Google Ads year in review

Eight numbers from 2026, where to find them, and what they usually mean. Thirty minutes to decide: keep, fix or stop.

> **Set the dates first.** At ads.google.com, click the date picker (top right) and choose 1 Jan 2026 to 31 Dec 2026, or to today. Every number below uses that range. If someone else runs your ads, send them this page and ask for the eight numbers by 15 January.

Where to click

Report	Path and what to look at
Campaigns	Left menu: Campaigns. Columns icon, Modify columns, add Cost, Conversions, Cost / conv., CTR, Conv. rate and Search impr. share. Read the totals row.
Search terms	Campaigns, then Insights and reports, then Search terms. Sort by Cost. This is what people actually typed, which is often not what you bid on.
Conversions	Goals, then Conversions, then Summary. Calls, forms and bookings are conversions; a page view is not. If page views are counted, your cost per conversion is flattering you.
Auction insights	Campaigns, tick a campaign, then Auction insights. Who you bid against and how often they outrank you.
Change history	Left menu: Change history, filtered to 2026. A near-empty list means nobody has been managing the account.

The eight numbers that matter

Numbers 1 to 6 come from the Campaigns totals row. Numbers 7 and 8 come from the Search terms report.

#	Number	Your 2026 figure
1	**Total spend**	$
2	**Conversions** (calls + forms + bookings)	
3	**Cost per conversion**	$
4	**Click-through rate** (CTR)	%
5	**Conversion rate**	%
6	**Search impression share**	%
7	**Top 3 search terms by cost**	
8	**Wasted spend estimate** Sort by Cost, scan the top 50, add up terms that could never become a customer: wrong suburb, jobs, DIY, brands you don't sell	$

What the numbers usually mean

Plain rules of thumb for Australian service businesses running search campaigns. Your industry may sit higher or lower; the point is to know which way you're facing.

Number	Usually fine	Usually a problem, and the likely cause
Cost per conversion	Under 20% of your average job value	Over 40%, or you don't know your job value. Start with the job value.
Click-through rate	Over 5% on search campaigns	Under 3%: the ads or keywords don't match what people type.
Conversion rate	Over 8%	Under 4%: the landing page, not the ads, is usually the issue (Door 12).
Search impression share	Over 60% on your core terms	Under 30%: budget or bids too low to matter, or targeting too broad.
Wasted spend	Under 10% of spend	Over 25%: negative keywords haven't been added in months. Fastest saving in the account.
Change history	Changes most weeks	A handful all year: the account is on autopilot.
What counts as a conversion	Calls, forms and bookings only	Page views or "engaged visits" included: real cost per lead is much higher than shown.

IF YOUR CAMPAIGNS ARE PERFORMANCE MAX

The search terms view is limited: Google shows grouped "search categories", not the actual queries, and you can't add negatives the normal way. Treat the wasted-spend line as unknown. The better starting point for 2027 is keyword research: list the 10 to 20 searches that bring paying jobs and decide whether a standard search campaign on those would be easier to measure and control.

Three outcomes

- **Keep.** Cost per conversion is fine and impression share is low: you're leaving jobs on the table. Raise budget on the campaigns that convert, not across the board.
- **Fix.** CTR is fine but conversion rate is poor, or wasted spend is high: the account needs a month of work, not more money.
- **Stop and reset.** You couldn't find half these numbers: conversion tracking is probably broken. Nothing can be judged until it works, so fix that first.

KEEP, FIX OR STOP? YOUR ONE DECISION FOR 2027 ADS:

Want us to read the account for you?

A JOGO Google Ads audit is $550 + GST, and free when a 3-month campaign starts in February or March (Door 24).

tidycal.com/ming/lets-jogo