

On the Right Track Remote: Road Safety and Driver Licencing on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) and Maralinga Tjarutja (MT) Lands.

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Abstract

'On the Right Track Remote' is a program conceived and delivered by the South Australian Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) to improve licensing outcomes for Aboriginal people living in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) and Maralinga Tjarutja (MT) Lands. An independent qualitative evaluation of the program, including the capture of 'significant change' stories on film of clients, community members and other service providers, was undertaken in 2016 to complement the ongoing collection and monitoring of quantitative data. After only two years of delivery licensing rates have doubled and positive effects are being felt across communities.

Background

The program areas are the in the remote north and west of South Australia. The APY Lands consist of 102,650 km² with a population of approximately 3000 people; the MT Lands 102,863 km² and approximately 100 people.

The Program became possible because of amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act 1959 and a 4-year funding arrangement from July 2014.

Four Program Officers are employed to assist clients to get their driver's licence. Two are authorised to conduct the Learner Theory Test. Professional Motor Driving Instructors (MDIs) are contracted for in-vehicle services. 27 week long trips to the Lands are scheduled each calendar year.

An individual 'case management' approach is used to map a licensing pathway, looking at a client's circumstances, driving experience and history (if it exists) to create achievable goals. Exemptions are applied where appropriate. Clients pay significantly reduced fees at all stages of the licensing process.

Services provided include:

- Learner permit testing
- Instruction by MDIs in program vehicles
- Vehicle on Road Tests to obtain a provisional licence.

Long term measures of success are licensing rates commensurate with those for non-Aboriginal people and no over-representation of Aboriginal people in crash data.

While the Program is focussed on these outcomes its clear message is that having a driver's license is about love for family and care for community.

Evaluation

The info graphic in Figure 1 shows program statistics after 20 months of delivery. Prior to program commencement the licencing rate (across all licence types including Learner's Permits) for Aboriginal people living in the Lands was 17%, compared with 89% of the overall population.

The licensing rate for Aboriginal people on the Lands has now more than doubled to approximately 36%.



Figure 1. Statistics of the ‘On Right Track Remote’ program (after 20 months of delivery)

In 2016 40 significant change stories were gathered from clients and stakeholders on the Lands about the effects of the Program. Communities were involved in choosing the four most significant stories, which have formed the basis of a visual report.

Conclusion and other initiatives

The evaluation’s written report found:

- The program has been highly effective in achieving Aboriginal licensing outcomes and increased culture of safety in communities
- The success of the program is evident in the Program data ... and the collection of systematic qualitative data, showing an undeniable, positive impact on individuals and communities.

It concluded:

“... the Program is outstanding and producing real, sustainable licensing outcomes for Indigenous people. The changes at the individual, family and community levels are significant.

The Program is well planned and implemented and, because it is well managed, it is efficient. There is a clear need for the Program and little overlap with other services available on the Lands.”

Complementary initiatives include:

- supply of child restraints
- supply of tow straps to reduce the practice of seat belts being cut from vehicles for towing
- assistance with Light/Medium Rigid licensing.