



# ‘Nudging’ visitors to notice Safeswim signs



## Trial increases in-depth engagement by 769%

Dr Jesse Allpress, Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU), Auckland Council

### Background

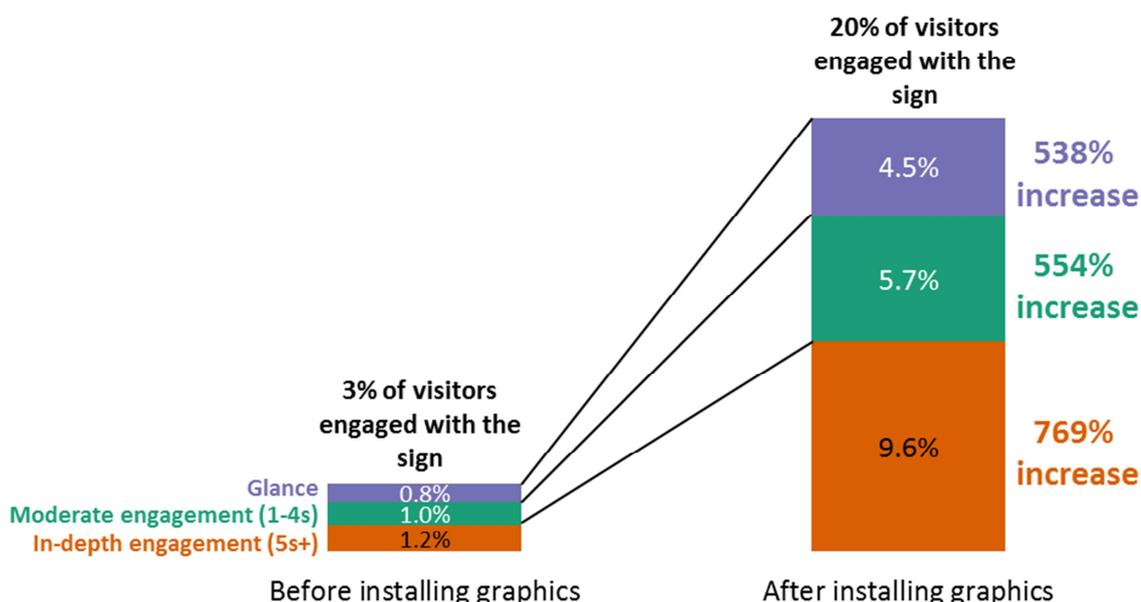
Safeswim’s digital signs provide real-time water quality and hazard information to Auckland beach visitors. The information helps Aucklanders to avoid hazards and becoming sick when swimming. However, our evaluation of the 2017/2018 Safeswim programme found that awareness of the new digital signs was low.

RIMU conducted a trial at Mission Bay in December 2018 to see whether the placement of pavement graphics leading to the digital sign would encourage more people to notice and read it. This approach is in line with the principles of behavioural insights, and is often referred to as a ‘nudge’.

### The trial

Colourful jandal-shaped graphics were designed to grab beach visitors’ attention and some contained written messages to pique interest (shown in the header image above). Visitors’ who walked past the in the hours immediately before and after placing the jandals were observed to see if they engaged with the sign (483 visitors were observed before and 314 after).

The graphics resulted in a significant increase in engagement with the sign. Notably, there was a 769% increase in the number of visitors who looked at it in some depth (i.e. spent five or more seconds looking).





## What we learned

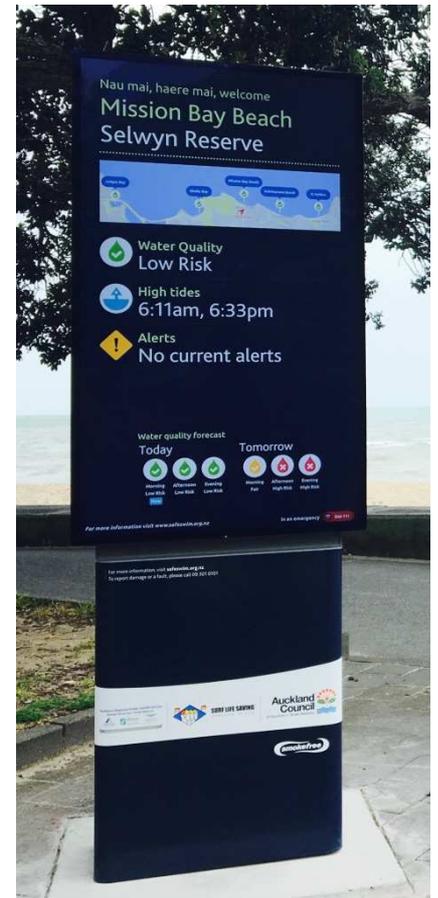
The trial showed that the use of inexpensive ‘nudges’ can have substantial impacts on behaviour. In addition:

- People were much more likely to notice the jandals if they walked directly over them.
- The jandals appeared to become less effective as the area surrounding the sign became busier and noisier, and other stimuli competed for visitors’ attention.

## Implications for future use of nudges

These findings suggest that other Safeswim signs would benefit from employing some form of nudge to encourage people to notice and engage with the sign. The following are recommended:

- Ensure pavement graphics fully cover visitors’ ‘lines of travel’ near the time (i.e. make sure graphics extend to the edge of the walkway), to increase the likelihood of visitors noticing the nudge.
- Ensure the nudge is appropriate for the context – noisy/busy environments may need ‘louder’ nudges, whereas subtle nudges may be more appropriate for quieter environments.
- Consider how visual, auditory, and sensory nudges might be used together to increase effectiveness.



Find out more: email [jesse.allpress@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:jesse.allpress@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

Read the 2017/2018 Safeswim evaluation report: <http://www.knowledgeauckland.org.nz/assets/publications/TR2018-004-Safeswim-impact-evaluation.pdf>