

Road Safety Song Competition- See it on DVD

by Aaron Watson

The power of music is being harnessed in the Northern Territory to spread important messages about road safety in remote Indigenous communities. In its second year running, the Road Safety Song Competition took place at the Barunga Cultural and Sports Festival on the June Queen's Birthday long weekend. Indigenous bands from across the Territory made the trip to Barunga, 80km south east of Katherine, to showcase their music and to take part in the competition and Festival activities.



The competition is a fantastic way of encouraging safe road use practices at the Barunga Festival and is proving a success in promoting road safety messages at the grass roots level. Eleven songs were entered in the 2007 Road Safety Song competition, each featuring a unique blend of messages and musical appeal.

The Sandridge Band from Borroloola took out first prize of \$2000 with their song, *Take care when driving along*, which is packed full of road safety messages including reminders to never drink and drive and think about the lives of your passengers.

Warren H Williams from Hermannsburg near Alice Springs was runner-up, winning \$1000, with

Hey you mob which asks people to put their seatbelts on and look out for cars near the road.

Barunga School won the school category, winning \$500 for performing a fantastic song they wrote with well known Indigenous musician Shellie Morris. Kriol, or pidgin English, is used in one of the school's songs and will have wide appeal across the region.

The strong field of entries in the competition builds on the successful roll-out of the winning songs from the 2006 competition on radio and as backing tunes to television and radio commercials. The 2006 competition winner, Reggae Dave, features on road safety television commercials aimed at heightening road safety awareness amongst Indigenous people.

The Barunga Live 2006: Safe Tracks Home CD, featuring last year's road safety songs and other music from the Festival, has been well received in Indigenous communities across the Territory and proceeds from the sale of the CD go towards future Barunga Festivals.

A high quality DVD production of the 2007 competition will be launched in late August. The DVD features all the road safety songs performed, road safety scenarios and interviews with band members. The DVD will be sold widely through community stores, music shops and online at NT Indigenous music publishers Skinnyfish Music. Visit www.skinnyfishmusic.com.au for more details. The DVD will be given to Indigenous TV stations and distributed to bush schools in the NT. It is shaping up to be a great tool to spread strong messages about very important road safety issues including drink driving, pedestrian safety, seatbelt use, the importance of having a licence and general road safety issues. The winning road safety songs will continue to be aired on Aboriginal radio stations throughout the NT and beyond.

For more information about the Road Safety Song Competition, the CD or DVD visit www.roadsafety.nt.gov.au or phone (08) 8924 7017.

Rolling on Road to Disaster

By Raphael Grzebieta

[Ed: This article was published originally in the Herald Sun Newspaper of 14 June 2007 and is reproduced by permission. It is a good example of how the media can provide opportunities for College members to promote the cause of road safety.]

I CARRY out crash tests for a living. I know how much energy a barrelling big rig possesses. I keep well clear of them if I can.

Big trucks and cars do not mix well. Big questions are being asked. The State Coroner is searching for the answer after horrific crashes in the Burnley tunnel and at a Kerang rail crossing. Both disasters involved trucks. What went wrong?

When trucks travel at 80-100km/h they take a lot of stopping in an emergency. It is obvious that if we want a truck travelling at 100km/h to safely stop at a railway crossing, it takes time. Any warning sign of an approaching train must be clearly visible when the driver is at least 300m away. Slowing the truck to 60km/h well ahead of the crossing is an obvious alternative.

Another thing we know about trucks is that they can scare people in cars in front and alongside them. Stories abound of car drivers being tailgated and bullied by speeding truck drivers. On my return from a two-week visit to the US West Coast, I suddenly noticed how many trucks travel on our roads. I seemed to be surrounded by them. The amount of energy contained in a fully laden B-double, with a mass of about 62 tonnes, travelling at 100km/h, is 39 times more than that of a car travelling at the same speed. But consider this: The difference in energy between a car travelling at the same speed, although much slower, is only around 15 times that of a cyclist, although the cyclist would be much slower.

In a crash between a truck and a car, the bottom of the truck's bumper bar is usually at the height of a car driver's shoulder. The truck's bumper often overrides the main structural crush components of the car. The truck bumper hits the car driver or passenger directly in the head before scrunching up the car. If a car hits the rear of the truck, the tray is again at around head height. Decapitation of the passenger is sometimes the result. It's no wonder cars come out second best when involved in truck crashes. An Australian Design Rule has now been introduced requiring trucks to be fitted with front override barriers. But rear and side underrun barriers are not required, in spite of calls for their introduction more than 30 years ago.

A truck moving at 100km/h will travel about 70m before the driver begins to apply his brakes. The driver will then require another 100m of hard braking to stop the truck. A car with ABS brakes will also travel about 70m before the driver reacts and applies the brakes. But the car can stop in 50m and a car braking hard in front of a truck braking hard will either get pushed forward or overridden and crushed by the truck. So, why do we allow trucks and cars to travel freely in the same lanes? A truck crashing into the rear of another truck is surely much better from an energy-management and occupant-survivability point of view than a truck riding over the top of a car.

One of the fundamental energy-management rules used by crash experts is to separate big moving objects from little moving objects. Trucks should be kept separate from cars, as cars should be kept separate from pedestrians and cyclists.

In the UK, trucks must keep to the left lane and can only move to the adjacent lane to overtake another truck. They must also travel about 15km/h slower than cars. The rules also apply on the west coast of the United States. Why are we tolerating an unnecessary and increasing risk on our roads by allowing trucks to use all lanes?

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Car Restraints for the Child Over 12 Months

By Dr Sam Tormey, Medical Doctor and Research Fellow at OzProspect, a non-partisan policy think tank based in Melbourne.

This article was published originally under the title 'Restraining Reorder' in the June 2007 edition of 'Canberra's Child', a free monthly magazine published in the ACT for parents. See www.canberraschild.com.au.

Big changes are underway to the regulations concerning children's safety in cars. There have been mutterings for some years now about how we restrain children in our vehicles, but a tragic accident near Wollongong last year has prompted more urgency to the reform process.

Danielle and Noel Broadhead, like many of us, assumed that Australia would have some of the toughest safety laws in the world in this field. After all, we are well-recognised internationally for having extremely strict and effective air and road safety regulations. Our road safety campaigns have been used as a model example by many countries in how best to reduce accidents and road deaths. The Broadheads had followed the current law that states that all children under 12 months must travel in a dedicated infant capsule. As their children grew older, they purchased Australian Standards-approved booster seats. It was into one such seat that they strapped their 3 year-old daughter Isabelle for a short trip

down the mountain the day before Good Friday last year. Driving cautiously down the steep and winding road, Isabelle's mother was confronted by an oncoming truck which had veered into her lane. Despite her best efforts, her people-mover hit a tree at about 40km/hr, stopping the car from falling into a gully. Apart from the initial shock of the crash, Danielle and her two daughters (who were both in booster seats in the rear seat of the car) appeared to be uninjured. Tragically, Isabelle soon lost consciousness and died shortly afterwards.

It was the findings of the coroner that spurred the Broadheads into action. The coroner held that Isabelle died from massive internal injuries sustained from the adult seatbelt which restrained her within the booster seat. With the dreadful clarity of hindsight, it became apparent that Isabelle was not in an appropriate seat for her height and weight. Since then, her parents have embarked on a tireless campaign to prevent similar deaths.

Thanks in large part to their efforts, new regulations have now been drafted which set out a pathway of restraints from birth to seven years old. A draft proposal from the National Transport Commission (available at www.ntc.gov.au) states that children up to six months old must be restrained in a rearward-facing restraint with an inbuilt harness; then in a rearward or forward-facing restraint with an inbuilt harness until the age of four; and a forward-facing restraint with an inbuilt harness or booster seat from four to seven years old. As well, the Commission notes that " while the proposed laws cater for the majority of