

INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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**South West Metropolitan
Region**

Submission to the NSW Government Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)

Inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education Programs

SUBMISSION TITLE: Driver Education Awareness Program - DEAP
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The Camden, Wollondilly & Wingecarribee areas have one of the highest rates of road related death and injury in NSW. In 2007, there have been 18 deaths on the roads within Camden LAC, which is second in the state to Lower Hunter LAC. Over 2300 serious traffic offences are reported each year. The Driver Education Awareness Program was developed in late 2003 by members of the NSW Police Force, NSW Probation and Parole Service, Council, and community members who are committed to road safety. The program received, and continues to receive no external funding apart from generous donations from the Business and general community.

The program was designed to increase participant understanding of the social and legal obligations when using our roads and develop skills, knowledge and attitudes in road safety. The DEAP Committee is made up of representatives from the general community, past DEAP participants, personnel from the council, police, probation and parole and members of local road safety groups.

Participant numbers are consistently from 30 to 75. In small rural communities having 75 people commit to attending a 7 week program makes DEAP an extremely significant community event. Many past participants of DEAP have volunteered their time to organising future DEAP programs or have joined local road safety community groups. DEAP has been conducted at least four times per year since 2003 in Wingecarribee, Wollondilly and Camden LGA's with over 500 participants completing the program.

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DEAP is an educational 'theoretical' style program that runs one night per week over 7 weeks with different guest speakers each week. It follows the "consequences" of a major motor vehicle crash, be it fatal or serious injury. The program follows the normal chain of events from when the first call to 000 is received.

The involvement in a collision by;

- Ambulance & Rescue units (injury),
- Police (investigation and legal process),
- Coroner (consequence of collision),
- Council Cemeteries Officer (consequence of collision),
- Police Prosecutor & Defence Barrister (legal process and penalties),
- In-mate from a Correction Centre (consequence of collision),
- Brain and Spinal injury sufferers (consequence of collision),
- Drug and Alcohol Counsellor (education to prevent collision),
- Next of Kin of deceased victims of road trauma (consequence of collision).

DEAP is available to **ALL** members of the community who have a Drivers Licence or are eligible to apply for one within the upcoming twelve months. Approximately 40% of participants are referred to the program by local magistrates. However, unlike Traffic Offender Programs (TOPS) DEAP is also available to all members of the community.

Each of the 7 sessions of DEAP are evaluated by participants. In all four programs the participant satisfaction rating of the sessions has been at 90% or higher

DEAP is evaluated in four key ways:

- Participant satisfaction ratings,
- Participant attendance levels,
- Participant offending or re-offending rates,
- Participant involvement in motor vehicle crashes post attendance.

Evaluations revealed:


- 91% of program graduates have not re-offended within the first six months after completing the program.
- 93% of program graduates have not been the driver at fault in a crash within the first six months after completing the program.
- DEAP has been featured on the 60 minutes TV program
- DEAP has been featured on the ABC's 7.30 report
- Various radio and newspaper articles have promoted DEAP
- Over \$ 6000 has been donated by community members to DEAP
- 3 Councils have supported DEAP with Local Government Road Safety Officer time and or resources
- More than 14 professionals donated their time as guest speakers to each program.

DEAP is being replicated in at least two other regional areas and the potential for development and expansion to other areas is great. There would be no area of the state not touched by road trauma. The program gives a voice to the victims and their families, provides an avenue for the dissemination of education relating to road trauma by emergency service personnel and develops greater community awareness of local road trauma issues. Many parents stated that the program was important in the development of their sons and daughters as drivers.

Attendance at all seven weeks of the program, and completion of assignments after each presentation results in participants being awarded certificates of completion on the final night. A high profile athlete, normally a paralympian who has suffered their injury in a motor vehicle crash, attends to award certificates to participants. This a very important component of the program as it rewards the efforts of participants, recognising their achievement.

In 2005, the Driver Education Awareness Program was awarded 'Most Outstanding Contribution to Community Road Safety in NSW for 2005' by the Professional Association of Road Safety Officers (PARSO)

Submitted for the information of the Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kane', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

John Kane
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Thursday, 29 November 2007