

**Submission
No 15**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Upper Hunter Shire Council recognises that many joint youth and police programs are run in larger city centres and as such are not available to regional young people. These programs are essential for developing closer police and young people relationships which in turn has an impact on intervening in young people's activities before they become actively involved in crime related activities. These programs however are often not available to young people in rural areas due to the facilities or policing resources not being available. One such program being run by police that has a direct interaction with young people is the NightDrive Learner Drivers Program. While this is focused at driving and road safety it serves a dual purpose of developing relationships between young people and police officers at a time when many young people are still developing their own personality. These programs should not be considered only road safety programs but opportunities to embed police into local communities and develop the relationships with young people that can have long term benefits in the community through reduced crime rates. Unfortunately the above program is not run regionally and young people and their families are not going to travel to Sydney (approximately 4 hours drive) to participate. In order to keep these programs in regional centres and allow police to become involved in regional communities Upper Hunter Shire Council makes the offer to host these programs on land owned and operated by Council. This program for instance could be run at our airport where there are large areas of asphalt road already constructed. We recommend that these programs be considered for regional areas and advise that we are more than happy to provide Council facilities for a pilot program .