

## **INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Organisation:** Port Stephens Council  
**Name:** Mr Graham Orr  
**Position:** Project Officer, Traffic and Road Safety  
**Date Received:** 30/11/2007

---

116 Adelaide Street, Raymond Terrace NSW 2324  
PO Box 42, Raymond Terrace NSW 2324  
DX21406 ABN 16 744 377 876

Telephone Inquiries:  
**Graham Orr 49 800 431**  
**Infrastructure Planning**

Please Quote File No:  
**PSC2005-4199**

Geoff Corrigan MP  
Chair, Staysafe Committee  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Corrigan

### **Inquiry into Young Driver Safety & Education Programs (Staysafe)**

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007, requesting Council submission addressing Young Driver Safety and Education Programs.

Council is pleased to provide the attached submission outlining the Drive Alive Past 25 program which has been in place since 2001.

Thank you for your interest in Councils program, and should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



For:  
**Graham Orr**  
**Project Officer, Traffic & Road Safety**



## PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL SUBMISSION DRIVE ALIVE PAST 25 - Young Driver Programs



### PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Port Stephens Council has conducted Drive Alive Past 25 since 2001. Over that period approximately 400 young drivers have attended the programs, with 25 places for participants per program. The program runs over 8 weeks as well as driving lessons, requiring the length of a school term commitment from participants.

Port Stephens Council has received a commendation for Drive Alive Past 25 in the Youth Engagement category of the National Awards for Local Government 2007.

Council is presently running three programs per year and expanding due to demand. In 2006, a pilot program for the Karuah indigenous community commenced in conjunction with NRMA, Hunter New England Health, TAFE and the RTA

The organisations involved in the programs include:

- Police ( Lower Hunter & Waratah Highway Patrol)
- SES (Road Crash Team)
- NRMA ( NRMA Country Service Centre, IAG Insurance, NRMA Motoring & Services - Mobile Members Centre)
- RTA (GLS Workshops, Crash Avoidance Space Workshops, Beyond Test Routes)
- Australian Driver Trainers Association ( Holdings Driver Training)
- Wheel Skills Driver & Rider Training (Observation & Awareness, Crash Avoidance Space)
- HEADSTART (Acquired Brain Injury, Community Education Team)

Since 2005 evaluation of the program has been aided by the introduction of Police data monitoring of participants. This is a voluntary permission form, allowing the group of participants to be monitored by Police at the anniversary of the completion of the program. Since inception Port Stephens has experienced a decline in 17-25 year old driver and passenger casualties.

**Commenced pilot program:** May 2001  
**Completion Date:** On-going  
**Target group:** 17-25 drivers and passengers  
**Road safety problem:** Young drivers are over represented in crashes in Port Stephens LGA

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To reduce road trauma in the 17-25 year old age group of young drivers
- To incorporate specific road safety information into the learner licence period for novice and supervising drivers
- To allow young drivers to look beyond testing requirements and experience the realities of driver responsibility.
- To provide a system of evaluation for all participants to help guide the program for future young drivers in the community
- To increase awareness of local road safety issues and introduce young drivers to local community road safety professionals
- To involve community and road safety stakeholders in young driver education
- To promote State road safety strategies at a local level directly to young drivers



## STRATEGIES

### PLANNING

Initial planning took place in 2000, involving stakeholders from the local community and Council. This process set the original framework of the program that still exists today. Funds to commence the program were sought from Council and four local Rotary Clubs and the pilot program commenced in 2001. The pilot program involved 20 participants from the Port Stephens LGA and was held at the Port Stephens Council Administration Building in Raymond Terrace.

The concept involved eight educational sessions held on a weekly basis and four driving lessons from a qualified local driving instructor. The content of these sessions included; Highway Patrol Officers, SES road crash team, Drug and Alcohol councillors, NRMA insurance and car maintenance, Headstart (Acquired brain injury Education team), Driver Awareness, First Aid and Stress Management.

### DEVELOPMENT

Planning continues on a regular basis with Road Safety Officers and Managers with feedback from presenters, participants and parents/supervising drivers.

Since the program's inception Drive Alive Past 25 has benefited from enthusiastic involvement from Council Managers and Councillors. This has ensured the program continues to improve and continues to be relevant to young drivers and community stakeholders.

This process involves attracting committed presenters that are not only knowledgeable but can relate well to young people. This is evident in the fact that most presenters are still involved in the program, six years on.

### PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Keeping the program relevant, also means incorporating current thinking on road safety into the program structure. Some of these areas include; GLS Workshops for supervising drivers, Crash Avoidance Space Workshops, Beyond Test Routes initiatives, Road Safety Engineering awareness component, NRMA - young driver resources using state of the art technology, such as the Mobile Members Centre in rural areas.

### CRASH AVOIDANCE WORKSHOPS

These workshops are conducted during the 7 week program on a Saturday morning. These sessions are optional due to other weekend commitments of participants. The sessions focus on practical crash avoidance measurement in an off road environment. Participants are asked to judge their following distances by walking with instructors in simulated situations. Participants do not drive the vehicle, however they are passengers in the vehicle for demonstrations of emergency braking at 40, 50 & 60 Km/h. This highlights the need for greater following distances when the addition of reaction time, road and vehicle condition and experience are taken into consideration. Further practical tuition is then with an instructor in a one on one basis during the third driving lesson depending on the skill level of the participant.

### DRIVING LESSON COMPONENT

The content of driving lessons has been a process of development of the program. Lessons are only available if program participants attend educational sessions. A participant does not have lesson vouchers issued unless their attendance is satisfactory.

In 2006 a voucher system was introduced to the program which also specified lesson content based on the 'Beyond Test Routes' RTA initiative. The three lesson vouchers include:

1. Observation and awareness



2. Practical road rule implementation and assessment
3. Crash avoidance space with a safe stopping component

These lessons are restricted to automatic vehicles only to allow for concentration on lesson content, there is no time allowed for reverse parking or other manoeuvring test requirements.

## IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION METHODS

### PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

Parental involvement has become an important factor in the success of the program. All parents /supervising drivers are able to attend all sessions except the drug and alcohol session. This allows the young drivers to speak openly with the presenter.

The GLS Workshop is held on this night for parents/supervising drivers in an adjoining room, at the end of the sessions all attendees are brought together to discuss strategies for getting home safely when effected by alcohol.

By having the parents and supervising drivers more involved in the program it has allowed the information in the program to be discussed at home and in car during non professional lessons. This has increased the learning time and quality for the learner driver by better support for the supervising drivers.

### EVALUATION METHODS

The program structure has only changed in minor aspects. The number of sessions has reduced to seven with an optional session. Evaluation has been developed in four key areas

#### 1. Police Evaluation

Programs at the beginning of 2005 incorporated a permission to use licence information for program participants. This form is a voluntary component to evaluating the program. All participants are given the opportunity to be a part of this evaluation tool at the first night of the program when all parents are in attendance.

The information is not retained by police however it does give the program a way of highlighting trends of driving records of course participants. There has been 100% enrolment in this aspect of the evaluation, which is still under development with Police

#### 2. Parent Evaluation

Evaluation of program content has been constantly monitored since 2001. This evaluation for parents/supervising drivers is encouraged both on an informal basis and evaluation forms at the end of the program

#### 3. Participant Evaluation

Participants are asked to complete evaluation forms at the end of each session in regard to retention of key points from the session and general comments on content. At the completion of the course an evaluation form is completed which includes the practical driving lessons.

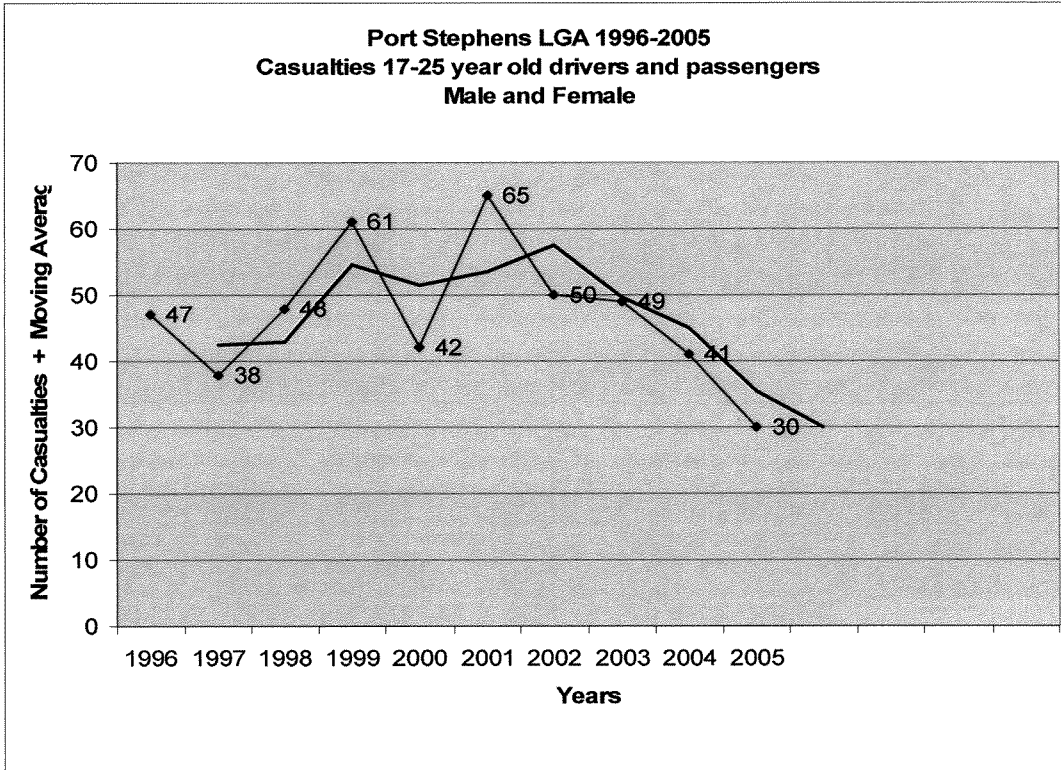
#### 4. Crash Data Evaluation

Port Stephens is experiencing a reduction in casualty rates for 17-25 year old drivers and passengers. This trend is across state and regional statistics due in part to the introduction of the Graduated Licensing Scheme and other initiatives, however as shown the percentage of reduction is significant in Port Stephens local government area.



**EVALUATION OF OBJECTIVES**

1. To reduce road trauma in the 17-25 year old age group of young drivers. *Result:*



2. To incorporate specific road safety information into the learner licence period for novice and supervising drivers  
*Result: Program content allows novice and supervising drivers to access information*
3. To allow young drivers to look beyond testing requirements and experience the realities of driver responsibility.  
*Result: Length of the program allows the driving test aspect to be put into perspective in relation to wider road safety and community issues*
4. To provide a system of evaluation for all participants to help guide the program for future young drivers in the community.  
*Result: Evaluation system is constantly evolving to help guide the program.*  
*Police evaluation trial showed (1) <15Km/h offence for program participants from 2005*  
*(As of 12 month anniversary, 2006)*  
*We are currently awaiting results over 24 month period, which will begin an annual 24 month check on program participants*
5. To increase awareness of local road safety issues and introduce young drivers to local community road safety professionals



*Result: All evaluations comment on this aspect of the program. By meeting Police, SES and road trauma victims gives young drivers an opportunity to develop a more informed opinion*

6. To involve community and road safety stakeholders in young driver education

*Result: The programs have allowed a forum for these stakeholders and direct access to young drivers in an educational environment*

7. To promote state wide road safety strategies at a local level directly to young drivers

*Result: These programs will play an important role in 2007, in explaining the changes to both young and supervising drivers. This helps support the supervising drivers and aims not alienate the young drivers by putting these changes in context with local road safety issues.*

## PROJECT INNOVATION

### KARUAH - DRIVE ALIVE

In early 2006, development commenced on a version of the program for the indigenous community of Karuah, with cooperation of Hunter New England Health, NRMA, RTA, TAFE, Port Stephens Council and the Karuah indigenous community stakeholders. Funds were received from NRMA road safety grants as well as participating stakeholders.

This program focused on young indigenous women associated with the Birra-li birthing unit at the John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle. The goal of this program is to help the program participants gain their learner's licence, assist them in driving experience, and to access general road safety education as well as specific information on indigenous community issues.

Within the 06/07 project year the first group of six participants achieved their learner's licence and commenced driving lessons to gain driving experience with professional instructors. From that group, three attained their provisional licences. One participant has gained employment with the National Parks working in the newly declared Worimi National Park and Conservation Lands.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Port Stephens Council has maintained a commitment to this program in annual budgeting for the program to continue and develop for future young drivers.

Program costs are offset with some presenter's time being donated and participants paying a nominal fee. Driving schools offer a reduced rate to program participants and council.

RTA figures show that the 2005 estimate on injury crashes at \$140 000 per crash to the community. Any contribution to reducing injury crashes far out ways the program costs.

## CONCLUSION

Drive Alive Past 25 has become a very popular program with the local community to the point were the community, by word of mouth, promote future programs to each other with no need for advertising. There have been over 400 participants complete the 8 week program in the seven years since the program began.

Port Stephens Council will be seeking assistance from an independent body to evaluate the program in regards to refinement of program components and affective evaluation methods for future programs.



A community expectation on driver education by road safety stakeholders has been an ongoing issue for decades. Young driver programs have been implemented, assessed and evaluated over many years by many organisations.

There are no set guidelines for community based programs to follow or develop to meet community needs.

A best practice model needs to be established to refine the content and give direction to the many agencies that are asked and expected to provide this service to the community.

Local Government, through Road Safety Officers, can contribute to the coordination and the delivery of programs such as Drive Alive Past 25.

