

# Road safety messaging trial with food delivery workers

Food delivery workers and platforms both see traffic accidents as a top work health and safety concern. Speeding and rushing are key risk factors leading to psychological and physical harm.

We co-designed and trialled a behaviourally informed intervention to reduce travel speeds and improve food delivery worker road safety.

## The aim of co-design

To develop a behaviourally informed risk-reduction intervention in collaboration with stakeholders to ensure it meets their needs and is appropriate for food delivery workers



## How we did it

A workshop with workers, platforms, and an e-bike rental company:



- Reviewed and discussed the research recommendations
- Voted on the top road safety ideas to take forward
- Co-designed the idea in breakout sessions

## What we focused on

Speeding and rushing are key risk factors for psychological and physical harms. Workers report that they speed or rush because they:



- Want to achieve high in-app ratings
- Want to maximise income
- Want to satisfy customers
- Believe that delivery times are firm deadlines, with penalties if they are missed



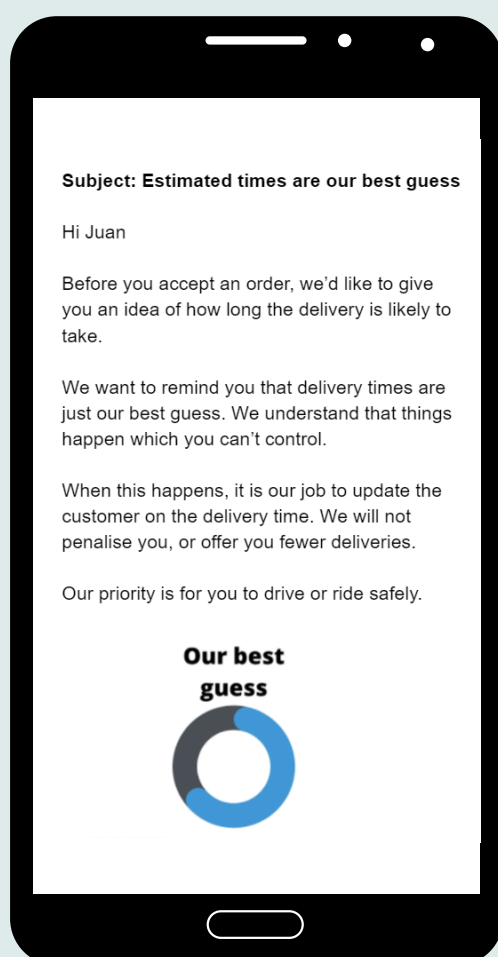
## How the stakeholders chose the winning idea



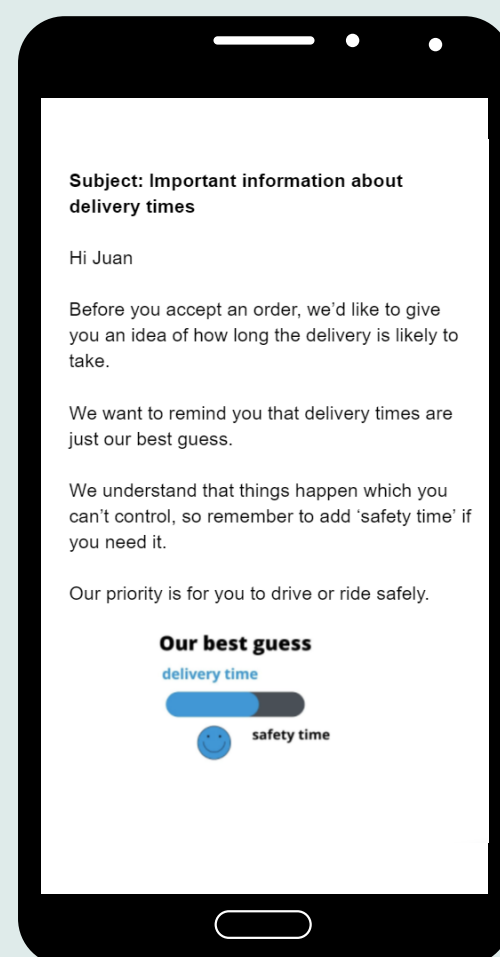
- **Impact** – is it likely to make a difference?
- **Feasibility** – can it be created and implemented?
- **Testability** – can we evaluate its effects?

## The winning idea

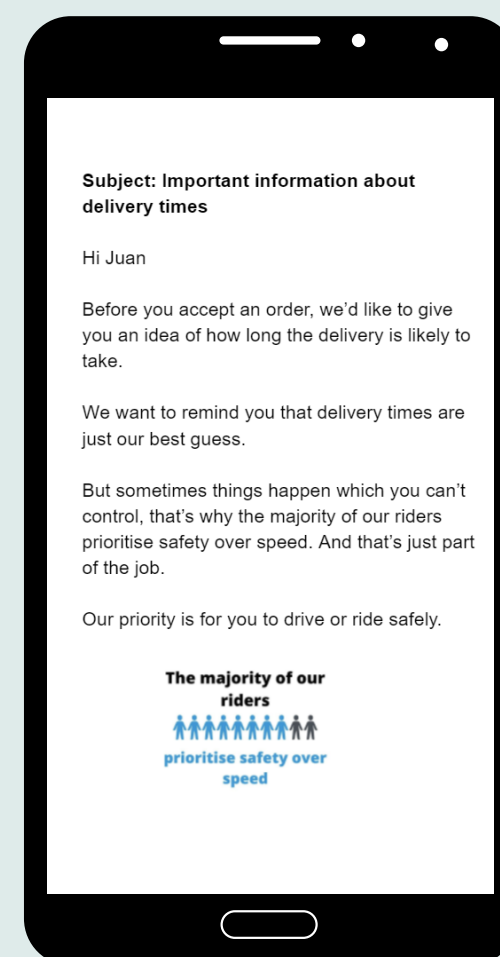
A series of four behaviourally informed messages that aimed to reframe workers' perception of delivery times as *estimations* rather than *expectations*. The messages were designed to be sent to the workers' inbox via the platform's in-app messaging system.



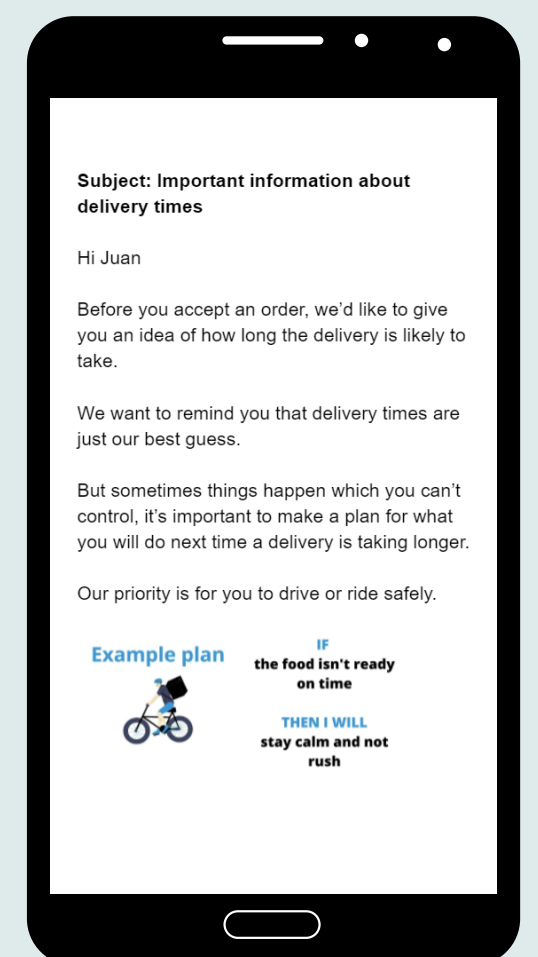
**Beliefs about consequences**  
To alter workers' belief that they would be penalised for not meeting delivery times.



**Anchoring**  
To anchor workers on a new reference point (delivery time combined with "safety time")



**Descriptive social norms**  
To encourage social comparison of workers' safety behaviour with their peers



**Implementation intentions**  
To encourage workers to make an advance plan for handling unexpected events.

The co-design process

## The aims of the trial

To evaluate the effects of the messages on:

- Average travel speed per delivery
- Beliefs that late deliveries are penalised
- Perceptions of road safety
- Customer satisfaction

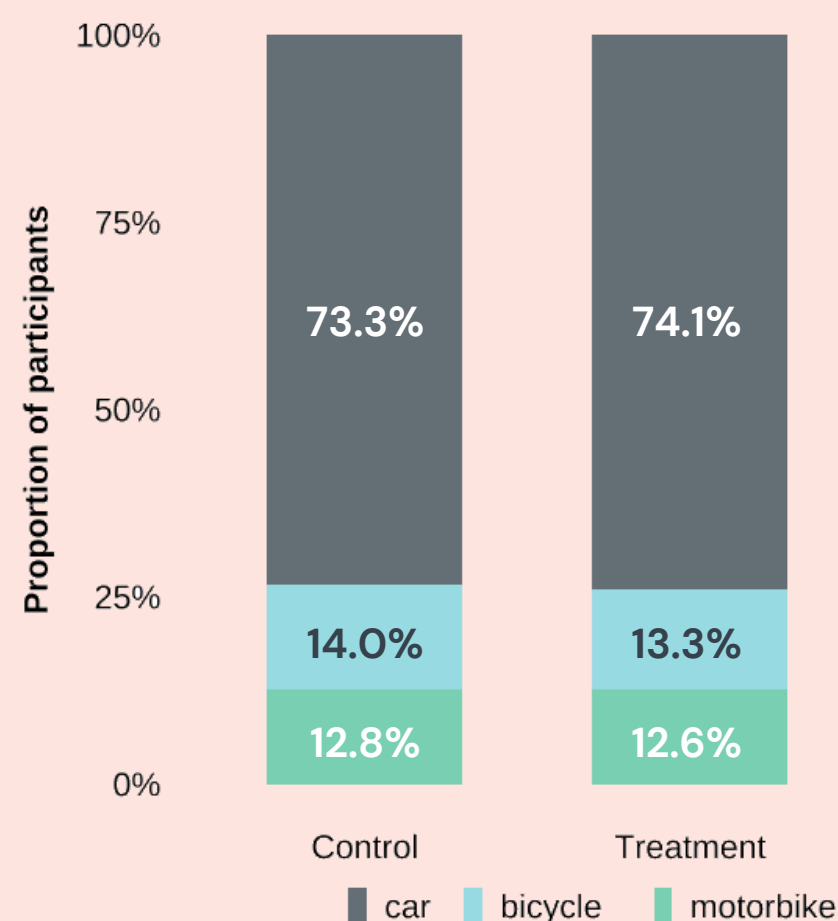


## How we did it

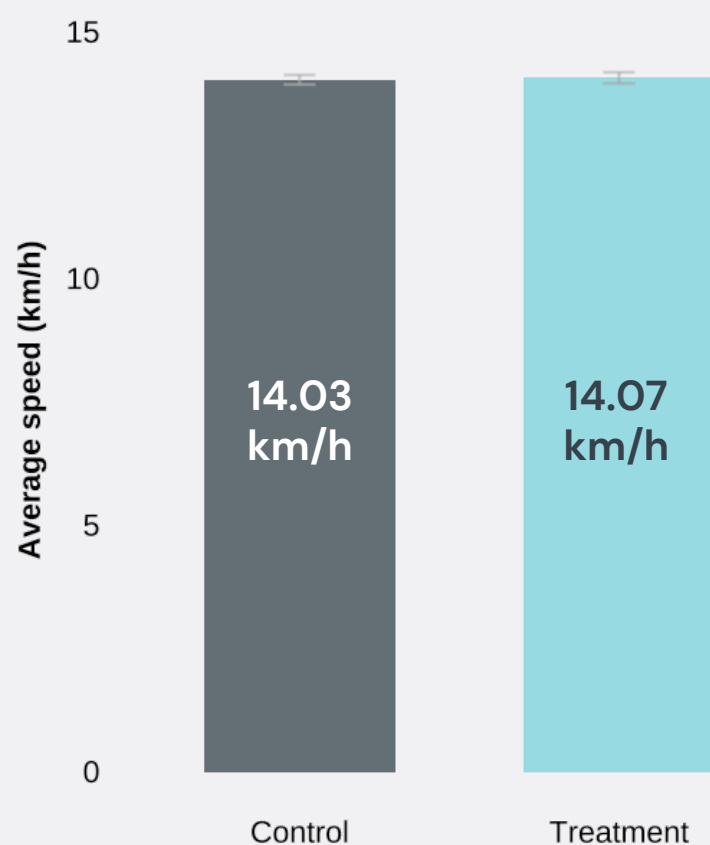
- The workers of a large global platform were randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group
- On four consecutive Thursdays, one of the co-designed messages was sent to the treatment group via the platform's in-app messaging function
- The week after the final message, both the treatment and control groups were sent a survey asking about their beliefs about penalties and perceptions of road safety

## Who the trial participants were

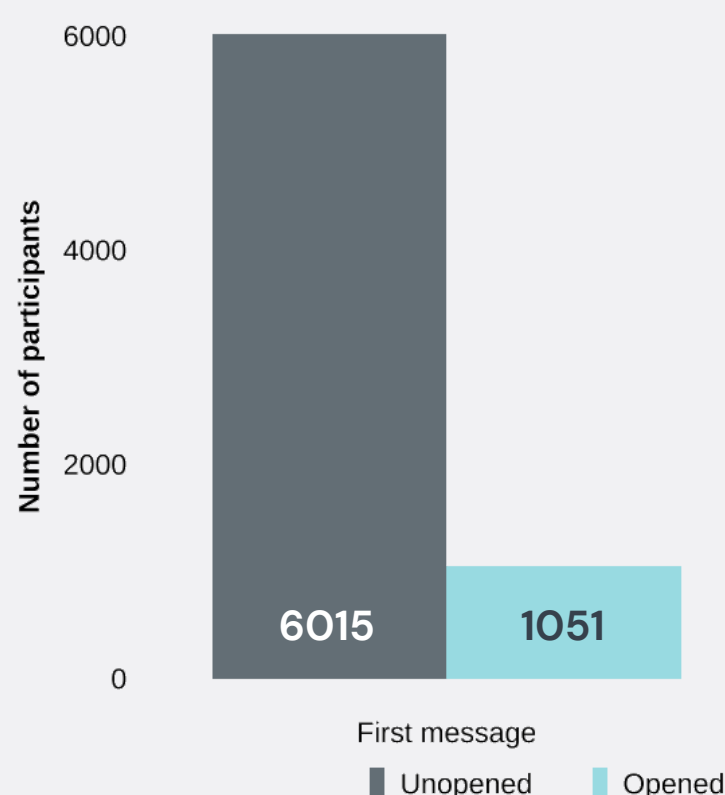
- 14,281 workers in Sydney and Melbourne
- Majority used cars, with smaller, equal proportions using bicycles or motorcycles
- 7,066 in the treatment group, 7,215 in the control group
- Together, the trial participants made 1,616,016 deliveries during the 1-month trial period



## Results: Low engagement with the intervention, low impact



There was no significant effect of the messages on the average travel speed of the treatment group.



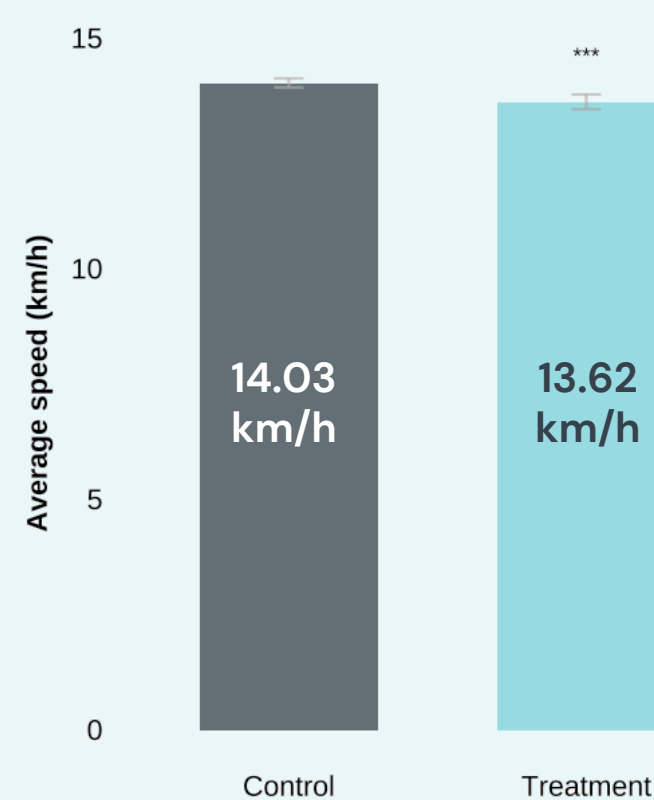
However, only a minority of FDWs opened the messages.

## Results: No adverse effects



While the messages had no effect on beliefs about penalties or perceptions of safety on the treatment group, the messages also had no adverse effects on overall delivery times or customer satisfaction.

## Results: Modest effect on those who read at least one message



When the effect of the messages was examined only for those who opened at least one of the four messages, there was a significant but modest effect. Workers who engaged with the messages traveled 3% slower than those in the control group.

**Safety messaging can be effective, but the challenge of low worker engagement – even with direct, in-app messages – must be tackled before implementing and scaling a safety communications initiative.**