

Full Gear – Community Youth Road Safety Program

Elisa Ryan,

Youth Development Officer, Community Department, Glenorchy City Council, Tasmania.

Abstract

The Full Gear Project was co-designed by young people, a local community house and the Glenorchy City Council and aimed to address unsafe/illegal motorcycle riding and to promote positive road safety messaging in the community. This paper explores how social issues and safety issues can be jointly addressed, the role of social workers and other support organisations in addressing road safety with young people and the impacts on the local and broader community.

Background

The Towards Zero - Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2017 -2026 states that both motorcyclists and young people are vulnerable road users and are over-represented in serious casualties.

The Full Gear Project was established to address the issue of unsafe and illegal trail bike riding and hooning on the streets of Chigwell (a low socio-economic suburb in Tasmania).

Glenorchy City Council (in conjunction with a local community centre) was successful in obtaining a Department of State Growth, Community Road Safety Grant and co-designed a pilot program with young people who were engaging in the target risky behaviours.

Planning and delivery

Consultation with young people revealed that 'cost' of gaining a licence was the primary reason for engaging in unlicensed riding and the resultant high-risk riding behaviours. Rather than assisting with the cost of gaining a licence in isolation, this was used as an opportunity to deliver a road safety program to further the knowledge and skills of participants in riding safely.

The road safety program (delivered over eight weeks) was a mutual exchange of experience and knowledge. Each session explored a topical issue guided by the ideas, knowledge and experiences of the local young participants, supported by experts and community organisations. Threaded into each session was the development of local road safety campaigns and planning for the promotion of the group's message to the community.

In exchange for their contribution, the young people were funded to complete the Pre-Learner Motorcycle Course (\$695.00 per person)

Working with Bucaan Community House, who had already formed a trusted relationship with the participants, enabled visiting services to contribute whilst utilising the support and familiarity of staff known to the young people.

Outcomes and observations

Positive outcomes indicating the success of this program include: completion rates; increase in the number of young people who obtained licences through the program; improvement of attitudes to road safety and an increase in employment.

Verbal feedback also demonstrates that participants have improved self-confidence and sense of importance as change-makers in the community. These personal achievements can manifest themselves into positive behaviours on the road, therefore, creating a safer community.

Three further programs were delivered following the success of the pilot.

Case Study

Jacob, a 16-year-old participant, was successful in obtaining part-time work as a motorcycle pizza deliverer. Jacob's brother has a methamphetamine addiction and often gets violent towards members of the family in his home. Now that Jacob has his licence he has the freedom to be out of the house when situations are volatile. Jacob is extremely proud of his achievement and this is evident in the way he handles himself on the road. He says in his post-program survey "I feel like if I didn't do this course I would have been more likely to ride on the road unlicensed and around the bush and that wouldn't have been good."



Figure 1. Full Gear Billboard Campaign designed by the young participants

References

Department of State Growth, Transport. (2016). *Towards Zero - Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2017-2026*.