



# Evaluation of the Promoting Consent Initiative

Teach Us Consent

*Final report*  
December 2025



## Acknowledgements



*We also acknowledge the talent and artistry of Emma Walke, who designed the artwork for our acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The design shows a story of connection to country and people, representing the breadth of work we do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. The colours represent the land, and the lines in between represent the water that connects us all.*

This work was completed with the support of several current and former Teach Us Consent staff members, including Adam Hegedus, Sofia Stavrou, Kaylyn Thyssen, Nevo Rom, Lisa Thomsen, and Tess Fuller. We would also like to thank members of the Youth Advisory Group for their time and insights. We trust that their views are adequately represented in this report.

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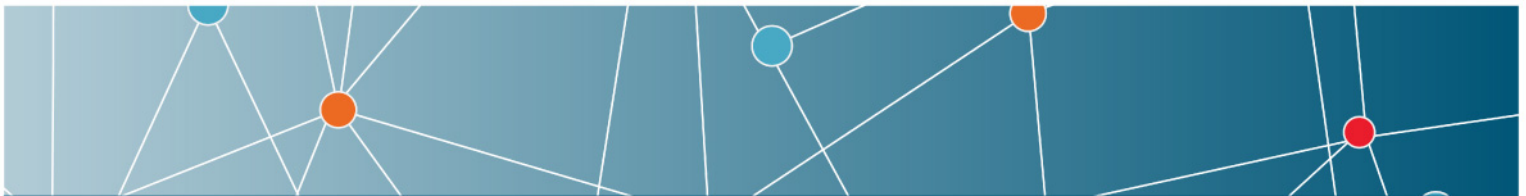
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## Abbreviations and acronyms

DSS	Department of Social Services
EAG	Evaluation Advisory Group
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
PCI	Promoting Consent Initiative
TUC	Teach Us Consent
YAG	Youth Advisory Group

# Executive Summary



## Executive Summary

Sexual violence remains a significant social and public policy challenge in Australia. National statistics indicate that over one in five women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15,<sup>1</sup> while police-recorded victim-survivor numbers continue to rise across almost all states and territories, reaching the highest levels on record in 2024.<sup>2</sup> While awareness has grown in recent years and the evidence-base has strengthened, many young people still lack clear, accessible information and the practical skills they need to navigate consent confidently and safely.

Teach Us Consent established the Promoting Consent Initiative (PCI) to help address these gaps by supporting positive shifts in young people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours during a formative stage of their lives. Funded through a \$3.5 million Commonwealth grant, Teach Us Consent curated, developed and distributed a suite of social media and online educational resources for people aged 16–25. The initiative sought to strengthen understanding of sexual consent, prevent sexual harm, and promote healthy, respectful relationships. The PCI content and delivery strategy was also informed by the expertise of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) and Expert Advisory Group (EAG).

### What we did

Teach Us Consent engaged ARTD to conduct an independent evaluation of the PCI. The project was conducted in two phases: the developmental research stage, and the evaluation stage.

The purpose of the **developmental research stage** (September to December 2024) was to generate insights to guide Teach Us Consent's content development and the PCI's overall content strategy. To do this we:

- developed and distributed a **pre-test survey** (N=1,975) to young people aged 16–25 to collect foundational data on young peoples' attitudes, understanding, and behaviours related to consent
- conducted a **rapid literature scan** (N=25 academic and grey literature articles) to identify key knowledge and attitude gaps for young people
- conducted an **initiative scan** of 5 existing consent education initiatives to ensure PCI content complemented existing efforts and avoided duplication.

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence. (2023). *Data about sexual violence*. <https://www.nasasv.org.au/data>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025, September 3). *Recorded Crime – Victims, 2024: Latest release* [Web page]. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/latest-release>

These activities helped identify four audience profiles with distinct attitudes toward sexual consent, highlight key gaps in young people’s knowledge and attitudes, and outline best-practice principles for engaging them on social media. These insights, summarised in the interim report, directly informed the PCI’s content and engagement strategy.

The purpose of the **evaluation stage** (January to December 2025) was to understand how the initiative was designed and delivered, and to assess the extent to which it contributed to improved knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to sexual consent among young people.

We were guided by the following key evaluation questions.

Section	Key evaluation questions
<b>Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was the PCI grounded in evidence?</li> <li>To what extent was the PCI grounded in best practice?</li> <li>To what extent is PCI content and delivery designed to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of young people?</li> </ul>
<b>Reach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was the reach of the PCI?</li> </ul>
<b>Audience reception</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What were young people’s perceptions of the PCI content?</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did the PCI improve young people’s knowledge and understanding of consent and healthy relationships?</li> <li>To what extent did the PCI shift young people’s attitudes towards sexual consent and healthy relationships?</li> <li>To what extent did the PCI influence self-reported consent behaviours and bystander actions?</li> </ul>
<b>Youth Advisory Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did the Youth Advisory Group inform the design of the PCI content and delivery?</li> <li>How was the Youth Advisory Group engaged throughout delivery?</li> </ul>

To answer these questions, we used a **mixed-methods approach** that involved:

- developing and distributing a **post initiative survey** (N=1,931), which had all the questions from the pre-test survey, plus additional questions to measure exposure to, and feedback on, the PCI content
- a **pop-up survey** (N=93) of only 5 questions, embedded on Teach Us Consent’s website, to capture feedback on PCI content
- facilitating 5 **focus groups** with young people (N=10; 8 females, 2 males) to explore their perceptions of the PCI content more deeply (see focus group guide in **Error! Reference source not found.**)
- a **focus group with the Youth Advisory Group** (7 of 16 YAG members) to gather insights about their experiences as YAG members

- reviewing **PCI documents** (N=42) and **program data**, including reach data from all distribution channels - Meta (i.e., Instagram and Facebook), TikTok, YouTube, and Podcasts.

## What we found

The PCI succeeded in capturing young people's attention online and engaging them on topics that are under-discussed, and for some, considered taboo. This was done in a way that felt authentic, relatable and non-judgemental. Across focus groups and YAG feedback, young people consistently described the PCI's voice and tone as its greatest strength.

The PCI differentiated itself from other initiatives in that it did not feel authoritative or moralising. It did this by adopting a conversational style that invited young people, particularly young men, into the discussion rather than telling them what to think. The content involved real people talking about real experiences. This approach created space for honest reflection, and helped young people feel comfortable engaging with a topic that can be confronting, complex or personally sensitive.

This authentic tone was a critical enabling factor for success. Conversations about consent can lead many young people to confront past behaviours or rethink beliefs, which can be challenging and emotionally uncomfortable. The PCI's approach created a safe and non-judgemental environment for this reflection, supporting young people to recognise boundaries, acknowledge when they may have crossed them, and consider how they want to act differently in future.

The success of the PCI's voice and tone was no accident – it was the product of deliberate and considered design from the outset. The content was informed by extensive research and consultation with diverse young people and experts, underpinned by a youth-centred approach, and supported by thorough testing of message tone and delivery formats. By focusing on getting the voice right, Teach Us Consent developed content that was effective at capturing attention, holding it, and encouraging young people to consider new perspectives on consent. The only slight caveat is that some young people in the YAG and focus groups noted that the production quality was so polished it might feel less familiar to younger audiences, reflecting their assumption that younger viewers are more accustomed to lower-production, informal content styles (e.g., direct-to-camera formats) rather than the PCI's broadcast-quality production.

This resonance in tone and delivery was reflected in the PCI's overall reach and engagement. The initiative reached a large number of young people and generated strong engagement across platforms. Program data from Teach Us Consent estimate that the PCI reached up to 5.9 million people. The post initiative survey provides a more conservative estimate, with 58% of respondents reporting they had seen PCI content, suggesting the initiative reached roughly 1.9 million young people. This difference likely reflects the program data overstating total reach, as some individuals may have been counted more than once across platforms (e.g., Meta and TikTok). Although these two estimates differ considerably, they suggest the PCI's total reach sits somewhere within this range and, importantly, far exceeds the original

target of reaching half a million young people. While overall reach was strong, social media platforms collect limited demographic data, making it difficult to assess the initiative's reach among priority populations. This highlights the need for future initiatives to ensure they collect clear evidence that these groups are being reached.

The PCI also demonstrated strong potential for peer-to-peer reach. The post initiative survey indicates that most young people (73%) would 'probably' or 'definitely' share PCI content with friends, suggesting high perceived value and relevance. Participants described seeing posts circulate within their social networks and appreciated that the social-media format made content easy to pass on. This willingness to share suggests the PCI not only engaged young people directly but also helped seed broader conversations within their communities.

Evidence suggests the PCI contributed to positive shifts in many young people's understanding, attitudes and behaviours related to consent. While the data has limitations (described below), the findings are consistent and promising. In the post initiative survey, most respondents (79%) reported that the content had impacted their understanding, attitudes or practices. Only a small minority (16%) felt the content had little or no effect. Results from the pop-up survey – although based on a smaller, more engaged sample (those who accessed the website during the initiative period) – showed an even stronger pattern of self-reported change. These findings suggest that young people engaged with the PCI content, and that it supported meaningful reflection and learning.

Qualitative insights reinforced this picture. Focus group participants described the content as educational, accessible and empowering, often providing new language and perspectives that helped them better understand consent and support their peers. For some, the PCI validated what they already knew but strengthened their confidence to talk about consent with others. For others, it prompted new reflections and encouraged them to seek out additional information, recognising that learning about consent is an ongoing process. Most significantly, many young people reported that the PCI helped make conversations about consent feel less taboo or uncomfortable, contributing to a more open, normalised culture of talking about sexual experiences and consent.

While feedback on PCI content was largely positive, some young people identified areas for improvement. Feedback from focus groups and the YAG suggested the need for more nuanced discussions and a wider range of perspectives on complex or subjective topics. Some also called for broader representation across different identities and lived experiences in PCI content.

YAG members were largely positive about their experience, giving an average satisfaction score of 7.3 out of 10. They felt their input was genuinely valued, and many saw their ideas reflected in the final content. At the same time, members wanted clearer communication about how their feedback was used, as well as more frequent opportunities to review content throughout development. They also noted some practical challenges, such as scheduling and payment processes, that made participation harder than it needed to be.

Teach Us Consent now has a strong foundation that future initiatives can build on. PCI content remains available on Teach Us Consent's website and social media channels and

continues to reach people organically through their established social media following. This provides a solid platform to continue this important conversation and expand reach to groups who may not have been fully represented or reached by the PCI.

Table 1 outlines the key findings from each section. Each finding links to the relevant part of the report where further detail and analysis are provided.

**Table 1. Summary of key findings by section**

Section	Key findings
<b>Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PCI was highly grounded in evidence and best practice, drawing on a wide range of research and consultation activities</li> <li>• The PCI demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusivity, but important gaps remain for some groups of young people</li> </ul>
<b>Reach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PCI achieved considerable overall reach and engagement</li> <li>• The PCI reached more men than women overall, although this varied by platform and engagement metric</li> <li>• The PCI reached young people from all states and territories in Australia</li> <li>• There is very limited evidence about the PCI's reach among priority populations</li> <li>• The PCI appears to have had greater reach among young people who held less positive attitudes towards consent</li> </ul>
<b>Audience reception</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most young people found the content relevant, relatable and engaging</li> <li>• Using multiple content formats improved accessibility and engagement</li> <li>• The PCI's non-judgemental, relatable messaging helped engage young men</li> <li>• Some young people wanted more nuanced discussions and multiple perspectives for subjective topics</li> <li>• Young people appreciated the diversity represented in the content, but noted several gaps in representation</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many young people who saw the initiative reported positive shifts in their understanding, attitudes and behaviours related to consent                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The PCI helped make conversations about consent and healthy relationships feel more normal and acceptable</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Most young people felt inclined to share PCI content with their friends</li> </ul>
<b>Youth Advisory Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, members were satisfied with their experience and generally felt their feedback was welcomed and valued</li> <li>• Members generally saw their suggestions reflected in the final content                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some members felt that, at times, TUC did not take up their ideas on certain topics because of concerns those topics might reduce engagement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some members felt their feedback on content for specific target groups was not fully reflected in the content</li> <li>• Members wanted more communication about how TUC used their input</li> <li>• Members wanted more frequent consultation sessions and opportunities to review content both early and late in its development</li> </ul>

Section	Key findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative processes, such as scheduling and payments, created unnecessary challenges for members</li> </ul>

## What we recommend

For future consent education initiatives, **Teach Us Consent** should:

1. Build on what worked in the PCI by replicating its most effective design elements, including:
  - Maintain a non-judgemental, conversational tone as a core principle, to help young people – particularly young men – feel comfortable engaging with a topic that can be confronting or personally sensitive.
  - Partner with trusted public figures to support content delivery, as young people are more likely to engage with messengers they see as relatable and credible.
  - Prioritise skills-based content that helps young people translate consent education into practical behaviours.
  - Develop content using evidence and best practice, informed by research, consultation and testing.
2. Identify and focus on the ‘movable middle’ as these groups are most likely to shift their attitudes, understanding and behaviours through a public education initiative.
3. Plan and budget for meaningful co-design with priority population groups earlier in the ideation phase. This will ensure these groups are clearly represented and targeted materials are finalised and disseminated on time within initiative timeframes.
4. Establish a clear and transparent feedback loop for consultation processes, documenting how input is reflected in content development, and communicating back to contributors what was adopted, what wasn’t, and why.
5. Strengthen the Youth Advisory Group’s governance and engagement across the initiative lifecycle.
  - Clearly define the YAG’s role and level of influence from the outset.
  - Engage the YAG early in content development stages so they can meaningfully shape initiative content.
  - Commit to transparent feedback loops so YAG members can understand how their input was used.
  - Maintain ongoing communication between meetings.

6. Plan and budget for independent measurement from the outset (e.g., through a market research provider), so reach among priority populations can be understood without relying on platform-provided demographic data.
7. Strengthen future evaluation design by:
  - Increasing matched pre- and post-survey responses to measure change in the same individuals over time. This can be achieved by offering stronger incentives to complete both surveys, reducing the time between surveys, and keeping them short with a targeted set of core outcome questions.
  - Increasing the qualitative sample size to generate more robust findings.

We also recommend the **Department**:

8. Continue to adequately resource consent education as a sustained, long-term effort. Public education is a necessary intervention for reaching young people and diverse audiences at scale. This approach recognises that meaningful population-level change requires consistent messaging.
  - Funding should prioritise initiatives that reach young audiences through their everyday online environments with evidence-based materials, delivered by trusted, credible non-government organisations, as these voices are more likely to reduce defensiveness and encourage engagement.
9. Embed co-design and youth testing as a requirement in content development to ensure tone, format and messaging remains relevant.
  - Where insights from the PCI are used to inform future consent education initiatives, include a simple validation step with young people to confirm they are still relevant, recognising how quickly online norms change.

## Limitations

A key limitation of the evaluation was our inability to measure change in individuals over time. Although the evaluation design included both a pre-test survey and a post-initiative survey, only seven respondents completed both. This small sample size meant we could not reliably compare individuals' knowledge, attitudes or behaviours before and after the PCI. As a result, we were unable to make causal claims about the initiative's impact on individuals.

Because the post-initiative survey achieved a large and broadly representative sample, but consisted almost entirely of different respondents, we instead used the data to conduct correlational analyses. These analyses allowed us to explore relationships between the amount of PCI content young people recalled seeing ('dosage') and key outcomes such as knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to sexual consent. While this approach provides valuable insights, correlational findings cannot be interpreted as evidence that the PCI directly caused these outcomes.

The pop-up survey was embedded on the Teach Us Consent website, so respondents were likely people already highly engaged with the content. This may have positively biased

responses and reduced the generalisability of the findings. We therefore report the pop-up survey results alongside the post initiative survey results, which are based on a more representative sample.

We encountered challenges recruiting focus group participants through the post initiative survey. The qualitative sample we obtained was relatively small and predominantly female (10 participants: 8 females, 2 males). As a result, insights from male participants are limited by the small sample size, although those who participated provided rich and detailed perspectives.

Despite these limitations, the evaluation still provides consistent and meaningful evidence about PCI outcomes. The combination of large-scale post-initiative survey data, pop-up survey responses, and rich qualitative insights from focus groups and YAG members allows us to draw well-supported conclusions about how young people perceived and engaged with the PCI, and the types of self-reported changes the content supported.





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