

Home Alive in Laura and Gladstone (SA)

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Introduction

When undertaking any planning for rural communities, one of the predominant issues repeatedly identified is the lack of public and private transport options available to them. Despite the obvious impact this has for the elderly, the young, and disabled, the Home Alive program was designed to provide transport options for those people who access the local hotels.

The concept for the Home Alive program was developed following a discussion between the local health service and a member of the community. This discussion identified the need to provide a transport alternative for people to return home safely from the local hotels without driving their own vehicle, and therefore reduce the incidence and potential incidence for collisions and subsequent serious injury or death

In the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula there has been around 200 fatalities and 1,500 serious injuries since 2000. Drink driving is a major issue. From 2000-2006, 34% of Mid North drivers/riders killed had a BAC of 0.05 or above. Similarly, over 20% of injured drivers/riders admitted to hospital after a crash has a BAC of 0.05 or above

The Home Alive initiative addresses the issue of drink driving and provision of transport was considered an effective crash prevention measure.

The Home Alive program is designed to build the capacity of the local people and therefore volunteers from the local communities were recruited to deliver the service.

The Home Alive program is provided from the communities of Laura and Gladstone (and includes surrounding communities within a 15 km radius) located in the Southern Flinders region of South Australia. The population of these communities is around 2500 people

The program is jointly supported and funded by the Motor Accident Commission (MAC) and Southern Flinders Health – Laura and Gladstone

Methods

Following the initial identification of the idea, a basic program plan was developed by the local health service, and a small program team was initially developed to provide immediate guidance to the program.

The team sought initial support from key partners including the Northern Areas Road Safety Committee and the Local South Australian Police Officers.

With the project team in place and partners identified it was necessary to identify the resources that were immediately available. It was identified that the local health service had vehicles accessible that were not being used in the evening or

on weekends. It was also identified that the health service had skills in program planning, implementation and management, and that there was also a volunteer coordinator who had the skills to work with and manage volunteers.

Despite the available resources it was identified that financial resources would be required for a range of other considerations including; volunteer coordination time, marketing, fuel, volunteer training as well as general administration of the program. To this end the Motor Accident Commission of South Australia provided grants to community groups and organisations to implement programs that would potentially reduce the both crash rates and serious injury or death as a result of drink driving.

A MAC grant was applied for and subsequently won, with the MAC becoming a key partner in the delivery of the Home Alive program.

Support was obtained from the local hotels in Laura and Gladstone, with an aim that the hotels would encourage patrons to use the “Home Alive” vehicle, and to provide free non-alcoholic drinks and nibbles for the drivers.

Following discussion with the local hotels it was agreed that the service would be provided on a Friday and Saturday evening from 9pm to midnight.

The project group were also keen to ensure that volunteer drivers would not be significantly inconvenienced and therefore it was felt that 1 evening every 8 weeks was not a significant workload for the volunteer drivers and therefore a total of 16 drivers for the two identified communities was set as a target, with an overall aim of 32 volunteers.

Insurance was also identified as a key issue that required clarification. Following advice from the insurance services unit, the program was listed on the health services insurance program.

Results and discussion

OBJECTIVE 1. SPONSORSHIP

Strategy 1 Seek support from the local hotels.

Support was initially received from the North Laura Hotel and the Gladstone Hotel at the commencement of the program, with further support being provided by the Commercial Hotel later in the program. The licensees attended the program orientation and have supported the program by:

- Providing free meals and soft drinks to all volunteer drivers
- Promoting advertising of the program within each of the hotels

- Recruiting volunteers to the program

- The Gladstone Hotel also managed the vehicle keys and volunteer documentation box at the hotel

Strategy 2 Gain access to appropriate vehicles to use.

The health service leases vehicles from Fleet SA, advice sought indicated that as the vehicle is leased for the purposes of running the health service and associated programs, it was appropriate that they could be used for the delivery of the program and therefore there was no issue using health service vehicles

Insurance services informed the health service that as the program is coordinated under the auspice of the health service then appropriate insurance cover is extended to the use of the vehicle

OBJECTIVE 2 . MARKETING –

Strategy 1 32 Volunteers to be recruited for the program by notifying the community of the program through the local newsletter

There has been consistent and regular advertising of the program in the health service and local football newsletters. Program brochures have been developed, authorised and implemented.

A total of 15 drivers have been recruited to the Laura Home Alive Program

A total of 10 Volunteer drivers have been recruited to the Gladstone Home Alive Program

Strategy 2 The service to be well utilised by members of the community

Overall in the 12 month period of April 2007 to March 2008 there were:

- **592 patrons who utilised the service**
- **322 individual trips**

Therefore that is a minimum of 322 individual events where a car was not used to get home, which has reduced by the same number the potential for accidents or deaths related to alcohol consumption.

The target group for this program was young males: the data collected during the 12 month period of April 2007 to March 2008, has indicated that:

69% of those carried were male

28% of the 69% were aged between 21 and 30.

HOME ALIVE VEHICLE USAGE STATISTICS APRIL 07 – MAR 08

	Under 20yrs	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	Over 60	Unspec Age	Total
Male	13	114	63	87	46	41	44	408
Female	8	44	43	31	10	12	12	160
Unspec Sex	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Children	14							14
Total Clients	592						TOTAL	592
Total Trips	322							

AVERAGE WEEKLY TRIPS	= 6
AVERAGE WEEKLY CLIENTS	= 11.5
AVERAGE CLIENTS PER TRIP	= 1.9
AVERAGE CLIENTS PER MONTH	= 46

Feedback

Despite no formal questionnaire, feedback from the hotels/patrons/ community members has indicated continued strong community support for the program as is evident by the patronage. This is reflected in the patronage more in Laura, however there have been a number of local circumstances in Gladstone that have affected the patronage, despite this community support remains strong.

Conclusions

The Home Alive program has become an integral part of the fabric of the community and has been able to demonstrate that in rural communities where public and private transport is not available, the community are willing to support each other to ensure longer term community well being.

With access to existing facilities and resources the Home Alive Program is reasonably simple to implement, self sufficient and low in cost and therefore the model may be easily applied to other small rural communities across South Australia and Australia.

Future Considerations

Given the positive feedback from the community and demonstrated support, (through patronage and verbal feedback) the Home Alive Program will now provide services to the local sporting clubs and facilities.

Support has been obtained from the Motor Accident Commission to further support the program and extend it to provide a service to the Crystal Brook community