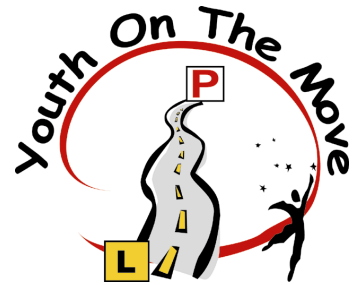


©YOUTH ON THE MOVE

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ABSTRACT

Youth On The Move is an educational young driver program with the focus on improving attitudes and increasing hazard perception. Youth On The Move was developed for the youth of the Cessnock City Council Local Government Area by Cessnock City Council, Samaritan's Jobs Placement Employment & Training (JPET), Kurri Youth Centre and Cessnock Youth Centre & Outreach in an attempt to decrease the incidence of road trauma in the local community.

The program is structured as a 6 week educational course followed by a weekend First Aid course with the provision of 8 Professional Driver Training Lessons taking participants through to the attainment of a Provisional Driving Licence.

The program is conducted in local Youth Centres on 2 campuses in the Local Government Area (LGA) concurrently to provide greater access for participants. Community and stakeholder participation is integral to the success of the program.

Cessnock City LGA has been implementing this program for 3 years with some successful outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The need for road safety education for young people within the Cessnock Local Government Area was brought to the forefront in 1994 following the deaths of seven (7) local teenagers on local roads in 3 separate crashes. A Community Road Safety Team was formed and council supported the team with some initial funding. Council has since participated in the Local Government Road Safety Officer Program and secured a full time Road Safety Officer position to develop and implement educational road safety programs within the council. Youth On The Move was the brain child of two youth workers in the area who were keen to promote safer driving among the young whilst assisting with the provision of licenses to increase employment opportunities. These youth workers approached council to see if a coordinated approach was possible.

BACKGROUND

According to RTA crash data, young people under the age of 25 continue to be over-represented in motor vehicle collisions with alcohol, speeding and fatigue identified as the major contributing factors. A pilot project was developed for implementation at both the Kurri Youth Centre & Cessnock Youth Centre. The project is unique in that it provides a holistic approach to road safety, by addressing both the behavioural and practical components of driving with support from many stakeholders from the wider community.

Research conducted both in Australia and overseas (Monash University 1999 et al) indicates that, education which focuses on increased awareness of the risks associated with driving will have far better results in changing driver attitudes and ultimately improving driver behaviour than will practical driver training alone.

AIMS

The aim of the Youth On The Move program is to:

- a) Educate young and novice drivers about the issues and consequences of driving
- b) Improve road user behaviour and road safety attitudes
- c) Decrease the incidence of risk taking behaviour.
- d) Increase the awareness of drug & alcohol issues and standard drink information
- e) Improve hazard perception
- f) Decrease the incidence of road rage

TARGET GROUP

The program is available to young people between the ages of 16-21 years who meet the following criteria:-



- a) Reside in the Cessnock City Council LGA
- b) Have held a Learner's Permit for 6 months.
- c) Have no outstanding fines with the RTA or Police.
- d) Are available to attend 6 x 2 hour weekly road safety sessions.
- e) Are available to attend a full weekend Senior First Aid Course.
- f) Are prepared to attend an interview as part of the selection process with a supervising driver.
- g) Are willing to be contacted six (6) monthly over the following 2 years to provide information pertaining to their driving history.
- h) Are prepared to pay a nominal cost of \$20 as full payment of the course

STRATEGIES

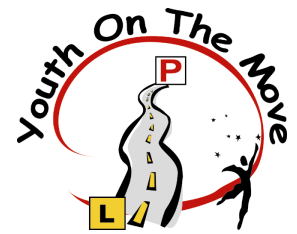
- a) develop an interesting program to educate young drivers about road safety issues
- b) advertise the program throughout the community to ensure equity issues are met
- c) interview potential participants to stress the importance of commitment and gain credibility for the program
- d) timetable all of the road safety sessions to ensure a problem and solution approach
- e) ensure that presentations avoid overly graphic photos & videos
- f) evaluate each road safety session and make modifications as required
- g) provide follow up sessions where needed

INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER AGENCIES

Community and stakeholder assistance is given by the following agencies at the sessions listed:

ROAD SAFETY SESSION and AGENCIES	
Session 1 – 1 hour	Volunteer Rescue Association. – Crash Consequences
Session 2 – 1 hour	Headstart –Acquired Brain Injury
Session 1 & 2 - 2 hour	Peter Meddows – Local Defensive Driving School – Stage 1
Session 1 & 2 – 2 hour	Police – Legal Consequences, Crash Factors, Common mistakes & misapprehensions
Weekend Course – 2 full days	Accidental First Aid or St Johns – Comprehensive First Aid Course
Session 1 & 2 – 2 hour	Hunter Life Education – Alcohol & Other Drugs
Session 1 – 1 hour	NRMA – Insurance, Legalities and Fraud
Session 2 – 1 hour	Registered Psychologist -Stress Management and road rage –
Session 1 – 1 hour	RTA - Licensing, Points and Vehicle Modifications
Session 2 – 1 hour	Peter Meddows – Defensive Driving - Stage 2

NB: Provisions are made for catch up classes in the case of extenuating circumstances and additional provisions are made for those with literacy, access or physical difficulties.



DESCRIPTION OF THE ©YOUTH ON THE MOVE PROJECT

The program is offered to the community through print media advertisements and school newsletters stating the criteria required.

Applicants are then interviewed to ensure suitability and commitment to the program . Selection process is determined by the program development team. Places are then offered to applicants and participants notified.

The key stages of the program are:-

- To successfully gain entry to the program by meeting set criteria and attending an interview.
- Attendance at all six structured interactive road safety driver education sessions.
- Completion of session evaluation sheets at the conclusion of each week's session.
- Successful completion of a weekend Senior First Aid course.
- Completion of practical driving instruction including night, multi-laned, gravel and wet weather driving (if possible).
- Attainment of Provisional driving licence.

Participants are required to complete each stage of the program before progressing to the next.

EVALUATION

Newcastle University's Associate Professor Richard Heath - Head of Behavioural Science Faculty, has conducted research into the project as part of the evaluation process. Newcastle University has forwarded some of the findings of the study.

These showed significant improvements in road safety attitudes in the participants of the *Youth On The Move* program compared to the control group of similar demographics. It also showed lasting benefits in the areas of alcohol education and crash consequences.

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY GROUP REPORT - Discussion paper excerpts:

1. *"The results are promising showing that the YOTM driver education program has changed attitudes, aggression, and risk taking behaviour in a direction that is desirable. These variables have been found as critical links to driver behaviour which are of the ultimate concern in a study by Malfetti, McGrath and DeMeo, 1975 reported in Mann, Vingilis, Anglin, Bleggen (1986)".*
2. *"In regard to the safe driver attitudes the results have revealed that the participants of the Youth On The Move (YOTM) program did improve significantly post test. The post test reveals a large drop in means for the experimental group (significant) and no improvement for the control group."*
3. *"The YOTM program specifically addressed issues around the negative consequences of risk taking, aggression and poor attitudes. This program was found to lead to better intentions around road user behaviour."*

The successful evaluation of the pilot project has ensured the willingness to continue the project in the Cessnock area in future years, depending on availability of funding and community participation.

BUDGET

The Budget associated with each course is \$5,000.

This budget is made up of
Presenter costs & expenses,
Driver training costs,
Certificates,
Folders,
Literature

First aid course costs,
Defensive driving workbooks,
Log Books,
Refreshments,
Key Rings



FUNDING

Funding for the 1999 project was provided by:-

Cessnock City Council	\$5,000-00
Hunter Area Assistance Scheme	\$5,000-00
IMEA (Institute of Municipal Engineers of Australia) Grant:-	\$5,000-00
Samaritans JPET	\$3,000-00

To increase the availability of the program, Council has continued to support the Young Driver Education Program with funds of \$10,000 provided in the 2000/2001 budget. Additional funding opportunities will be sought in 2001/2002.

RESULTS TO DATE

Eight courses have been completed with 127 individuals participating.

Out of these, all 127 have graduated.

Within those courses we have experienced:

100% completion of Road Safety Sessions (Two participants required a catch-up class)

100% completion of the program by participants.

100% success rate in the First Aid Course

100% attained Provisional Driver's Licence (some required the full 8 Driver training lessons, some required less and a few required more. The driving school is prepared to bare the costs of any additional lessons if so required).

Benefits to the applicant successfully completing the course are:-

1. Better educated in the area of Road Safety
2. More aware of hazard perception and crash avoidance.
3. Attainment of a Provisional Driving Licence.
4. Completion of a First Aid Certificate.

These benefits also increase the potential for successful participants to find suitable employment and/or training because of the added credentials of a first aid certificate and driver's licence. The program attracts around 70 applications for each of the programs where only 30 can participate (15 in each youth centre).

Applicants have, in general terms presented well for the interview and informal observations indicated that they were from all spectrums of socio-economic backgrounds. Graduates are keen to participate in follow up evaluation in regard to their driving record and have identified driver intimidation towards learner and provision drivers as a concern. Anecdotal evidence has many graduates praising the program and recommending that other siblings/friends participate.

Community participation has been an integral factor in the success of this project with many road safety stakeholders expressing their willingness to be fully committed to the ongoing program.

CONCLUSION

The Youth On The Move program has gained solid credibility in the community as an effective program to improve road safety attitudes and reduce risk taking behaviour among young drivers. Parents and carers are constantly approaching Cessnock City Council in regard to the timing of future courses. Other councils have expressed interest in taking on the program.

As the program developed and courses were implemented it was decided to develop more community ownership and so a logo was developed for use on Workbooks, Folders, Log books, Key Rings and Presentation Certificates for both participants and supporters.

Although funding is being sought from the wider community Council has recognised the benefits of the program and is keen to continue its support of road safety and in particular young driver education. Promotion of Youth On The Move is effortless with graduates themselves great stalwarts in promoting the course throughout our community.

Overall experience indicates that Youth On The Move is an easily funded, organised and advertised project which receives wide community support. Initial indicators show that it performs to address the target issues.

Youth On The Move an educational approach to young driver education with the focus on improving attitudes.