

INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Organisation: Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
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Date Received: 7/4/2008

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4 April 2008



PORT MACQUARIE
HASTINGS

Mr Bjarne Nordin
Slaysafe Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Nordin

Young Driver Education and Safety Programs Submission

Please find enclosed a submission from Port Macquarie-Hastings Council in relation to the enquiry into Young Driver Education and Safety Programs.

Should you require further information please contact Councils Road Safety Coordinator, Karen Thompson on PH: 02 6581 8656.

Yours sincerely

Cliff Toms
Technical Services Manager

Inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education Programs

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Situated 420km north of Sydney, the Hastings boasts one of the best climates in Australia as verified by CSIRO research.

Port Macquarie is the focal point of the Hastings area and the regional centre of the Mid North Coast of NSW. The Hastings covers an area of 3693 sq km, from Comboyne and Mt Seaview to Wauchope in the west, Kew, Laurieton, North Haven and West Haven in the south, Bonny Hills, Lake Cathie and Port Macquarie in the east and Telegraph Point in the north.

The Hastings has gone through a renaissance in recent years with new urban design, streetscapes and waterside parks catering not only to visitors, but also to a rapidly growing resident population. The extent of entertainment, activities and cultural life has contributed to Port Macquarie being appointed the prestigious Fourth City of the Arts.

Demographics

The population of the Hastings has grown approximately 36% over the previous 10 years. These figures show the Hastings area to have one of the fastest growing populations in Australia with a growth rate of almost double that of the nation's average.

The median age of the Hastings is 43 years and the area has a large proportion of elderly residents with approximately 24% of the population over the age of 65 years. A large number of these residents are retired.

The Hastings is the traditional country of the Birpai Nation. Four Local Aboriginal Land Councils have areas within the Hastings local government boundaries. Birpai and Bunyah have headquarters in Port Macquarie and Wauchope respectively, while Kempsey and Taree/Purfleet border on the Hastings to the north and the south.

Driver Statistics 2007-Learner, P1 and P2 (Preliminary)

In the Hastings Local Government Area there are:

Learner Drivers- 1,843
P1 Licence Holders- 1,547
P2 Licence Holders- 1,736

1. Incidence of Road Crashes

Number of motor vehicle controllers involved in crashes, licence status, degree of crash

Crash Data -01 Jul 2002 to 30 Jun 2007

Licence Status	Fatality	Injury	Non-injury	Total
Learner	1	13	14	28
Provisional	6	123	247	376
TOTAL	7	136	261	404

Fatal 17 – 25 years

Age group	YEAR					Total
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
17- 20	1	1	3	2	1	8
21-25	1	2	0	1	2	6
TOTAL	2	3	3	3	3	14

Injury 17 – 25 years

Age group	YEAR					Total
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
17- 20	27	32	37	27	30	153
21-25	19	30	32	13	24	118
TOTAL	46	62	69	40	54	271

Non casualty (tow away) 17 – 25 years

Age group	YEAR					Total
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
17- 20	55	57	55	57	50	274
21-25	20	34	22	22	32	130
TOTAL	75	91	77	79	82	404

2. The availability and appropriateness of current diversionary and educational programs for young offenders involved in serious traffic violations.

TOP (Traffic Offenders Program)

There are many traffic offender programs and driving education programs that operate through out New South Wales. The TOP is implemented in Port Macquarie by the Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Centre. A letter from the Neighbourhood Centre is attached including their program evaluation.

The Traffic offenders program is an option to magistrates where a person has not yet been sentenced for a traffic offence. It is also used by the Probation and Parole Service in the management of traffic offenders who are on existing probation or parole orders.

An increasing number of people are enrolling in the program on the advice of their lawyers before appearing in court to demonstrate to the magistrate that they are serious about improving their driving behaviour. The traffic offenders program is designed to increase peoples understanding of their social obligations, particularly where they relate to traffic laws. When sentencing a traffic offender, a magistrate may take into account any changes of attitude displayed since they attended the driving education program.

3. Initiatives to improve young driver safety

Issues

Young drivers are still over-represented in fatalities and crashes. The research shows that the main safety issues for young drivers are:

Inexperience

Youth and being young

Dealing with challenging driving conditions – late night driving and multiple passengers

Drink driving and drug driving

Driving while fatigued

Mobile phone use

Disobeying road rules, particularly speeding, tailgating and giving way.

Lack of late night alternative transport options (rural communities)

Developing safety in young drivers

Initiatives and programs to focus on are:

Encouraging learner driver experience, with an emphasis on the 120 hours driving practice

School and community education programs (to be consistent)

Licence tests

Continue the Licence restrictions that minimise high risk driving

Penalties and incentives to encourage safer driving

4. The efficacy of young driver education programs and the potential for the development and expansion of these programs, subject to proper evaluation.

Many community and government groups in the Port Macquarie-Hastings continually strive to reduce the incidence of young driver involvement in road related crashes. Council placed an advertisement in the local news paper as well as wrote letters to community organisations and groups to ascertain the level of Young Driver Education Programs that are currently been implemented. An outline of these programs is below.

YOUNG DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

A. RRISK (Reduce Risk Increase Student Knowledge)

The RRISK program, first developed in 1999, has grown rapidly in response to demand. It initially involved 300 students from 9 high schools and in 2007 over 3,500 year 11 students from 43 North Coast high schools were invited to participate.

This was the first year that students from schools in the Clarence Valley and the Mid North Coast were offered RRISK. Seminars for students were held in Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie as well as in Lismore and Tweed Heads.

The RRISK program offers students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills required to reduce risk taking behaviour associated with alcohol and drug use, driving and celebrating. The aim of the program is to assist students to make informed decisions that will reduce potential harm and injury. RRISK targets year 11 high school students who are most likely to be learner and/or provisional drivers.

The major themes of the RRISK Program are:- Know the Facts, Make Informed Decisions, Minimise Risky Choices, Plan Ahead and Look After Friends.

RRISK offers timely education on issues appropriate to the developmental stage, social life and concerns of adolescents. It provides a framework for an integrated response to minimising the harms associated with alcohol, drugs, driving and other potentially risky behaviours.

The RRISK program involves a range of strategies including skills based learning, support for the senior Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) curriculum, newsletter inserts, professional development for teachers and peer leadership training for students. Professional Developments seminars are also offered to parents, teachers, health and welfare professionals and community workers as part of the seminar program.

The key initiatives of the RRISK program are: the RRISK seminars held in November and December each year. The seminars are multi strategic, with a range of exciting sessions designed to engage young people. Students are involved in planning the presentations to ensure that RRISK is relevant and empowering to adolescents. Over 200 students are trained each year as peer educators to help other students understand and reduce risks. Peer educators are a vital part of the RRISK Seminars and are also encouraged to promote the program in and out of school.

The seminars include a keynote address from Paul Dillon, Drug and Alcohol Research and Training, Australia. Paul is an expert in communicating with young people on alcohol, drugs and risk taking. There are sessions on young driver and passenger safety and how to buy and maintain a road worthy car. The day's activities culminate in a "crash scenario" involving police, ambulance and SES and a powerful presentation by a young man who has been permanently injured as a result of a motor vehicle crash involving alcohol and drugs.

Stakeholder Engagement/Consultation

RRISK is managed by a dynamic intersectoral partnership including Health Promotion-North Coast Area Health Service, Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Office, Lismore City, Tweed, Ballina, Coffs Harbour City, Port Macquarie-Hastings and Nambucca Shire Councils, Coffs Harbour PCYC and NRMA. The program is sponsored by Southern Cross University, Motor Accidents Authority and supported by the RTA, NSW Police Force, Ambulance Service and State Emergency Services.

RRISK Evaluation

In 2002 the Motor Accident Authority funded a comprehensive evaluation of RRISK with four key components:

Survey of student knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (KAB)

Independent survey of RRISK partnership

Teacher/school involvement which resulted in a Checklist of activities for schools

A driver injury and infringement outcomes study (part of a state-wide survey).

Student knowledge, attitudes and behaviour was evaluated via pre/post comparison involving 4,701 students in 21 intervention and 19 comparison schools. This revealed a high prevalence of risk taking behaviours and a positive effect on seminar attendance 3-4 months after the seminars.

At baseline more than 60% engaged in some binge drinking (6+ standard drinks per occasion). One third failed to wear a seatbelt at least once, 23% rode with an alcohol-impaired driver, 23% rode with a drug-impaired driver and 9% had been alcohol impaired when driving. Respondents got so drunk they felt ill at every fourth party they attended.

Key improvements in student behaviour

At follow-up, students who attended seminars reported significantly improved protective partying behaviours, compared to non-attendees, 3-4 months after the event.

Maturation and other variables were adjusted for.

RRISK Seminar attendees versus non-attendees:

Planning a safe return from parties - (25-29%)

What to check when buying a used car to ensure it is safe - (17-23%)

Being contactable by parents guardians - 17%

Agreeing to "always inform friends where I am" - 10%

Looking out for friends so they don't get too drunk or stoned - 8%

Agreeing to "good parties- don' need alcohol or drugs" - 8%

Checking that the driver is not drunk before getting into the car - (6-8%)

To view the full evaluation report, go to:

<http://www.ncahs.nsw.gov.au/alcohol/index.php?pageid=1264&siteid=206>

RRISK is an effective health promotion project, which is readily transferable to other areas.

B. Graduated Licencing Scheme (GLS)

Young drivers are three times more likely to be involved in casualty crashes. That's why the RTA introduced a new licensing scheme, with more supervised driving practice for learner drivers. All States and Territories are working in similar and different ways to address the 'young driver problem'.

We are aiming to inform learner drivers about factors that increase the risk of crashes, and to encourage cooperative partnerships between parents/carers and the learner drivers.

To help parents in supervising learner drivers, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, in conjunction with the RTA has set up 2-hour workshops for parents, which offer practical advice on how to help learner drivers become safer drivers.

This scheme encourages beginners to gain their initial driving experience under conditions that involve lower risk. The learner driver is then introduced in stages to more complex driving situations.

C. Mid North Coast Night Rider

Although this program is not a driver education program it is an intervention program which has achieved a reduction in the amount of drink driving and crime related incidents in the Local Government Area over 5 year period.

This late night bus service was developed in response to the high level of drink driving in the Council area, along with a number of drink walking incidents. As with many regional areas, there were no late night transport options to assist people with getting home after a night out. In response to these concerns, Council and the Hastings Liquor Accord worked together on developing and implementing a late night bus service during the summer holiday season. This project was highly commended at the 2006 IPWEA Road Safety Awards for its clear identification of the local road safety issue, not only through crash statistics but also through observational surveys and police intelligence. The use of local networks was excellent and it has been very effective in gaining longer term support from the community. The Night Rider program has been transferred to other regional areas.

D. Aboriginal Road Safety and Licensing Program

The Aboriginal Road Safety and Licensing Program was planned and developed in consultation with a number of agencies dealing in health, employment, family, culture, transport and crime prevention. The program assists Aboriginal people to obtain their drivers licence and provide them with the knowledge and skills to maintain this licence. The program presented road safety information during a two day workshop. The workshops aimed to foster and promote service delivery of existing programs and reduce the cost of road trauma and injury accidents. The program has provided direct outcomes including employment and greater community mobility. The Aboriginal Road Safety and Licensing Program won the 2006 IPWEA Excellence in Road Safety for its identification of a local issue and road safety partners, innovation and coordinated planning. The participation rates and outcomes were excellent with clear plans for future expansion outlined. Award judges noted that the project has the potential to deliver road safety benefits into the future.

E. The Power of Choice

The Power of Choice is a community program designed to assist young drivers and passengers to make the right choice whilst they are in a motor vehicle. The program is not a 'how to drive' program. Throughout the presentations students are constantly reminded that choosing the right attitude is their decision.

Students are shown the consequences of making the wrong choice. The presentation runs for approximately three hours on a rotational basis.

Presenters are:

Emergency Services (SES or Rural Fire Service)

Police
Local Court Magistrate
Accident Victims
Ambulance Officer
Automotive Professional
Driver Educator

The 'Power of Choice' is targeted to Year 11 students.

6. Any other relevant matters

Young Driver education programs are all to be complimented, because at the end of the day it is the community, government, parents and teachers concerned about our young drivers and trying to keep them safe from harm (i.e. fatality or injury accident).

Education is the key component of all programs. But we need to ensure that the information that is delivered to our young drivers remains consistent.

Additionally, having a licence is a privilege not something to be taken lightly. A licence is a commitment not just for our young people but all road users. Obtaining a licence is like an apprenticeship system for new drivers- they gain the experience under less risky driving conditions before graduating to an open licence.

Hacker's Driver Training

31-10-07 043

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In Association with; Driver Training **Solutions** for Senior Drivers

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*Commercial Driving Instructors Course-TAFE: Tutor/Assessor of Driving Instructors Course-TAFE: B.M.I Course-TAFE:
Member of the Australian Driver Trainers Association of NSW*

24 October 2007

Karen Thompson
Road Safety Coordinator
Port Macquarie – Hastings Council
PO Box 84,
Port Macquarie 2444

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31 OCT 2007	
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Cabinet	PROGRAMS
Binder	PUBLIC EDUCATION

Dear Karen,

Re; Inquiry into Young Driver Safety & Education Programs

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Council with my comments on the Term of Reference for the New South Wales Staysafe Committee's inquiry.

Driver Education has been a part of my life for the past eighteen years. During that time I have become aware that more needs to be done to help young drivers understand and achieve proficient driving skills and adopt a sensible attitude towards their driving. In dealing with the Term of Reference, I would like to make the following comments.

- a. The current incidence of road crashes involving young drivers in NSW is everyone's responsibility. It is easy to place the blame on governments and in many ways they are partly responsible. However parents need to show more duty of care towards the young drivers in their family. They have to lead by example by driving in a responsible manner when their children are accompanying them in a motor vehicle. All young people begin their driver education the first time they travel in the family car. Further more, it is irresponsible for any parent to allow their eighteen or nineteen year old son or daughter full use of a vehicle, without full knowledge of where that vehicle might be going and who the occupants might be.

- b. The underlying risks and major factors contributing to road crashes have become clearer in recent years. Some of the main problems involving younger drivers include;
- poor attitude
 - peer pressure
 - in- sufficient and good quality professional driver training
 - a lack of quality experience time during the learner licence stage

Community programs such as the "Power of Choice" help to impart a sound message regarding attitude in the minds of young drivers. This has to date proven to be very successful in the Port Macquarie – Hastings area. After a number of road fatalities involving young drivers in this region in 2004, the "Power of Choice" program was introduced into the local High Schools. Since that time not one road fatality has occurred involving a "P" Pate driver in this area. This program has now been extended to include our older drivers under the heading of "Power of Choice for the Senior Drivers".

- a. The difference in driver behaviour, crash outcomes and relevant trends in urban and rural areas of NSW, is not something I have a lot of knowledge about. However, I do believe young drivers in urban areas are more likely to have more professional driving training than those in rural areas, due to the different driving environments.
- b. The availability and appropriateness of current diversionary and educational programs for young offenders involved in serious traffic violations are of the utmost importance to help change a poor attitude towards driving.
- c. As already mentioned, young driver education programs such as the "Power of Choice" program, have proven very effective in this area. The potential to extend this throughout NSW would be very simple now that there is material available on how to run such a program, including a DVD accompanied by written guidelines to assist others in putting on their own presentations. Evaluation forms filled in by students after witnessing this program overwhelmingly support the success of the "Power of Choice" presentations. A couple of reasons for its success include a good balance of professional presenters and not running for too long (3 hours).
- d. Other initiatives that would help to improve young driver safety would be;
- the improvement in the standard of tuition offered by professional driver trainers.
 - driving instructors to be monitored more closely in the way they deliver their lessons to clients
 - more emphasis is to be put on road driving skills such as corning and steering techniques, use of gears in the automatic as well as the manual vehicle and less reliance on the parents (*for too long, people have been receiving the incorrect tuition from those who had never been taught correctly to drive themselves*)

- e. In summary, my believe is that young drivers require;
- more professional tuition (*Particularly in the early stages*)
 - the benefit of programs such as the "Power of Choice"
 - a driving test that takes in more than a "drive around town"

Driving Instructors need to be;

- better trained and monitored
- more accountable

The new longer on-road testing system recently introduced should help to overcome some of the problems of the past. It is hoped, this will help the RTA testing officers to evaluate applicants with greater accuracy.

While this inquiry is only dealing with the young drivers, I would like to comment on the recently released paper from the RTA concerning the aged driving test. Should the RTA stop compulsory testing of our senior drivers we are going to have many unsafe drivers on the road. The current test system helps to provide checks and balances on the senior drivers and should remain.

I trust this will be of some assistance to you in forming your submission for the New South Wales Staysafe committee.

Yours faithfully



Barry Hacker

-1-11-07 021

Port Macquarie
HASTINGS COUNCIL

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- 1 NOV 2007

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OK KAREN THOMPSON² (Sister New) ASKS FOR INPUT INTO DRIVER EDUCATION FOR THE YOUNGER DRIVERS AND OF COURSE LEARNERS. I WAS A PROFESSIONAL DRIVER UNTIL ILLNESS INTERRUPTED ME FROM MY WORK. DRIVER OR SAFETY EDUCATION NEEDS TO START VERY EARLY IN A YOUNG PERSON'S LIFE, MAYBE 5, IF NOT 8 YRS OF AGE

ONE WAY IS TO SHOW PROPER DRIVING PROCEDURES IN SAY, 30 SEC ADVERTISEMENTS ON T.V.

I REMEMBER SEEING ADS LIKE THIS ON T.V. WHEN I WAS A KID. BY TEACHING CHILDREN EARLY IT SHOULD HELP THEM UNDERSTAND ROAD SAFETY RULES, ROAD SAFETY SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS AND WHEN THEY REACH SAY 15 YRS OLD THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN THEIR FIRST LESSONS IN DRIVING A MOTOR VEHICLE, WITH OF COURSE COMPETENT INSTRUCTORS.

SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO LEARN IS CONCENTRATE IF SOME ONE IN THE CAR SAYS TO YOU, THE DRIVER THERE'S YOUR FRIEND (WHOEVER) YOU KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD. YOU ARE OUT OF A BUILT UP AREA. YOU ACCIDENTLY PUT THE LHS OF YOUR CAR ONTO THE GRAVEL SECTION OF THE ROAD, YOU DON'T PANIC YOU STAY THERE TILL YOU CAN BRING THE CAR BACK ON THE BITUMEN SECTION WITH ABSOLUTE SAFETY AND DON'T BRAKE HARD ON THE GRAVEL.

LEARN TO DRIVE TO BOTH ROAD AND WEATHER CONDITIONS. THEY SAY THAT THE PACIFIC HIGHWAY IN SOME PARTS IS NOTHING SHORT OF A COFF TRACK.

WELL IF THE ROAD OR HIGHWAY YOU ARE ON IS NOT THE BEST, SLOW DOWN, CONCENTRATE, DON'T DRIVE TOO CLOSELY TO THE VEHICLE IN FRONT, IF THEY NEED TO BRAKE FOR WHATEVER REASON, YOU DON'T WANT TO END UP REAR ENDING THAT VEHICLE.

FLASHING LIGHTS SHOULD BE INSTALLED IN ALL SCHOOL ZONES. IF YOU'RE IN AN UNFAMILIAR AREA YOU DON'T ALWAYS KNOW YOU'RE IN A SCHOOL ZONE.

THE N.S.W. GOVERNMENT CAN FIND MONEY TO WASTE IN DIFFERENT AREAS, SCHOOL ZONE FLASHING LIGHTS SHOULD BE A PRIORITY, AFTER ALL THIS IS THE SAFETY OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AND OF COURSE PARENTS.

THERE ARE MANY ISSUES TO DO WITH ROAD SAFETY. COMMON SENSE MUST ALWAYS BE PRESENT. I THINK WE ARE BORN WITH IT, AND AT A LATER STAGE DEVELOP IT. STRANGELY ENOUGH POLITICIANS DON'T SEEM TO HAVE IT.

THANKING YOU

Neil McArdle



30TH DEC 2007

PH. 0408 632459



ABN: 89 592 910 624

12-11- 07 033

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This Organisation is partially funded by the Department of Community Services Grants program

BOX

- 3 0 2007

6th November 2007

For the attention of:
Ms. Karen Thompson
Road Safety Coordinator
Port Macquarie Hastings Council
PO Box 84
Port Macquarie NSW 2444

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Dear Ms. Thompson,

Re: Young Driver Safety and Education Programs

The Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Centre has been the course provider for the Hastings Macleay Traffic Offenders Program in Port Macquarie for the past six years. Five courses are delivered each year, with an average of 20-25 participants in each course.

This course endeavors to change the attitude of drink-driving offenders, in particular those in the 17-25 year age group. The effectiveness and success of this course is evidenced by the reduction in recidivism, currently under 2%.

In the courses delivered in 2006 and 2007,

*70% of participants were aged in the 17-25 year age group, 81% of those male.

*92% of participants stated that they had "never previously considered the consequences of their actions in relation to safe driving practices"

*at the beginning of each course, 62% stated they "may drink and drive again".

*at the completion of each course, 98% stated that they "would never drink and drive again",

The above questions are included in compulsory questionnaires and evaluations.

Almost exclusively, the participants in the 17-25 year age group initially attend the course only to assist in the reduction of their sentence. They harbour feelings of resentment that a) they were caught, and b) because they know everything about driving already. The traffic Offenders Program was designed to change this attitude by providing an insight into the consequences of unsafe driving habits, including their exposure to people with life-changing injuries caused by unsafe driving practices.

One comment that emerges spontaneously and unsolicited from over 90% of participants is: "I wish I had done this course before I ever got my licence".

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lindy Peck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lindy Peck,
Administrator.
Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Centre Inc.