

# Household Assistance Package

...communication campaign research

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

**Phase 1, Wave 2 testing**  
**Full report**  
April 2012

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# Summary of research intent – Phase 1

## Background to the research

As part of the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future (CEF) Plan, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) is responsible for communicating on aspects of the assistance to be provided to Australian households through the introduction of a carbon price. As a result, millions of Australians will receive increased payments, tax cuts or both, in the form of the Household Assistance Package (HAP).

There are three new types of payments, in the form of increases in pensions, allowances and family payments that comprise the HAP:

- Clean Energy Advance and Clean Energy Supplement
- Low Income Supplement
- Single Income Family Supplement

Additionally, low income earners will receive income tax cuts. The details of each payment type are specified in the Brief, and are not repeated herein.

To date no significant communication activity has been undertaken to clarify and/or communicate the specifics of the HAP to target audiences. Given the lump sum nature of the initial payment, there is reason to assume recipients may become confused as to the purpose of the payment or that they have been overpaid.

Consequently, there is a need for the campaign to inform audiences of the assistance and its effect on their entitlements, rights and obligations to manage the factual information needs of millions of Australians and mitigate public confusion.

To this end, FaHCSIA has developed a communication strategy that will drive an information campaign, raising awareness and understanding of the assistance to be provided from mid-May 2012. This strategy will focus on communicating the assistance measures of the HAP to those who will benefit from it.

The primary objective of Wave 2 of Phase 1 research (to which this report pertains) is to re-test the "Fridge" concept which encompasses recommendations from Wave 1 to ensure it is on-strategy in terms of message, and potential efficacy among the target audiences.

## Objectives of this research

FaHCSIA has commissioned the development of creative concepts to communicate the details and benefits of the HAP and now requires a research consultant to undertake testing research for these concepts. Specifically, the research will:

- address any 'gaps' in FaHCSIA's existing understanding of target audiences and their communication needs, barriers and preferences;
- ensure proposed campaign advertisements and information products are appropriate for target audiences and deliver key messages clearly and effectively;
- assess any risks associated with campaign materials, including how they might be received by people who will not be eligible for a payment.

The research needs to test a range of advertisements and information products with target audiences, as well as a broader public, and evaluate their appropriateness and effectiveness in meeting the aims and objectives of the HAP communication strategy. The consultant will be required to make recommendations to FaHCSIA about what, if any, changes are required to ensure advertisements and information products will meet the objectives of the HAP communication strategy.

## Target audiences

Primary target audiences are defined as those who are either eligible for assistance or require a call to action (apply for the low income supplements) to receive assistance under the various Household Assistance Package measures, primarily low-middle income families, seniors, people with disability and carers.

Secondary target audiences are the remaining Australians who will not be eligible for assistance under these HAP measures. From an issues management and service delivery perspective, it will be important to ensure this audience has an understanding of eligibility to avoid confusion and manage expectations.

# Summary of research method – Phase 1, Wave 2

The key component of the methodology of Wave 3 is **n=10 extended (90 minute) focus groups**. In stratifying the focus groups, the following structure was applied:

Group number	Location		Payment type				Non-payment		
	Metropolitan	Regional / rural	Family support	Age pensions	Unemployment /study	Disability/ carer	Others	Low/mid income	Non-recipients / all others
W2_1									
W2_2									
W2_3									
W2_4									
W2_5									
W2_6									
W2_7									
W2_8									
W2_9									
W2_10									

Other details (refer overleaf).



# Summary of research method – Phase 1, Wave 2

## Other details:

- 2 groups each were conducted in Ballarat, Ipswich, Perth metro, Sydney metro and Melbourne metro – totalling 6 metro groups, and 4 regional.
- 1 group was recruited with a specific CALD / Aboriginal focus – Group W2\_9.
- 8 participants were recruited for each group, and on average, 7 or 8 were present in each group.
- An incentive of \$110 was paid to each participant – this is higher than standard, and is to account for the longer than standard group duration (90 minutes).
- All groups were moderated by senior researchers with a minimum of 8 years experience.
- Participants were required to complete written 'rating sheets' (short surveys) of the concepts prior to the group discussion to control for potential 'group-effect' throughout the analysis.
- The concept versions were rotated in presentation in order to control for order effect.
- Full analysis was undertaken on each group and integrated into reporting.
- All groups were conducted on 16 April 2012.



## A note on quasi-quantitative analysis charts

Throughout this report, there are several charts which detail quasi-quantitative analysis from rating sheets which participants completed as a part of their focus group attendance. In Wave 2, the sample size is relatively small for quantitative analysis (n=70) and thus, their interpretation must always be coupled with a qualitative assessment from more detailed feedback obtained from group participants throughout the discussions.

Any changes in the quasi-quantitative data from wave to wave should be viewed cautiously, and the intent of their inclusion is to:

1. **Identify whether there are any 'extreme' and 'consistent' significant shifts** across the measures that would indicate a negative (or positive) impact of any of the creative and content changes between Waves ...rather than to identify small changes.
2. **Determine whether the previously reported strengths of the "Fridge" concept** (and the rationale which underpinned its recommendation for progression) **have been maintained** throughout the waves.

In the cases where a movement in the quasi-quantitative charts are highlighted as indicative of 'change', this is because the finding was coupled with a strong and consistent sentiment expressed in the qualitative discussions (that is, it is not solely reliant on the quasi-quantitative ratings).

## Overall

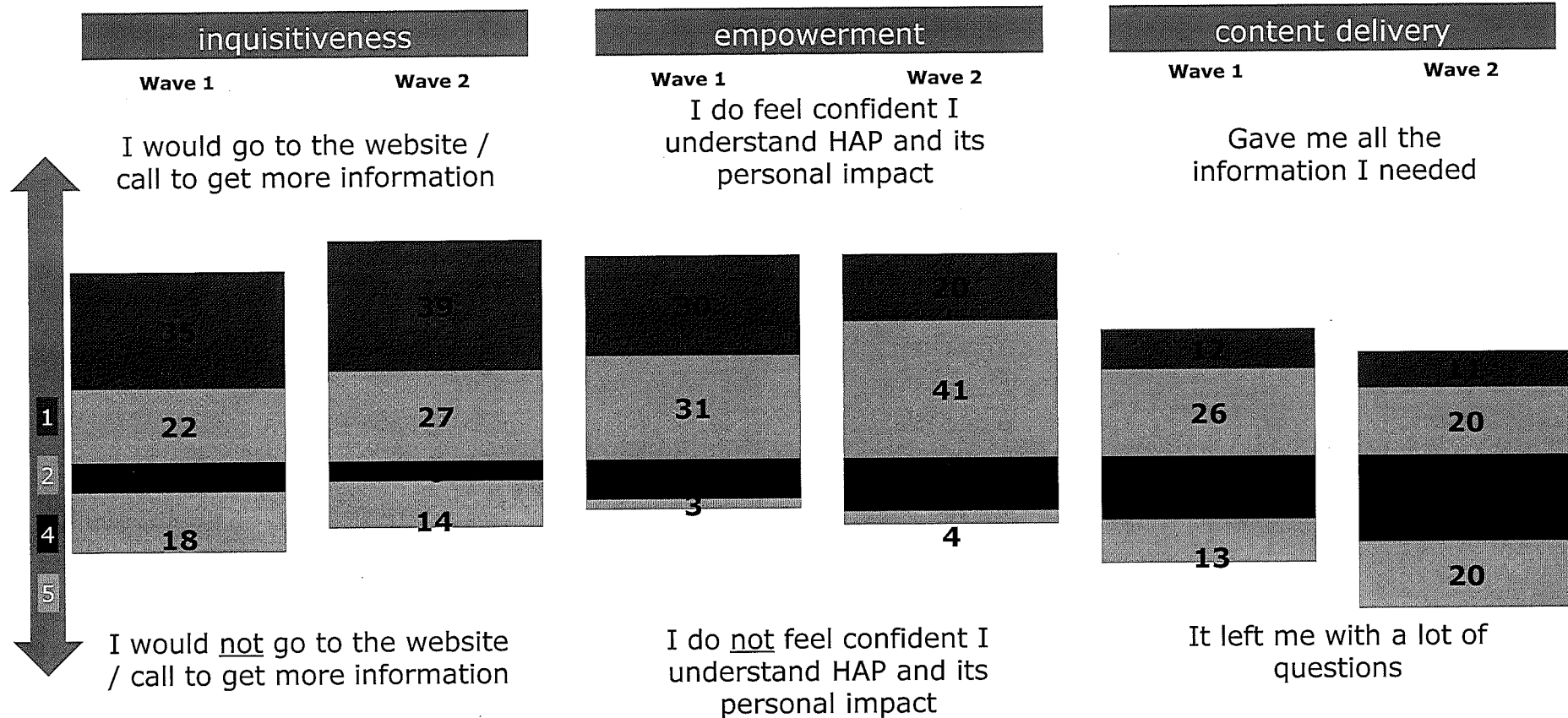
Overall, the "Fridge" concept is positively received, and has addressed many of the 'concerns' raised via the Phase 1 Wave 1 testing. The pages which follow indicate further recommendations for minor changes in order to strengthen the communications.

## CALD and Aboriginal audiences

It should be noted that, throughout the Phase 1 Wave 1 and 2 testing, the communications were received in a similar way among those of CALD and Aboriginal descent. There were no specific additional concerns raised by these audiences, aside from a desire for the content to be translated, and targeted (in terms of placement in culturally relevant mediums).

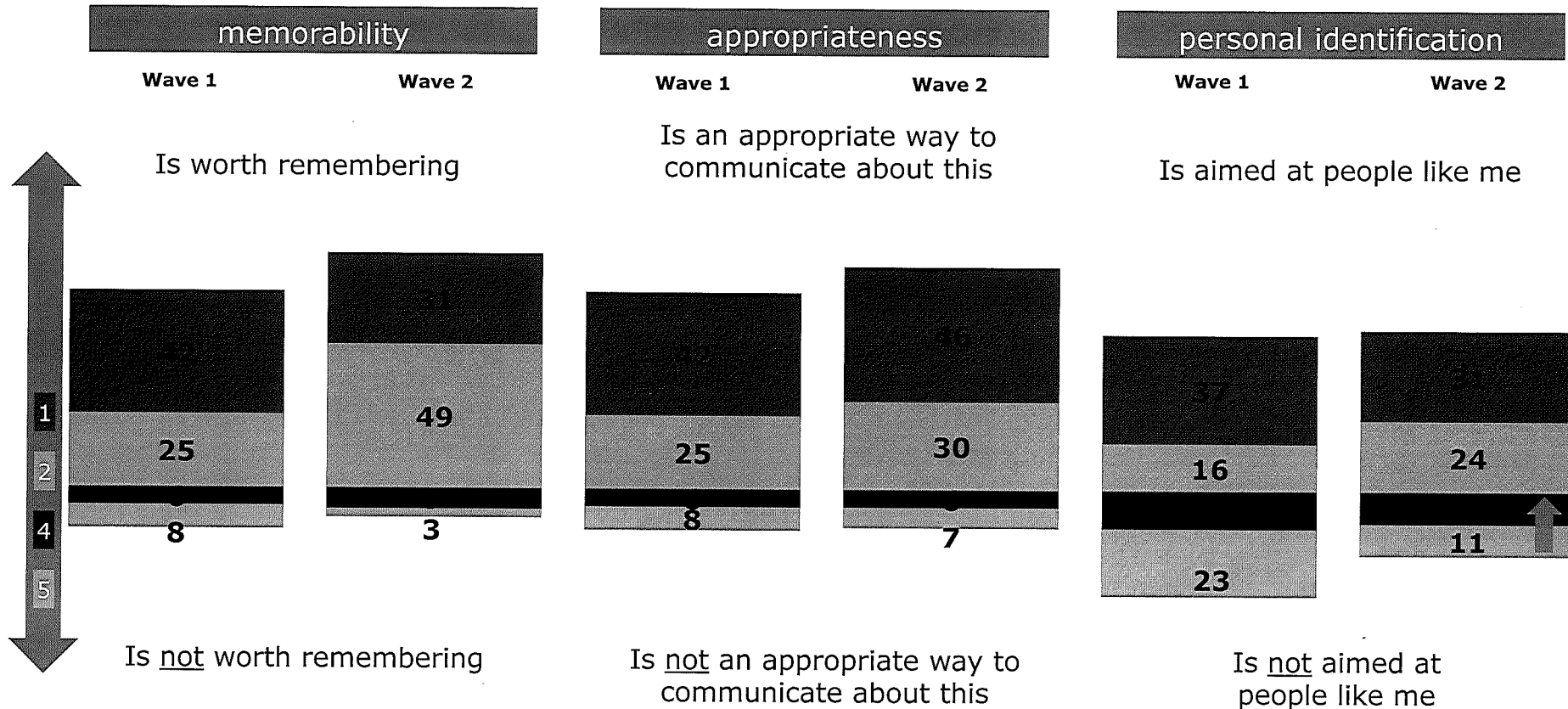


# Fundamentally ...perceived **content delivery, empowerment** and **inquisitiveness** have not changed significantly between Wave 1 and Wave 2...



SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it. BASE: Wave 1 n=297, Wave 2 n=70 – responses to TVC

However, the content and creative changes have resulted in a strengthening of perceived **memorability**, **personal identification** and **appropriateness** of the execution.

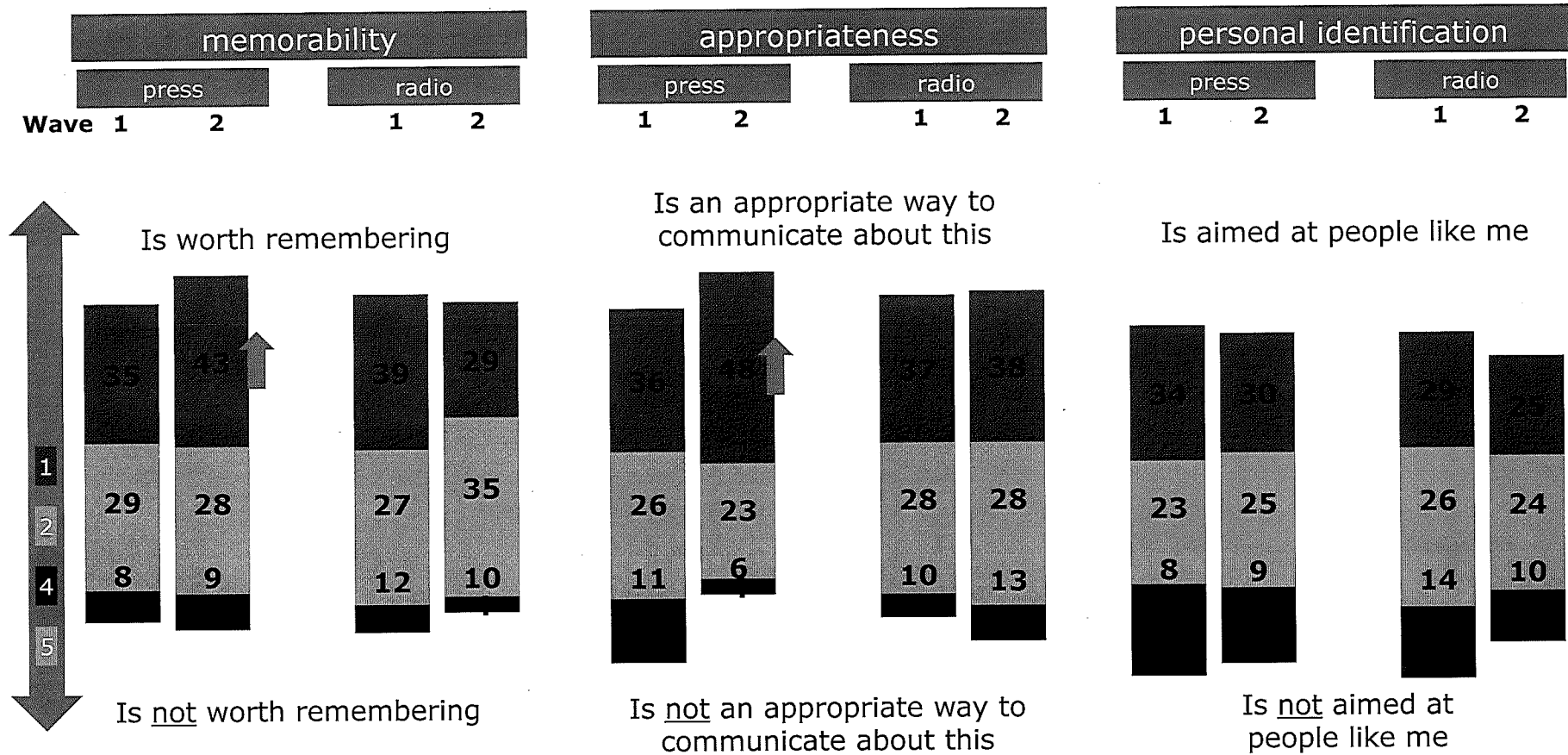


SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it. BASE: Wave 1 n=297, Wave 2 n=70 – responses to TVC



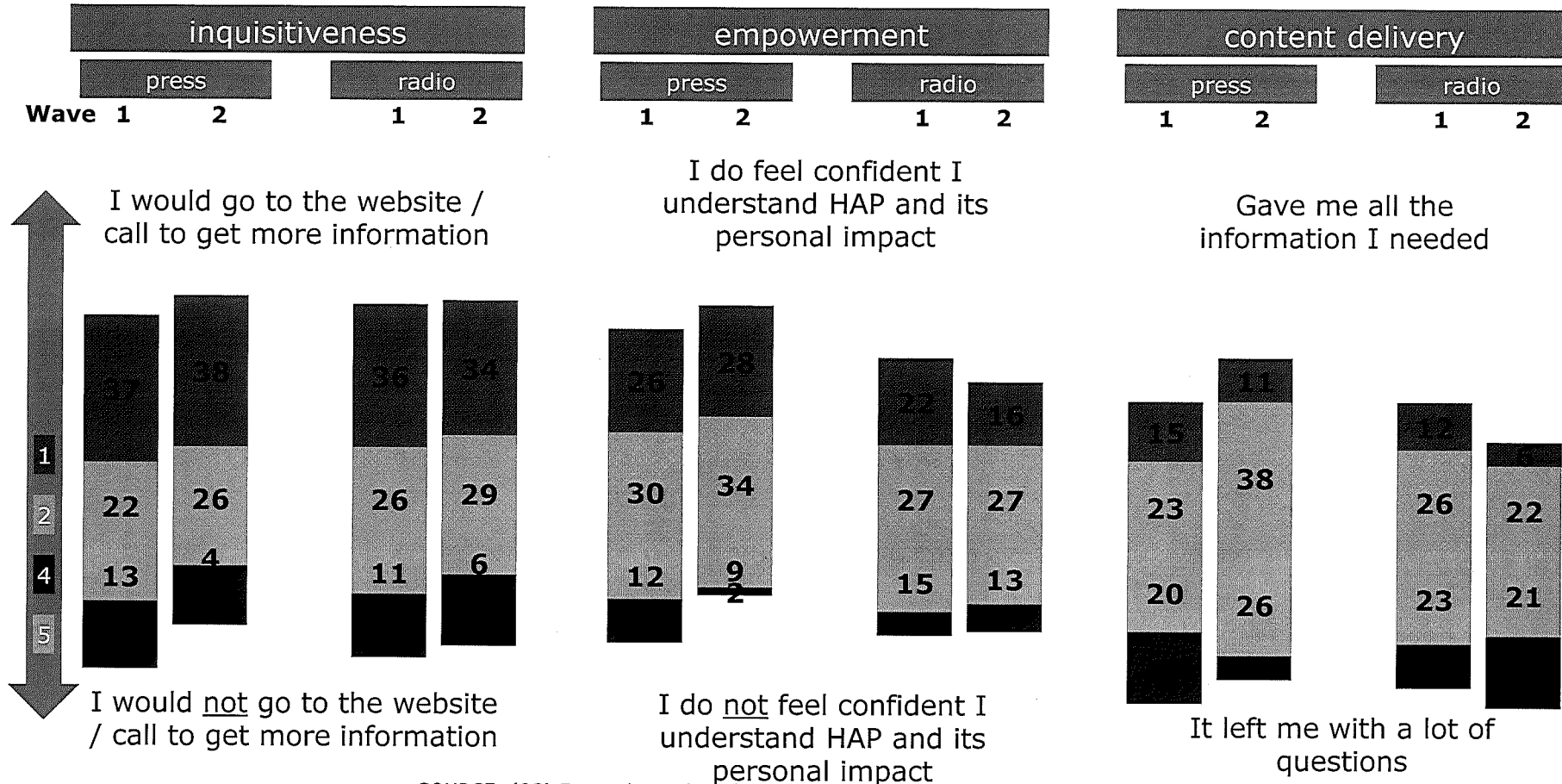


Post Wave 1 amendments, **press** has strengthened in terms of perceived **memorability** and **appropriateness** – both quasi-quantitatively, and qualitatively...



SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it. BASE: Wave 1 n=297, Wave 2 n=70

...There is also an apparent (quasi-quantitatively, and qualitatively) strengthening in terms of perceived content delivery and empowerment of press.



SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it. BASE: Wave 1 n=297, Wave 2 n=70

# Content changes have resulted in an increase in mentions of the 'package', as well as 'timing' ...

	TVC		PRESS		RADIO	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
<b>Financial assistance</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%
▪ for households	4	6	0	7	0	7
▪ for families	10	11	7	7	5	4
▪ for elderly	0	3	4	0	1	0
▪ for low income earners / receiving Govt. payment	1	0	13	0	6	0
▪ for many Australians	0	3	0	7	0	4
<b>Package</b>						
▪ Lump sum / one-off payment	25	17	16	43	32	41
▪ Additional payment	0	6	2	7	1	7
▪ New regular payments	9	4	8	27	14	22
▪ Tax cuts	0	0	0	10	0	0
▪ Household package / package	0	0	0	3	0	0
▪ 'Household Assistance Package / HAP'	0	0	0	7	0	4
<b>Timing</b>						
▪ Early May	2	10	6	13	13	22
▪ To last until next year/next 12 months	1	4	0	7	1	11
▪ March next year	0	3	0	17	0	7
Benefitting those who need it most	7	7	3	10	8	15
To help with the cost of living	26	48	13	23	18	15
Bills disappearing / bills will disappear	25	0	0	0	0	0

Q2. What are all the things you remember being spoken about in this ad ...what was it trying to tell you / what did you take out of it? Please write in as much detail as you can.

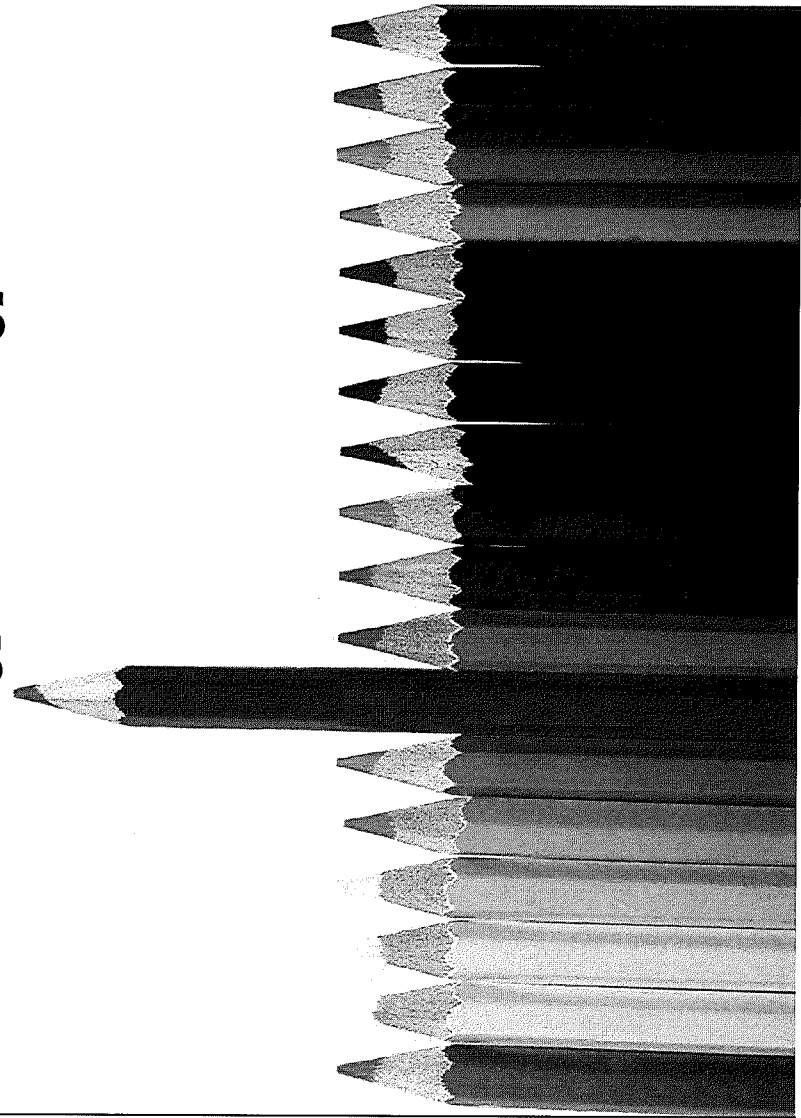


Household Assistance Package Communications Research - Phase 1, Wave 3

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**Final conclusions  
and  
recommendations  
on the 8 key  
learnings and  
recommendations  
from Phase 1  
Wave 1 & 2  
testing ...**



# Final recommendations

1

Implicit linkage of HAP to **'bill support'** is important  
...a learning generated by "Fridge", but overall applicability

## Wave 1 learning:

Implied linkage to assistance for 'paying (utility) bills' increases knowledge of the intent which underpins HAP ...and has the potential to drive campaign / program acceptance. However, "Fridge" is overly-focussed on 'bills disappearing', rather than 'bill support'.

## Wave 1 recommendation:

Maintain the implicit link to bills, however, it is critical to remove visual and verbal references to bills disappearing – the focus should be more on 'balance' / 'topping up' / 'support'.

## Wave 2 update:

The linkage to bills (via 'fading into the background') is critical to correct message delivery – it provides HAP with a perceived legitimate purpose.

There is still a risk, however, that seeing several bills 'fading away' elevates expectations of monetary value of the one of payment.

## Wave 2 final recommendation:

1. The bills must remain visible and identifiable throughout the ads – that is, they must retain a noticeable presence on the fridge and not be fully covered by pictures.
2. The visual of an electricity bill should be legible within all TVC and print executions as this creates a (positive) implied, necessary link to carbon tax.

# Final recommendations

## 2

Clarify **eligibility** for HAP to reduce the frequency of calls / contacts seeking clarification

### Wave 1 learning:

Because of the **informational nature** of the campaign, the **creative** is interpreted literally, which is then inflated because of the low starting base for knowledge of HAP, resulting in a literal interpretation of creative and content ...ie. what is 'not there' is not 'assumed'.

This causes confusion and unanswered questions around eligibility for HAP.

### Wave 1 recommendation:

It would be ideal to have more than one "Fridge" TV / press execution (identical style, but different images), and multiple voice-overs in the radio execution.

Verbal / written articulation of broad 'groupings' of people (eg. seniors, families and singles receiving government payments) was generally considered more informative in clarifying eligibility than more general references to 'if you are receiving Centrelink payments'.  
If possible, integrate more specific referencing to voice-over and text in press executions.

**Wave 2 update  
(overleaf):**

# Final recommendations

## 2

Clarify **eligibility** for HAP to reduce the frequency of calls / contacts seeking clarification

### Wave 2 update:

While questions around eligibility remain (for some target audiences), the additional creative executions have considerably reduced the perceived issue of 'eligibility'.

Questions around eligibility are now more likely to drive **inquisitiveness** rather than confusion ("this could be me, I hope I qualify, I will check it out").

### Wave 2 final recommendation:

1. The desire for verbal / written articulation of **broad groupings of people** (eg. seniors, families and singles receiving government payments) remains (ie. there is no desire to link references to specific payment types, as this is considered overly complex). This terminology needs to be integrated to press copy, rather than relying on generic references to 'receiving government payments'.

### Wave 2 update:

However it is important to note that within the TVC voice-over, the reference to eligibility based on receiving 'government payments' appears in the second last sentence. Prior to this, many participants believed that 'all Australians' would be eligible.

### Wave 2 final recommendation:

2. The reference to eligibility linked to receiving government payments (including the reference to broad groupings of people) needs to be integrated earlier into the TVC voice-over.

Household Assistance Package Communications Research - Phase 1, Wave 2

# Final recommendations

3

'Over' versus 'under'-stating ...managing expectations relating to **financial scale** of HAP

## Wave 1 learning:

Perhaps driven by low existing knowledge of HAP, many expected relatively 'substantial' lump sums (four figures) from the content provided in the existing concepts.

In "Fridge", this was heightened by individual 'mental calculations', adding multiple bills together – and this is driven by the visual and voice-over behind the idea of 'making bills disappear' (rather than eg. 'bridging a gap').

Without clarification, this poses real risk for the campaign, and HAP, in falling short of expectations ...and driving negativity.

## Wave 1

### recommendation:

1. The terminology "bills disappear" would be considered incorrect for most households, and therefore misleading – by 'over-stating' and raising expectations..

2. Many link terminology of "one-off-lump-sum-payment" to the preceding economic stimulus package ...and subsequently assume it is implying a figure equal to, or greater than, \$900. Avoid, or tone down this expression.

## Wave 2 update:

There are now fewer references to 'bills disappearing' linked to the campaign. This appears, in part, driven by creative and content changes. It is likely, however, that this has also been influenced by recent media announcements relating to scale of additional payments within the package.

There are fewer links to the preceding 'economic stimulus'.

## Wave 2 final recommendation:

1. Supporting the campaign with other media / communications and specific content available in relation to size and scale of payments is essential to mitigate the risk of unrealistic expectations.

2. There will need to be clarification (on 'ranges' of payments) as a prominent element of the website.



# Final recommendations

4

Consider removing references to **'economic boost'** / **'boosting the economy'**

## Wave 1 learning:

To many, terms like 'economic boost' drive the 'memory' of 'economic stimulus package' – while most reflect positively on their own personal use of the money, they are quick to criticise others (largely driven by negative media attention). Terms like this may open the communications, and package, to misplaced criticism.

## Wave 1 recommendation:

References to 'economic boost' or 'stimulating the economy' references will be risky. These should be toned down, and referenced in an alternative manner (eg. economic balance / maintenance / recognising current economic conditions etc).

## Wave 2 update:

Some references to 'economic boost' and 'economic stimulus' are still present ...however, they are less prevalent, and less extreme / top of mind. And, rather than being driven by explicit references to 'the economy' (which have been removed), they are driven by references to the initial payment.

## Wave 2 final recommendation:

1. The increased focus in the copy and voice-over to other elements of the package must be maintained in their current format.

# Final recommendations

## 5 Explicitly reference the '**longevity**' of HAP (in press and radio)

**Wave 1 learning:**

Some become overly focussed on the 'one-off lump sum payment' which cannibalises their recall and understanding of 'regular payments', 'tax cuts' and the holistic nature of the package.

**Wave 1 recommendation:**

The concept of a holistic package is crucial in generating acceptance, and reducing confusion – both in this launch phase, but also to build a sound basis for future phases of communications.

This research suggests the concept of a 'one-off lump sum payment' (albeit, with changes to its articulation – as referenced previously) is likely to naturally have higher recall than 'regular payments'. Therefore, content relating to 'regular payments' and 'tax cuts' should receive greater focus in communications to compensate for this – and raise awareness that HAP is a holistic 'package'.

**Wave 2 update:**

The 'initial payment' retains high recall, however, there are now more frequent spontaneous mentions, and understanding, of 'regular payments starting next year / March next year' which appropriately balances the focus on the initial payment.

**Wave 2 final recommendation:**

1. Content relating to 'regular payments' needs to be maintained within the current voice over and press copy, and must also be prominent in website content.
2. References to 'tax cuts' must be maintained within the press copy and prominent in website content.



# Final recommendations

6

Focus direction to further information to **website**

The potential 'complexity' of HAP (eg. eligibility and personalised calculations etc) is generally understood among recipients ...it is not interpreted via the current concepts as a 'one size fits all' solution.

A minority will not seek clarification / further information, a minority (likely with complex situations) will telephone for further information, a majority will likely seek clarification from the website.

## Recommendation (unchanged between Wave 1 and 2 testing):

**1.** Elevate prominence of website (and 'google term') to precede telephone details.

## Recommendation (unchanged between Wave 1 and 2 testing):

**2.** Key content areas for prominence on website ...

(Note: this is not an exhaustive list, and is focussed on key areas of importance)

- **What is included in HAP?** (ie. content clarifying to the holistic nature of the package)
- **Am I eligible? - for lump sum payment/for regular payments/for tax cut?**
- **How much am I eligible for? – for the lump sum, for the regular payments ...in terms of tax cuts?**
- **How long does HAP last for?**
- **Why is the Government introducing the HAP?** (Note: This is where the link to carbon pricing / carbon tax could be appropriately included and addressed)
- **Why is the Government advertising / mass communicating about HAP?**
- **How long does the lump sum need to last me for until regular payments kick in?**
- **Will I get the lump sum again next year, and how much will it be?**
- **Do I need to apply for HAP?** (additional to Wave 2 testing)

## Recommendation (additional to Wave 2 testing):

**3.** Structure the website such that there are dedicate sections by the broad groupings of people (eg. seniors, singles, families, carers/disabilities) to facilitate access to specific, tailored content (as well as a general 'FAQ' section).

# Final recommendations

7

Address '**legitimacy**' for the communications – particularly TV, their perceived 'purpose' (...regardless of concept)

## Wave 1: campaign content

The more content ('questions answered') received from the communications, the less likely they were to question legitimacy.

Press and radio should retain (and, elevate) their focus on content and information delivery – the creative idea should not be perceived as 'cannibalising' these mediums.

## Wave 1 : campaign purpose

Consider direct articulation of campaign purpose (eg. because notifications may follow the automatic payment – which, qualitatively, seems accepted as a valid reason among recipients).

## Wave 1: media buy

Consider the media buy ...giving higher weights, and duration of support to press and radio (as the higher content mediums) will increase legitimacy of communications – as these mediums can more effectively articulate, and thus demonstrate, the campaign's 'purpose'.  
Focus on reach, not frequency – or, lighter weights following week 1 to account for cumulative build, or targeted buys by week linked to rollout.

## Wave 1: simplicity

Needs to be creatively engaging ...but, sufficiently simple such that the 'message' remains the 'hero' – a low scale / necessary spend.

(Note: All three concepts already appear to fulfil this – qualitatively, and via rating tasks.)

# Final recommendations

7

Address '**legitimacy**' for the communications – particularly TV, their perceived 'purpose' (...regardless of concept)

## Wave 2 update:

Questions around legitimacy have dissipated considerably. This is likely driven by the following three factors:

- (a) **research design** (the fact that we are not 'over exposing' participants to multiple executions with a similar message);
- (b) **environmental factors** (increased media coverage over the last week providing additional details);
- (c) as well as **creative and content alterations** (removing some of the confusion around eligibility which had partially fuelled questions of legitimacy).

## Wave 2 final recommendation:

The learning related to legitimacy should, however, remain a focus throughout launch.

There are three recommendations in this regard:

1. Other communication mediums, such as PR, should contribute to the campaign's legitimacy by raising awareness of the elements of package and its intended purpose.
2. The media buy (particularly for TVC, but also for press and radio) must focus on reach rather than frequency.
3. Explicit content should be available on the website to support legitimacy (as per previous recommendations on website content).

# Final recommendations

8

Absence of explicit link to the carbon price leaves unanswered questions about campaign legitimacy. If people spontaneously draw a 'natural' linkage to **carbon pricing**, the campaign is legitimised ... but there is a risk that negative 'interference' messaging will erode this.

## Wave 1 learning:

On average, only 1 or 2 people per group spontaneously linked the campaign / HAP with carbon tax.

When this link is made in 'natural conversation', the majority seem to 'accept' HAP the campaign on this premise.

However, this research suggests that if the link is drawn by the media (negatively)

...this could, in turn, negatively impact receptiveness to HAP and the campaign as, for some, it indicates an intentional omission of 'the obvious'.

## Wave 1

### recommendation:

Referencing carbon pricing can be addressed through other communication mechanisms and does not necessarily need to be a part of this campaign.

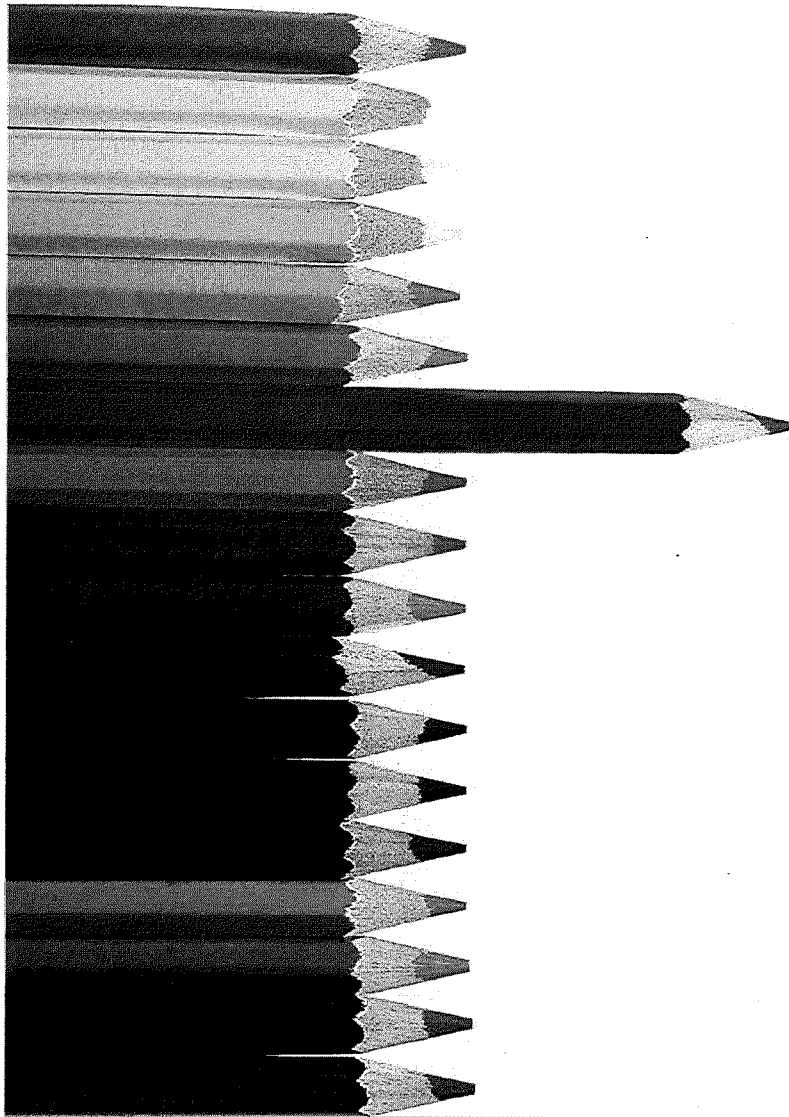
We do, however, recommend that the link is referenced, even if external to the mass media campaign.

This will help reduce the risk of backlash for what is considered (to some) 'intentionally avoiding the obvious'.

## Wave 2 update and final recommendation:

The extent to which 'natural links' to carbon pricing are made, following exposure to the communications, remain.

1. Linking HAP to carbon pricing via other communications should not be avoided – and should be incorporated to other forms of communications where considered appropriate.
2. A specific reference to the package's link to carbon pricing should be indicated on the website such that it is not considered an intentional omission of detail.



# **Additional recommendation from Wave 2 testing ...**

## Additional recommendation ...

1

Remove voice over references to **easing pressure**

### Wave 2 learning:

The terminology "easing pressure" within the TVC does not have unanimous support and to some, this indicates 'negativity' and 'ambiguity'. Given its potential polarisation, this phrasing should be amended.

### Wave 2 final recommendation:

1. The alternative expression of "help" / "assistance with everyday expenses" (utilised in the radio voice over and press content) was preferred – and will likely be received more positively by a broader range of individuals. This terminology should be incorporated to the TVC voice over.
2. Importantly, this alteration in voice over within the TVC will not reduce clarity of interpretation of the 'bills fading' creative element – the "easing pressure" terminology was considered separate to this creative link by participants.



# Additional recommendation ...

2

## Key recommended changes to press copy

Revised press copy is provided overleaf, which is based on the following:

*"if you receive a government payment"*: As per previous reference, requires clarification via broad groupings of eligibility to reduce potential confusion.

*"some extra financial relief"*: Some target groups do not perceive their existing payments as 'relief', but rather an 'entitlement'. In addition, the word 'extra' implies it is additional to something already provided.

*"This payment is to last you until next year"*: This requires clarification that it is an 'adjustment' payment, and not a payment to pay for 'all bills' until next year)

*"You may receive"* (on post-it-note treatment): Clarification on 'may' needs to be included.

*"An initial payment from May"* (on post-it-note treatment): Requires the word 'automatic' to reduce the likelihood that people will perceive a need to 'apply'.

*"New tax cuts from July 1"* (on post-it-note treatment): Should be the final bullet point, as the initial and regular payments are considered 'joint'.

## Additional recommendation ...

2

Key recommended changes to press copy

### Wave 2 recommendation for press copy:

If you currently receive a government payment for seniors, families, parents, or individuals, some help from the Australian Government could be headed your way. You could be one of the millions of Australians who will automatically receive an initial payment in your bank account from May 2012.

This payment is an adjustment to last you until next year when, from March, this extra assistance will be added to your regular government payment.

It's the first part of the Government's Household Assistance Package.

*(Post it note treatment):*

The Household Assistance Package includes:

- An initial, automatic payment (from May 2012)
- Additional assistance added to regular government payments (from March 2013)
- New tax cuts (from July 1, 2012)