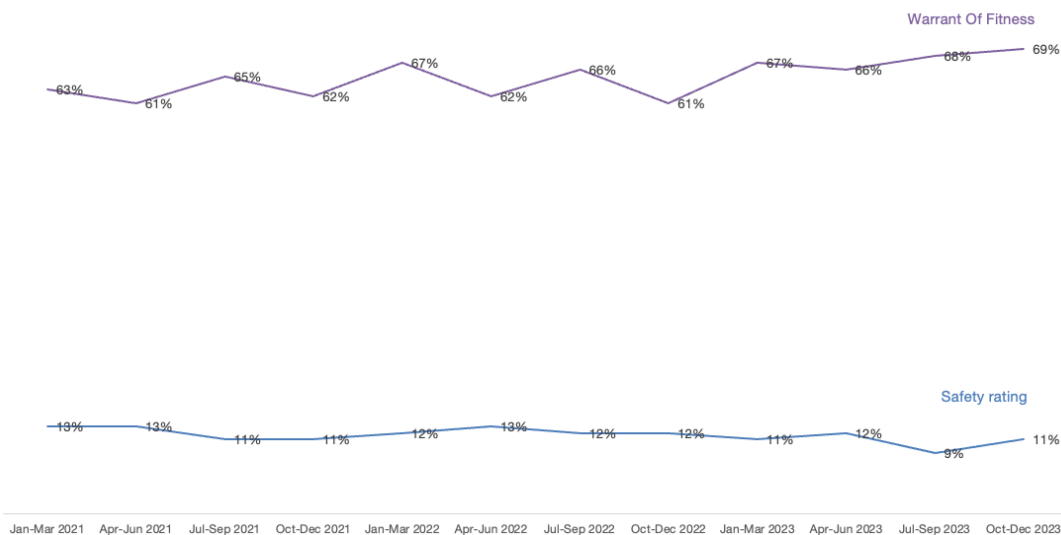
Having a Warrant of Fitness means a car meets the basic requirements of safety at a point in time – working tyres, brakes, lights, indicators, and seatbelts.

It doesn't tell you how protected you are in a crash.

But Kiwis assumed it did.

Having a WOF was *the* most front of mind way of knowing whether a car is safe or not.

Unprompted mentions of how to know whether a car is safe



- SOURCE <sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2023

In fact, even with 'safety' in its name, the one true indicator of safety scraped in as the 5<sup>th</sup> most mentioned.

#1	Warrant of Fitness (69%)
#2	Regular maintenance (24%)
#3	Tyres (15%)
#4	General performance (12%)
#5	<b>Safety rating (11%)</b>

- SOURCE <sup>9</sup>

When purchasing a car, Kiwis relied on surface-level observations that had little to do with safety <sup>10</sup>

- *'If it looks safe enough'*
- *'Big cars like this are safer'*
- *'It hasn't done too many k's'*

Troublingly, misconceptions were shared by well-intentioned loved ones who assisting with the car-purchase journey.<sup>11</sup>

Our audience were dangerously unaware of how unsafe they really were.

We weren't going to win them over by making them feel bad about decisions they didn't know they were making.

Instead, we would get them second-guessing their assumptions.

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

***Create a sense of doubt so strong that people need to find out their safety rating***

#### **INSIGHT 2**

***We couldn't educate our way to behaviour change***

Buying a car is an emotional decision.

We couldn't rationally explain the importance of safety ratings and expect to grab attention and persuade people.

We needed to make people *feel* how important of safety ratings are.

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

***Force an emotive revelation in our audience***

<sup>9</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, Oct-Dec 2023

<sup>10</sup> Analysis of The Potential Benefits of Making Safer Vehicle Choices in New Zealand, 2020

<sup>11</sup> NZTA segmentation research, 2023

**INSIGHT 3*****A safety rating doesn't just impact the driver***

New Zealanders pride themselves on being good, confident drivers.<sup>12</sup>

Knowing how to handle a car.

And not needing all the safety 'bells and whistles' to stay safe in a crash.

But something flips when they are asked to think about the impact a crash could have on a loved one over themselves.

Suddenly, they are not just playing with the risk to themselves but to others.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

**Position a high safety rating as a way to protect those people care about**

**INSIGHT 4*****Distinctive assets work in social marketing too***

We drew on learnings from commercial advertising. The use of a consistent distinctive asset across channels and touchpoints makes the whole bigger than the sum of the parts. Consistency across channels improves effectiveness outcomes and allows other channels to do more heavy-lifting.

Our AV wouldn't just tell a stand-alone emotional story, it would introduce a strong visual asset for us to use elsewhere, reminding people of the emotional impact of the AV, and helping our static work stand out.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

**Introduce a new distinctive asset that dramatises the risk in an unforgettable way**

**02B.**

What was the Core Idea or strategic build that enabled you to reach your solution?

(Be succinct. A maximum of 50 words.)

***What if it's not as safe as you think?***

A simple question to get New Zealanders doubting how well their car would really protect them and their loved ones in a crash.

And in doing so, send them to [rightcar.govt.nz](http://rightcar.govt.nz) to find the answer.

<sup>12</sup> *Understanding Speed*, The Navigators, 2023

03.	<b>Bringing the Strategy &amp; Idea to Life [20%]</b>
03A.	Describe the creative solution and how it helped the idea break out of the category and resulted in unexpected solutions.
<p><b>With a strategy to raise doubt, creative deliberately unsettled</b></p> <p>A young girl sings a nursery rhyme from the back of a typical family SUV. It's late and dark. You know something bad is about to happen.</p> <p>As a truck passes from the other side of the road, the door shakes as if it could easily fall apart.</p> <p><b><i>'In a crash, your car is the last line of defence'</i></b></p> <p>The girl stops singing and pulls at the door and easily tears it. It is made from cardboard.</p> <p><b><i>'What if it's not as safe as you think?'</i></b></p> <p>Dad, blissfully unaware of the danger they are in, continues singing.</p> <p>The camera pulls out and reveals that the car is made from cardboard.</p> <p><b><i>'Check your safety rating at right car'</i></b></p> <p><u>The hero AV:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Made our audience feel uneasy</b> Drawing on horror movie tropes, pairing a child's nursery rhyme with eerie visuals and sound, made our audience anticipate something terrible. But nothing happened. Like any good horror director knows, leaving it to people's imaginations is powerful.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Played on people's desire to protect others</b> We knew that showing a father unaware of the danger he was putting his daughter in would cause a moment of reflection.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Positioned safety rating as relevant to all drivers</b> The young girl is in a car seat. Dad's wearing a seatbelt, indicating, and not speeding. This landed our message that crashes happen to responsible drivers too, and a high safety rating can be the difference between life and death for anyone.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Introduced a powerful distinctive asset</b> The life-sized cardboard car dramatised how deceptively unsafe cars can be. The young girl tearing at the door to reveal cardboard was the perfect metaphor for how surface-level observations are unreliable. Further, we deliberately chose a mid-sized, fairly modern SUV – a car shape that most would assume is safe.</p> </li> </ul>	

The Cardboard Car challenged assumptions in outdoor, social, print, and sponsored content.

Headlines included:

- *Lower kms doesn't always mean safer.*
- *Bigger doesn't always mean safer.*
- *Higher price tags doesn't always mean higher safety rating.*
- *Comfy seats won't soften the blow in a crash.*

03B.

WHAT WAS THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY?

This section relates to the media and communications thinking and strategy that brought the creative solution to life in the most powerful and relevant way for the target audience. Include all significant touchpoints and channels in this section.

**Outline the rationale behind your communications strategy.** Explain how the key elements worked together to drive results:

**Behaving like a car brand**

Instead of following a traditional behaviour change campaign approach, we took inspiration from car brand marketing and adopted a full-funnel strategy built on three layers:

### 1. AWARENESS – Prime the market

Car brands invest in long-term brand building to build future demand.

We followed suit.

Rather than speaking only to those in-market, we used emotionally resonant channels to make safety ratings famous among all New Zealanders.

- Audience: All drivers and influencers
- Mindset: Not actively shopping, need a reason to care
- Role: Put safety ratings on their radar by sparking doubt
- Channels: TV, cinema, online video, outdoor, radio, social, print

### 2. CONSIDERATION – Lean-in moments

We tapped into a major behavioural trigger: expecting a child.

This milestone prompts families to look for a new car and also makes them more conscious of safety.<sup>13</sup>

- Audience: Young families
- Mindset: Care about the safety of their family but feel overwhelmed by the car buying process
- Role: Bust myths, elevate safety ratings as the clearest guide to safety
- Channels: Life-stage targeting via digital and outdoor, sponsored content in *Woman's Day* and *Woman's Weekly*

One standout piece saw expectant mum Hemma Vera (lifestyle editor), crown safety ratings as the deciding factor for the best 'Mum Car'.

### 3. CONVERSION – Seal the deal

This layer nudged active car buyers toward [rightcar.govt.nz](http://rightcar.govt.nz) when it mattered most.

- Channels:
  - Time-targeted outdoor near dealerships and nearby retail centres during peak weekend periods
  - Always-on Trade Me display (NZ's #1 site for used cars)
  - Always-on paid search

<sup>13</sup> NZTA segmentation research, 2023

<b>List all supplementary communications touch points</b> used in this campaign (the touchpoints that were not central to the campaign).	
- PR	
<b>What was the \$ Spend?</b> Outline the media and production spend on the campaign within the campaign period. Use actual spend rather than ratecard. In the case of donated media please list the rate card value separately from the paid media spend.	
Media Spend	[CONFIDENTIAL, REMOVED]
Outline the media spend in relation to competition and versus last year	[CONFIDENTIAL, REMOVED]
Creative Production Spend	[CONFIDENTIAL, REMOVED]

<b>04.</b>	<p><b>WHAT WERE THE RESULTS? [20% for 4A and 15% for 4B].</b></p> <p>Outline the results achieved by the campaign against the short and long-term objectives set, provide conclusive proof that it was the campaign that drove the results.</p> <p>In this section, the judges will be looking to see a clear cause and effect between the communication activity and business performance over time. Show the compelling evidence that will convince even the most cynical finance director.</p> <p><b>Please Note:</b> All results must be sourced to be judged; any unsourced results will not be considered by judges.</p>
<b>04A</b>	<p><b>Overall achievement against objectives [20%].</b></p> <p>Clear proof that the objectives established in section one have been achieved. Judges will be seeking quantified results. Successful entries ensure that results can easily be aligned against objectives established in section one.</p> <p>Note: Please ensure all data is sourced, and is specific to the results period outlined in the Call for Entry, and geographically isolated to Aotearoa.</p>

## RESULTS SNAPSHOT

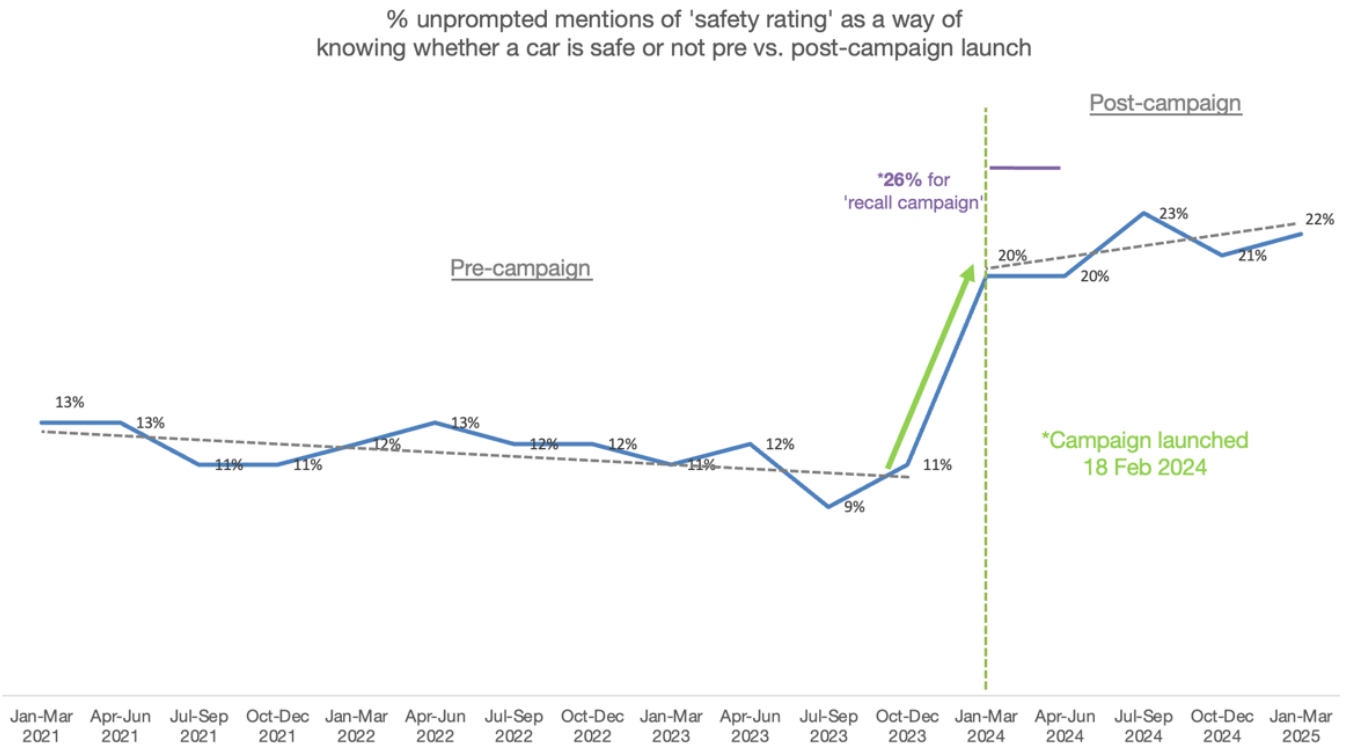
Objective:	Measured by:
<p>1. <b>Build awareness</b> Make safety ratings front of mind</p>	<p>1.1 Reverse decline in unprompted mentions of 'safety rating' as a way of knowing whether a car is safe or not <b>Highest ever score achieved and sustained.</b></p> <p>1.2 Ensure creative lands 'check the safety rating of your car' as top message outtake.* <b>Achieved.</b></p>
<p>2. <b>Create importance</b> Get people prioritising safety ratings</p>	<p>2.1 Outperform previous campaign 'relevance' benchmarks <b>Stronger scores achieved across the board.</b></p> <p>2.2 Increase perceived importance of safety ratings* <b>Those who recall campaign significantly more likely to rate safety rating as being 'very important'.</b></p>
<p>3. <b>Change behaviour</b> Influence people's next car purchase decision</p>	<p>3.1 Positive influence on claimed behaviour* <b>68% agreed that 'it will make me check the safety rating of my current/future car.'</b></p> <p>3.2 Increase usage of rightcar.govt.nz <b>Achieved highest ever website traffic.</b></p> <p>3.3 Increase number of people who know their current car's safety rating* <b>76% of those who saw our campaign know their safety rating.</b></p>

\*No benchmark available

**IN MORE DETAIL**

**1.1 Reverse decline in mentions of 'safety rating' as a way of knowing whether a car is safe or not**

Mentions of 'safety rating' grew immediately post-campaign and continued to grow – reaching the highest ever score since tracking began in 2018.



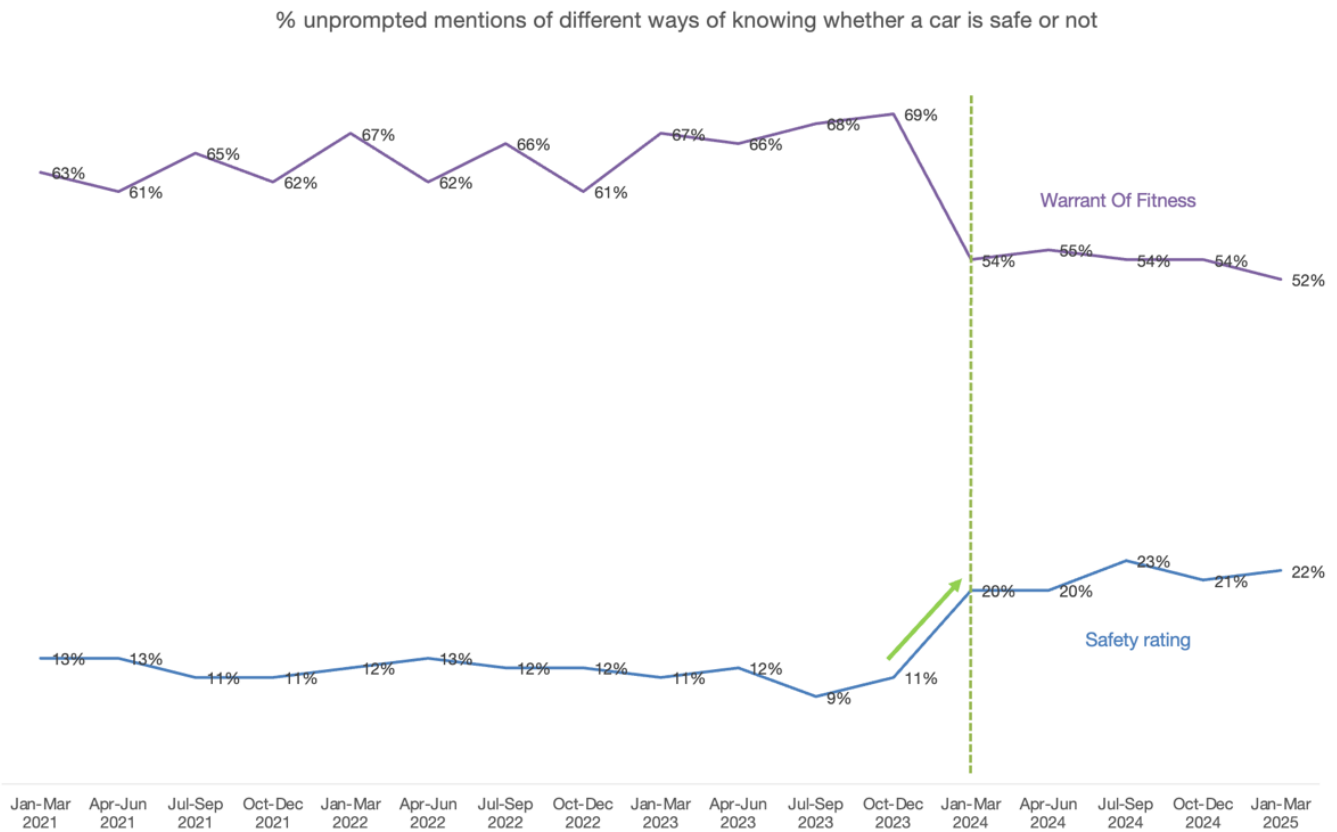
- SOURCE <sup>14</sup>

Was it our campaign behind the change?

Yes — because people who recalled the campaign were more likely to mention 'safety rating'.

<sup>14</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2025

Meanwhile, reliance of Warrant of Fitness dropped significantly.



-SOURCE <sup>15</sup>

'Safety rating' jumped from being the #5<sup>th</sup> most mentioned way of knowing a car is safe to #2 equal.

#1	Warrant of Fitness (69%)
#2	Regular maintenance (24%)
#3	Tyres (15%)
#4	General performance (12%)
#5	<b>Safety rating (11%)</b>



#1	Warrant of Fitness (54%) ▼
#2 =	<b>Safety rating (20%) ▲</b> Regular maintenance (20%)
#3	Tyres (12%)
#4	General performance (11%)

- SOURCE <sup>16</sup>

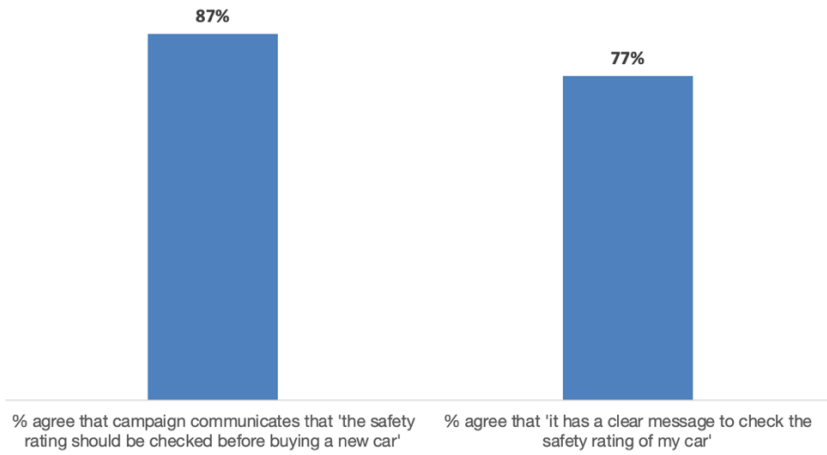
<sup>15</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, Oct-Dec 2023 vs. Jan-March 2024

<sup>16</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2025

**1.2 Ensure creative lands the right message - 'check the safety rating of your car'**

The message clearly landed:

'Last Line of Defence' message outtakes

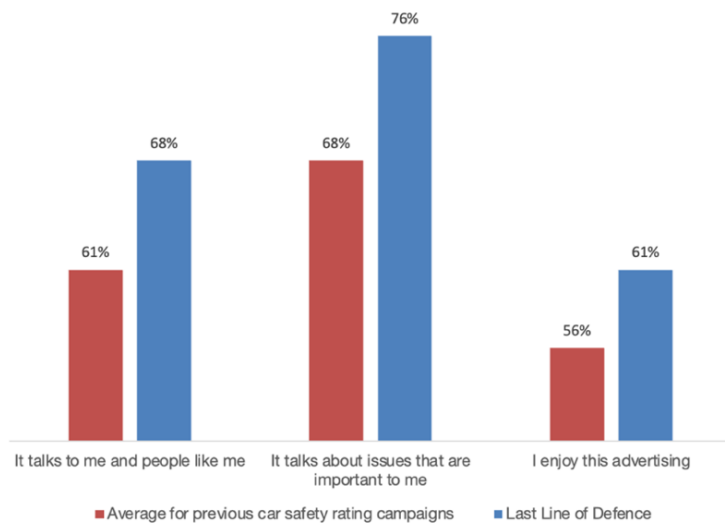


- SOURCE <sup>17</sup>

**2.1 Outperform previous campaign 'relevance' benchmarks**

The campaign was more effective than previous campaigns at making safety ratings relevant and important in a way that people enjoyed.

Creative performance on 'relevance' vs. previous campaign benchmark



- SOURCE <sup>18</sup>

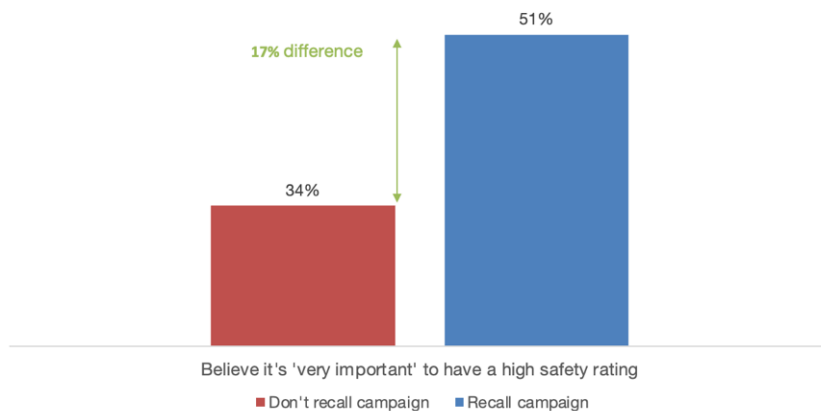
<sup>17</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2025

<sup>18</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2025 (Compares average achieved for 'One Star' and 'The Unsell' with 'Last Line of Defence' Oct-Dec 2024)

## 2.2 Increase perceived importance of safety ratings

Those who recalled the campaign were more likely to rate safety rating as being 'very important'.

% believe it's 'really important' to have a high safety rating  
- don't recall vs. recall campaign



- SOURCE <sup>19</sup>

## 3.1 Positive shifts in claimed behaviour

- **69%** agreed that 'it will make me check the safety rating of my current/future car'.<sup>20</sup>

This increase in claimed behaviour translated to real behaviour.

## 3.2 Increase website usage

Within one month of being live:

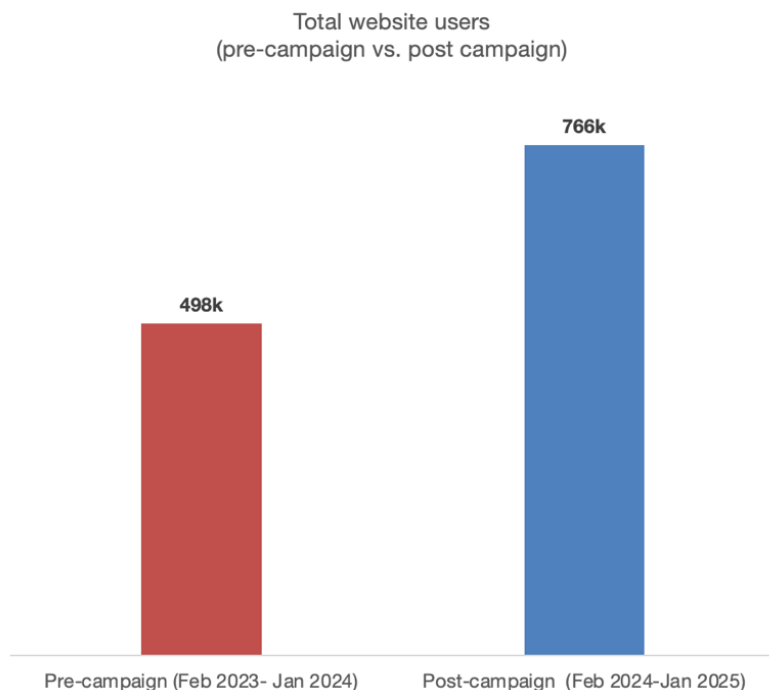
- **92K** visits to rightcar.govt.nz, and **89k** were first time users <sup>21</sup>
- **159%** increase in new users vs. 4 weeks prior
- Traffic coming from organic search increased by **81%** and traffic coming directly to site increased by **88%** suggesting the majority were coming after seeing AV or OOH

<sup>19</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2025

<sup>20</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2025

<sup>21</sup> NZTA website data

When comparing the 12 months to Jan 2025 vs. the 12 months prior, there was a **54%** increase in total website users.



- SOURCE <sup>22</sup>

And from campaign launch to May 2025, there have been over **1 million** website users.

### 3.3 Increase number of people who know their safety rating

**76%** of those who saw our campaign now know their safety rating. <sup>23</sup>

### **The campaign positively shaped real-world shopping behaviour**

We reached out to Trade Me, New Zealand's most popular website for used cars, to get access to third party data on Kiwis car shopping behaviours.

There was a **10.4%** increase in those searching for a car with a 5 star rating (**1,048 more** Kiwis searching per month).<sup>24</sup>

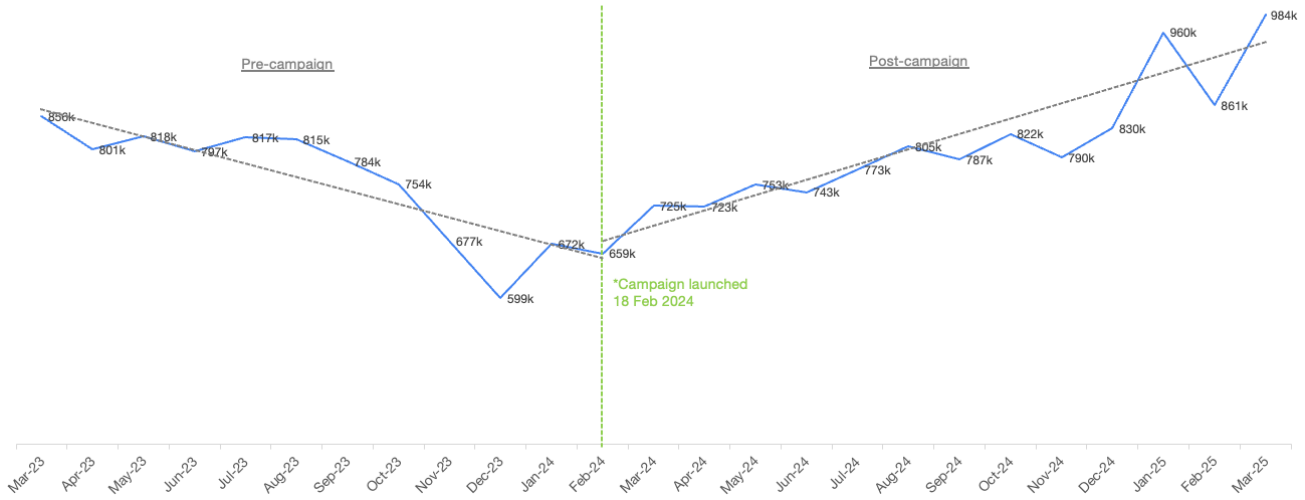
<sup>22</sup> NZTA website data

<sup>23</sup> IPSOS Campaign Tracking, 2025

<sup>24</sup> Trade Me search data \* Comparing pre-launch (Feb 23 - Jan 24) vs post-launch (Feb 24 - April 24)

Further, post-campaign there was a dramatic increase in Kiwis watchlisting cars with a 5 star safety rating.

Watchlisted cars on Trade Me featuring a 5 star safety rating



- Source <sup>25</sup>

This clearly shows that claimed behaviour has translated into real behaviour.

<sup>25</sup> Trade Me search data

**04B****Convincing proof that the results were a direct result of your campaign [15%].**

Outline other external factors that could account for the results outlined in 04a and provide compelling evidence and rationale for why these did not contribute significantly to those results. There are almost always other factors that could have affected your results, such as product changes, pricing, distribution, stock levels, competitive activity, weather, etc. You need to convince the judges that these factors were not responsible for your results, or estimate their contribution and/or demonstrate how they needed the campaign to amplify their impacts.

**Did car dealers play a role?**

Around 67% of vehicles listed by registered motor vehicle traders displayed safety rating labels<sup>26</sup>. However, this figure remained unchanged during the campaign period, indicating no new influence.

**What about Trade Me?**

Trade Me lets users filter vehicles by safety rating, but this feature was already in place before the campaign.

**Any other factors?**

Updated safety ratings were released on rightcar.govt.nz in December 2024, and PR efforts highlighted this. While this may have contributed slightly, the key driver was clearly our campaign. We saw a sharp increase in safety rating awareness and website traffic within the first month of launch with continued growth through December.

Further proof lies in the significantly higher awareness and importance of safety ratings among those who saw the campaign compared to those who hadn't.

For a campaign of this scale, NZTA collaborates with Te Waka Kōtuia Engagements and Partnerships, the AA, and key industry stakeholders such as the Vehicle Safety Research Group, motor vehicle industry associations, importers, inspectors, and others. However, no significant changes were made vs previous campaigns.

<sup>26</sup> HOED Research for NZTA

	<b>Guidance Notes</b> Please refer to the guidance notes below, to ensure your entry conforms to eligibility criteria.
	<p>Eligibility: Data presented must be isolated to Aotearoa, and work must have run between 1 June 2023 and 30 June 2025. Results may be included up to 22 July 2025. Results data that fails to isolate or identify data specific to the eligibility period and/or Aotearoa New Zealand risks low marks and/or being ineligible.</p> <p>Data Sources: All data referenced in the entry requires sources (recommended as footnotes on the page referenced or at the end of the entry).</p> <p>Charts and Graphs: Entrants are encouraged to display data via charts &amp; graphs within the limits allocated in each question. Sources required for all data including charts and graphs.</p> <p>Agency names: No agencies, of any kind, are to be included in the entry.</p>