

Driving in Sunraysia

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Abstract

Driving in Sunraysia is a dedicated campaign targeting two cohorts; backpackers and itinerant workers, using video presentations, social media, pamphlets and new induction material for labour hire organisations. It provides an emphasis on international driver safety, including identifying key stakeholders, exploring and identifying the most effective forms of communication and disseminating the information. The campaign followed concern in the community after a high number of crashes and fatalities of foreign visitors in the Sunraysia area and of Police information regarding numerous traffic offences committed by backpackers and itinerant workers. Over 2000 people have reached through the video alone and the National Labour Hire Office is using the material for all Sunraysia workers. The result has been a reduction in crashes by itinerant workers in Sunraysia.

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Work commenced in August 2016 in identifying overall visitor numbers and the reasons they came to the Sunraysia Region. Most of the data was available from Mildura Tourist Board. Victoria Police assisted in determining which of the visitors were represented in vehicle crash statistics. It was determined that itinerant workers and backpackers made up the greater number of road accidents.

During October/December, we surveyed Backpacker residences throughout Mildura to determine the demographics, particularly the languages most spoken, their method of transport and the best means of communicating with them. It was observed that most of the Backpackers had an international licence and that ALL of the Backpackers had a smart phone to communicate.

Their method of transport was varied, with some Backpackers residences showing an 80-90% vehicle ownership and others had no vehicles of their own – instead, relying on the accommodation to provide transport for them.

Most of the backpacker hostels had at least one minibus, with some providers supplying the drivers and others letting a Backpacker drive them. The criteria for the Backpacker to be entrusted with driving a vehicle were based on having an international licence and “Looking trustworthy”.

For the second cohort, the itinerant workers, we surveyed farmers and Labour hire offices. From our interviews, it was determined that the National Harvest Labour Office had a great interest in the

road safety aspect and has agreed to incorporate material resulting from this program into the induction of hired labour.

The other main stakeholder is Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC). This organisation is instrumental in the integration and resettling of immigrants and refugees. All language, health, housing, transport and education issues are dealt with by this organisation.

The programme includes a video “Driving in Sunraysia” which is available on social media and on websites of accommodation facilities as well as labour hire offices. The video, whose crew and cast is shown in Figure 1, is supplemented by posters and leaflets, some of which would be included in welcome packages in the Visitor Information centre, at caravan parks and backpackers’ accommodation. The leaflets will also have QR codes which will link to the videos. The brochures are also in Dari and Vietnamese.

We have reached an audience of 2400 and since the launch of the video, there have been no recorded fatalities or accidents.



Figure 1. Driving in Sunraysia crew and cast.