

About Think Before

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About Think Before

Many of the 650,000 overseas students in Australia are not accustomed to the danger signs in our urbanised society and some have been placing themselves in high risk situations.

Traditional forms of communication to warn students to be aware of their surroundings have had limited success so Victoria Police and key stakeholders elected to try a new digital approach. Accordingly, **Think Before** delivers the message to students via the media with which they spend most of their time – chiefly social media, video sharing sites and SMS – to promote engagement and viral distribution.

Think Before is one of many safety awareness initiatives authored and promoted by police across all states and territories in Australia to help improve the safety of international students. Stakeholders from a wide variety of agencies including Victoria Police, ISANA, Australia Network, government, education and industry have contributed both funds and in-kind services to support it.

The **Think Before** tagline reinforces the message that international students need to be aware of their surroundings, particularly late at night on public transport, and to plan their travel.

Seven **key safety messages** are available in English and 13 other languages (Hindi, Punjabi, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Nepalese):

1. Whenever possible travel in groups. Risk is created by travelling alone.
2. Keep valuables such as mobile phones, laptops and MP3 players out of sight and stay aware of your surroundings when travelling on public transport.
3. Outside of peak times and at night travel in the front carriage of the train with the driver. Where possible do not travel in empty carriages.
4. Check public transport timetables in advance. Avoid long waits on platforms and around public transport hubs. If you do have a long wait stay in well lit areas or near open shops.
5. Walk in well lit areas even if it means your trip is longer.
6. Avoid short cuts through dark isolated areas.
7. If you feel threatened in any way while walking on the street go to a shop or a house with its lights on (if at night) and ask for police to be contacted.

The messages have been packaged into an animated video clip for both online and mobile distribution to international students in Australia and abroad. The animation, which features the culturally neutral student character, 'George', uses a non-confrontational approach to convey core behaviours that will help students avoid threatening situations. Independent research assessed the final stage creative concept to ensure the animation would resonate with students from all nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

The mobile strategy includes a mobile site and free iPhone and Android applications so international students can easily pass the seven safety tips on to increase reach and engagement. To further facilitate the campaign, educational institutions have been invited to promote the initiative to their students, partners and agents.

The campaign runs across digital platforms and is complemented by a social media campaign designed to reach students both here and across the world using existing social media groups, forums, key bloggers, and Twitterati to spread the safety messages.

About the Think Before social media campaign

Think Before – A Student Safety Initiative (www.thinkbefore.com) is a social media-driven campaign designed to improve situational awareness among international students in Australia.

It represents a new way of communicating personal safety information via an animated video clip and text message delivered through media with which students spend most of their time: social networking, You Tube and other video sharing sites, and SMS. This approach recognises that international students are highly competent users of technology and are more likely to respond to information conveyed by these means than via traditional media.

This is the first time that a social media-driven approach has been adopted to help overseas students improve situational awareness. Many are not accustomed to their new environment and a few have been placing themselves in high risk situations in some of Australia's big cities.

This new communications channel for the police and educators demonstrates their commitment to enhancing the safety of Australia's international student community.

The animated safety clip and text-based safety messages feature the character 'George' and have been packaged for distribution on mobile and online platforms.

The web, free mobile applications (Apple and Android) and social media extensions are available in English and 13 other languages that represent the diversity of overseas students in Australia.

The safety messages are designed for viral distribution to the 650,000 international students in Australia and to their friends and families in Asia Pacific, Middle East and Latin America.

The **Think Before** social media strategy engages bloggers, website forum publishers and users, social media, public video sites, Twitter and social bookmarking sites to help spread the word.

More than 50 country/language-specific social MEDIA platforms that are popular among international students' have been targeted. Taking just a few examples in selected countries: China (51.com, Chungo, Kaixin001, Netease, QZone, Renren, Sina, Sohu, Tianji, Tianya, Taisha, Tigtag, Xiaonei, Zhanzuo); Hong Kong (Discuss, UWant); India (Bharat Student, Hi5, NGOPOST, Orkut); Indonesia (FUPEI, Kafe Gaul, Kaskus, OZMate); Japan (2Channel, Gree, Mixi); Malaysia (eKewan, Ruangz); the Philippines (Eskwela, Ok Pare); Saudi Arabia (brg8, hawaaworld, Te3p); Singapore (FunkyGrad, Plurk); South America (badoo, Orkut, taringa.net); South Korea (CyWorld, Daum Café, Naver Café, Renren); Taiwan (Buboo, Wretch); Thailand (Dek-d, Pantip, Sanook).

Think Before is also targeting non-country specific social MEDIA sites in various languages – that will encompass the countries mentioned above as well as Nepal and Vietnam – including Facebook, Friendster, Hi5, Jaiku, Linked-In, MySpace, Plurk, Pownce and Twitter.

The **Think Before** animation has also been uploaded to video sharing sites in a variety of languages including YouTube, Photobucket, Metacafe, Vimeo, Yahoo Video and Daily Motion. To aid users in accessing the information and sharing, social bookmarking sites such as Digg, StumbleUpon, BuzzFeed and Yahoo Buzz are also being employed.

About the Think Before animation and digital executions

The **Think Before** animation (see www.thinkbefore.com; mobile <http://m.thinkbefore.com>; or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaKOZvEH1tU> portrays 'George', a fictional character designed to resonate with international students in Australia. The animation is based on seven key personal safety messages endorsed by the police.

In the 60 second clip we see George encounter a series of incidents in which his attention is anywhere but where it should be. Listening to his iPod, he walks alone down a dark alley, waits for half an hour on a deserted platform, rides in an empty train carriage while using his laptop (and still wearing his iPod!), and is followed out of the station by two thugs. Along the way, with nothing more than luck on his side, George avoids becoming a victim of crime. At the end of the clip, George's efforts to impress two girls are thwarted when he drops his kebab filling on his lap, prompting the campaign tagline: '**Feeling lucky? Think Before you Travel.**'

The animation was tested in independently-moderated focus groups of international students from diverse backgrounds in May, 2010, by research company Reality Check. This research study found that the students endorsed the creative and media strategy:

- They recognised most if not all of the key behaviours that should be adopted to stay safe, particularly the importance of continual situational awareness;
- They agreed that the issues raised were clear and relevant to international students;
- Students were not unduly alarmed nor had their expectations of being a victim of crime raised, believing the campaign made a serious point with a bit of humour;
- They felt positive about the initiative and were willing to promote it to their peers; and
- Students found George an acceptable, fun, and neutral character.

Think Before animation and supporting messages are designed for viral distribution across web, mobile, SMS, public video sites and social networking platforms. The mobile extensions contain links to the moving animation plus the seven key safety tips in English and 13 other languages.

Credits

Brand Creation and Animation	Hackettfilms Director/Scriptwriter: James Hackett Producer: Libbie Doherty Character design and 2D animation: Leo Nguyen 3D modelling: Ben Wright, Lissa Brown 3D animation/compositing: Ben Wright Think Before identity: James Hackett and Chris Tan Composition: Gary Sinclair, Tactile Music Sound effects and mixing: Zig Zag Lane
Website	TigerSpike Producer: Matthew Rugers Junior Producer: Kavita Nambiar
Android/ Apple apps Mobile site	Locatrix Interaction Designer: Sherwin Huang Developer: Sam Collins

Think Before Partners

The campaign is supported both financially and in-kind by peak education bodies and Commonwealth and state government agencies, including:

Gold

Victorian International Directors' Committee (VIDC) representing:

- Australian Catholic University
- Deakin University
- La Trobe University
- Monash University
- RMIT University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- The University of Melbourne
- University of Ballarat
- Victoria University

Australia-China Council (DFAT)

Australia-Malaysia Institute (DFAT)

Council on Australia Latin America Relations (DFAT)

Navitas

IDP Education Pty Ltd

University of NSW

Queensland Education and Training International (QETI)

Victorian Multicultural Commission

Victorian Government Department of Justice, Victim Support Agency

Telstra

Silver

Victoria University

Pearson Australia

DET International, NSW Department of Education & Training

ETS TOEFL

Campus Living Villages

UTS: Insearch

Education Adelaide

Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Victoria

Perth Education City

The Council for Australia-Arab Relations (DFAT)

Australia-Korea Foundation (DFAT)

Australia-India Council (DFAT)

Bronze

Hobsons Asia Pacific

National Australia Bank Limited

OSHC Worldcare

Universities Australia

Latrobe University

RMIT Village

RMIT University

Swinburne University

University of Melbourne

Deakin University

Monash University

Australian Catholic University

University of Ballarat