

The Power of Partnerships

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Biography

Marg Hombsch has a background in Marketing obtained at the University of NSW and been involved in the Local Government Road Safety Program as a Road Safety Officer in Tamworth since 1996. During this time one of her key strategies has been to develop and enhance cooperation with other major stakeholders in an effort to create community ownership of road safety at a local level. The recently formed Tamworth Road Safety Committee is a result of this concerted strategy and has had enormous impact at a local level.

Sergeant Denis Humphreys has a 22-year history with the NSW Police Force and has spent 14 of those years in Highway patrol. He has held the position of Highway Patrol Sergeant for a total of seven years. During his 22 year Police career he has lectured at the NSW Police Academy and feels strongly about Community Involvement in Road Safety and the need for working in partnership with other agencies to bring about sustainable change.

Abstract

This paper will be presented in partnership with the NSW Police Service, an integral player in local behavioural road safety initiatives in the Tamworth area. This paper will examine the incredible power of positive partnerships and the valuable road safety outcomes that can be achieved at a community level by working in this way. Two local road safety initiatives will highlight the vital processes involved and illustrate the importance of a strategic approach to the development of local road safety campaigns.

The Tamworth Road Safety Committee, made up of key stakeholders, community members and the media, was established to bring a community flavour and innovative approach to road safety issues through the development of campaigns featuring local identities and familiar environments.

This partnership has seen the development of local campaigns, **“Speed and It’ll Cost you”**, a youth speed campaign designed to support a sustained reduction in young driver speeding behaviour and **“Buckle Up EveryTime”**, a local seatbelt initiative designed to improve the seatbelt wearing rates amongst local residents. Both programs grew from a need to address local problems which identified youth speeding along with an alarming increase in the number of local residents involved in fatal crashes where failure to wear a seatbelt was the major contributing factor. Both initiatives found their success in the strength of the partnership and the synergies created as a result of sharing skills and resources.

1. BACKGROUND

The Tamworth Road Safety committee comprising representatives from the NSW Police Service, Tamworth City Council, New England Area Health Service, local media and business/community members was established in May 2001 to identify specific road safety issues in the local area and develop innovative ways to deal with them at a community level using shared resources. The committee represents a diverse range of

people and skills all working toward a common goal and each with a firm commitment to performing the specific tasks within their skill expertise.

This partnership has enjoyed substantial success over the past two years, attributed to the commitment from individual members, the support from high levels of management from the member organisations and in particular the profile and support given by the local media which has been integral to the success of the group.

Two local road safety initiatives entitled **“Speed and It’ll Cost you”** and **“Buckle Up Everytime”** will highlight the vital processes involved in this partnership and illustrate the importance of a strategic approach to the development of local road safety campaigns.

Speed and young people were the focus of a new and innovative speed campaign conducted in the Tamworth Local Government Area, entitled **“Speed and It’ll Cost you”**, during the three month period from May to July 2002. With young people over-represented in speed related fatal and injury crashes, the Tamworth Road Safety Committee decided to target them with a new local campaign.

The major objective of the campaign was to support a sustained reduction in young driver speeding behaviour in Tamworth through:-

- Research to help identify youth attitudes toward speed;
- Involvement of Youth in the design and development of a road safety campaign aimed at addressing Speed in the Tamworth/Parry Local Government Area (LGA);
- Increased enforcement in Tamworth LGA particularly in speed problem locations (measure of change of enforcement);
- Increased perception of enforcement and the likelihood of being caught if speeding (pre and post surveys);
- Enhance the contribution of enforcement to sustained reduction in young driver speeding through targeted advertising campaigns, developed on the basis of research (Focus Groups);
- Examination of options for ongoing contribution of local youth agencies (eg TAFE, PCYC) to speed reduction.

2. METHOD

The Tamworth Road Safety committee met on a monthly basis during the planning and development stage of this program. During the planning the committee identified the need to conduct some attitudinal research in order to develop some effective countermeasures to target the local youth speeding problem. This research was only made possible by the generous support of Itcom marketing, one of the members of the Tamworth Road Safety Committee, who provided this research at no cost as their contribution to the local community in addressing the youth speeding problem.

Included in the project was an extensive research phase covering target group identification, a speed attitudinal survey amongst this group, youth focus groups and a Youth Talk Back Radio Forum. Speed Counts were conducted in identified problem youth speed areas and formed a vital part of the overall campaign strategy. Investing in the collection of data at key speed locations provided an important base line for future campaigns.

The formative research was carried out by Itcom Marketing by means of a questionnaire/survey which was distributed to 525 students across five Tamworth High Schools, in relation to attitudes toward driving generally and speeding. A 51% response rate was recorded and the results of the survey together with focus group activities were used to assist in the development of strategies to curb speeding including a local media

campaign. In designing this program for youth it became obvious that the most effective way to do this was to speak with youth and gain their input.

A locally produced 30-second television and radio commercial was aired during the campaign period and print media featured real-life stories of local youth and their families who had been involved in speed related crashes. The committee built on the success of other local road safety campaigns and focused on local people and their personal stories in relation to speeding and used this as advertorial in the local newspaper. The real life stories complemented the television and radio commercials by completing the loop from the very real likelihood of being caught if choosing to speeding in the Tamworth area, through to the consequences of speeding in personal terms – loss of independence and family trauma as told by local people. Supporting this media was a radio Bumper Sticker competition which was run on the local FM station during the campaign period.

The “Speed and It’ll Cost You” slogan resulted from a series of youth focus groups and their responses to a series of proposed advertisements. The participating youth felt that the slogan gave the opportunity to show the many costs of speeding, in terms of financial loss, licence points, loss of licence, loss of job, emotional costs, family trauma and potential loss of life. The committee wanted to bring home to young people the on-going costs which could result from their actions, the possible loss of job, of independence, of living with injury and the very real risk of being caught if they chose to speed. By linking the advertising and the personal story editorials, it was possible to highlight all these aspects in a manner which the target group could identify.

The media campaign was coordinated in a strategic fashion:-

- The launch of the campaign on Friday 24 May 2002 with press and television exposure;
- 30-second television commercial aired intensively for the first two weeks of the campaign, followed by a week off and then again for the last 10 days of the campaign;
- Radio was aired at a high frequency during the campaign alternating between the 30 second commercial using the same voice and script as the television and the police enforcement commercial featuring Local Highway Patrol Sergeant Dennis Humphreys. This enforcement commercial only went to air during the enforcement weeks of the campaign to warn the community that if people continued to choose to speed, they would be caught. In addition a new 15-second commercial with the original television voice was produced at no cost by Itcom Marketing, to reinforce the print advertisement ie “You’ve seen the ad, You’ve been warned, Now it’s for real. Speed and it’ll Cost You”!
- Bumper Sticker competition to gauge the message recall of the “Speed and It’ll cost you” slogan;
- Print advertising and advertorial consisted of three major articles in the paper, tracking the campaign progress along with the Speed Fact Boxes which appeared daily over a two week period and Speed advertisements with eight inserts over two weeks.

Courtesy Speed Checks formed another major component of the project and were conducted in rotation around each of the identified speed sites commencing with the launch of the Television and radio advertisements on 23 May 2002. A new and innovative strategy used in the development of this program was “*Courtesy Enforcement*” by the police. *This type of “warning enforcement”* proved very effective, with those being cautioned as many were not aware that they were speeding. Others were very appreciative of the warning and impressed with this positive style policing. This approach was directed towards positive behaviour modification without the risk of being criticised for simply “revenue-raising”. The warnings reinforced to the community the very real chance

of being caught if they chose to speed. The Courtesy Police warnings followed the speed checks, advising motorists of their inappropriate speed before a period of enhanced enforcement. Enhanced Enforcement was approved for this campaign and whilst only one component of the overall program, was perhaps the key in determining the success of this project. RTA research and our own local experience has shown that public education and media campaigns must be backed up with an increased perceived risk, by the target group, of being caught.

This program involved extensive communication with local road safety stakeholders and great commitment in terms of time, energy and resources. A major outcome of this process has been the improved networking between agencies since the commencement of this project and identification of future project opportunities, including the “**Youth on the Move**” youth mentoring program currently being implemented in the Tamworth local community.

Further development of this Speed campaign is currently underway with the recent endorsement by Adam Brand as the new face of the local campaign “Speed and It’ll Cost You” in the Tamworth Area

3. RESULTS

Frequency data from the attitudinal survey revealed that 69.1% of respondents enjoyed the feeling of speed. 33% stated that the faster they drove the more alert they became, whilst 77.4% said that they often get impatient with slower drivers and 39.5% stated they try to get where they are going as fast as they can. Inferential statistics revealed quite significantly that males enjoyed the feeling of speed much more than females. It was revealed that the majority of female’s perception of speeding in town areas, was closely aligned to the present set speed limits, whilst males were more inclined to state that the speed limits should be set higher.

3.1 Summary of Speed Count Data

Location	Number of vehicles	Speed Zone	85 th percentile pre campaign kph	85 th percentile post campaign kph
Jewry Street	6,292	60	73.3	72.0
Wilburtree St	3,441	50	61.5	60.7
Hillvue Rd	3,793	50	62.3	58.9
Napier St	2,321	50	59.8	58.0
Manilla Rd	7,288	60	67.2	60.8
Piper Street	1689	50	56.7	
William Cowper School In school zone time	1647	40	82.6	57.6 am 67.5pm
Duri Road	8126	60	65.5	62.0
Daruka Road	2475	60	81.8	79.0
Calala Lane	6423	60	68.7	60.1

Results indicate an improvement in speed compliance across all sites surveys pre and post campaign period with a variation in the level of improvement between sites.

Council Law Enforcement Officers conducted Courtesy Speed Checks using Council’s Courtesy Speed Trailer each day of the campaign. Each site was allocated the trailer at least three times during the campaign period. Feedback from the Community about the presence of the speed trailer was extremely positive during the campaign and as a result Council has had a number of requests from the community to have the trailer in their residential area.

3.2 Police Enforcement

Courtesy enforcement was conducted during last week of May with more than 80 warnings issued to motorists from local Highway Patrol Officers during this phase at the identified speed locations

Speeding Offences	Phase 1 27/5 -31/5/02	Phase 2 3/6 – 7/6/02	Phase 3 17/6 – 22/6/02
CHECK	2	3	8
LIDAR	10	31	21
CAMERA	361	103	51
RADAR	42	35	66
SCHOOL ZONE SPEED	5	2	3
	420	174	149

These results clearly highlight the effectiveness of the enforcement arm of the “Speed and It’ll Cost You” campaign, with a major reduction in speeding infringement from the first phase to the third phase.

4. DISCUSSION

There were significant reductions in the number of speeding offences in the Tamworth Local Government Area during the “Speed and It’ll Cost You campaign” period. The greater Police enforcement in Speed problem locations in the Tamworth area contributed to improving compliance in these precincts.

School Zones which were identified as problem speed locations through out the campaign period were subsequently targeted in the January 2003 Tamworth Back to School campaign. Oxley Highway Patrol reached full strength just prior to the speed campaign period allowing improved intelligence based taskings, which ensured high profile enforcement throughout the entire command. Increased perception by local residents of the likelihood of being caught for speeding in the Tamworth Local Government Area through additional police resources being allocated to the problem in addition to an Increase in the use of the Camera Car in the Oxley Local Area Command were additional, very positive outcomes. An unexpected outcome of the enforcement operation included improved Enhanced Enforcement applications, resulting in greater success rates with applications.

The insight into local youth attitudes towards speeding achieved as a result of the youth survey conducted in December 2001 has provided direction for future counter measures as well as the opportunity to continually improve existing initiatives, including the Endorsement by high profile Country Music Star Adam Brand of the “Speed and It’ll Cost You” campaign.

The increase in local youth involvement and input into all stages of development of this community based road safety campaign has generated further opportunities to engage youth at a local level. Improved networking with other agencies and the development of new joint project opportunities such as the “Youth on the Move” youth mentoring program currently being conducted, have been incredible spin offs from the partnership that has such commitment among member organisations. This is truly like “bottling gold”

5. BACKGROUND BUCKLE UP EVERYTIME

Nine fatal crashes caused the death of 12 people in the Oxley Local Area Police command in the twelve months to December 2000. 75% of those involved were local residents and almost 25% of these crashes involved someone not wearing a

seatbelt. From the statistical information gathered from the RTA NSW Provisional Road Traffic Accident Database for the year 1996 to 1999, indications are that at least 20% fatal crashes involved drivers who do not wear a seat belt at all times when driving. Those drivers killed while not wearing a seat belt are most likely to have been on a routine journey in their local area. Speeding and alcohol consumption are co-factors in a large proportion of fatal crashes where the driver was not wearing a seat belt

The majority (78.1%) of the people not wearing their belt were 17 to 49 years with the worst being people aged 17 to 25 and 40 to 49, hence the target group for the campaign being the 17-49 year age group

CAUSES OF P5 COLLISIONS, TAMWORTH, 2000	Percentage
Speeding	28%
Seat belt not worn	24%
Alcohol - related	6%

The objectives of the campaign were to:-

- Promote the consequences of not wearing a seat belt;
- To promote the legitimacy and importance of police enforcement activities;
- To increase the number of people wearing their seat belt to at 97%. This is to be measured by pre and post surveys throughout the campaign period;
- To increase Tamworth residences knowledge of the seat belt problem.

6. METHOD

The Tamworth Road Safety Committee met on a fortnightly or monthly basis throughout the seat belt safety campaign, from 2/4/01 to 11/9/01 and then for subsequent campaign run in 2002 and 2003.. This interagency road safety committee used information and evidence from known sources, such as RTA data and ABS data, together with local police data, to set priorities for a road safety campaign in the local area. The campaign aimed to educate the whole community, to influence their behaviour and reduce the mortality and morbidity from road traffic accidents in the local area. This has a direct influence of the health status of the community. This inter agency committee planned and evaluated the campaign which included:-

Observational surveys were undertaken at ten locations throughout the city at the beginning and end of the campaign period. The results of the preliminary survey certainly verified that failure to wear seatbelts was a major problem. With the research information and preliminary survey results in mind, a new Seat Belt awareness and education campaign was developed to encourage greater compliance with wearing seatbelts and to reinforce to both passengers and drivers the importance of wearing seatbelts on every journey. In addition the role of enforcement during this campaign period was determined as integral to its success. It was important to challenge the perception that police don't enforce seat belt wearing and communicate that penalties are high and that the likelihood of being caught equally high. **Follow-Up Surveys** were conducted at the completion of the media campaign to determine the impact that the Buckle Up campaign had on seatbelt wearing rates.

Media Strategy. With the assistance of Prime and NBN Television and local radio station 2TM, television and radio commercials were produced at production cost only. The stations ran the ads as a community service without charge. They featured local people working in the emergency service area, who deal daily with the consequences of not wearing a seatbelt in the course of their work. The ads featured real local people, not actors, ranging from paramedics and crash investigators to Emergency room doctors,

church ministers and a local father who had lost his son in just such an accident. The commercials were hard hitting and focussed on the victims and their families, as well as everyone else affected by the avoidable tragedies.

The committee felt that it was important to keep the local focus, because RTA data from 1996-1999 revealed that those drivers killed while not wearing a seat belt were most likely to have been on a routine journey in their local area. For crashes on country roads where an unrestrained occupant was fatally injured, 72% of the vehicles' drivers (who were usually the fatally injured occupants) were residents in the country. The 72% is made up of 42% resident in the same local government area as where the fatal crash occurred and 30% resident elsewhere in the country (Roads and Traffic Authority data)

Print Advertising Backing up the television and radio campaigns which ran on both the Prime and NBN networks and Radio 92.9 and 2TM, the Northern Daily Leader ran a concentrated series of interviews with the people featured in the radio and television ads. These stories ran strategically over a ten-day period receiving enormous exposure, which helped extend the life of the campaign. In addition to the real life stories ongoing articles outlining the campaign progress, enforcement activities and survey results were featured. Although there were still a disturbing number of infringements, the percentages were well down on the original survey figures. The education campaign was particularly relevant, in line with new increased fines and demerit points for both drivers and passengers announced during the campaign.

FREE Child Restraint Checks The committee also wanted to address seat belt safety in children. Injuries to children in transport accidents are often the result of incorrectly fitted child car seats. The committee wanted to keep the campaign positive and educational, and so planned **free checking of child restraints**. It was decided to provide this service at the New England Area Health Service immunisation clinics around Tamworth to capture an audience of young children travelling in cars. These child restraints fitting checks were carried out by the local RTA approved restraint fitter free of charge to parents, with RTA funding of \$500. Council's Road Safety Officer attended each of the three clinics to encourage participation in the child restraint check service and provide important information to parents and carers of young children. Combining the Free child restraint checking service with the immunisation clinics was a very effective way to communicate vital information about correct fitting and appropriate restraint use. Another spin off from these mornings, was heightened awareness about restraint use and correct fitting procedures and service amongst the early childhood nurses.

Enforcement. An extensive enforcement program was conducted during each of the campaign periods in conjunction with the Media Campaign involving both Highway Patrol and General Duties Police. The enforcement involved high profile mobile patrols combined with static covert operations involving several Police at numerous locations throughout the Oxley LAC. Each Operation was conducted in three Phases, each of 3 days duration with the results being widely advertised via the media campaign at the completion of each phase. Each period of enforcement by the local police, as far as possible mirrored the original survey sites and times of day making comparisons of the results more accurate.

Buckle Up signage and promotional material. Two banners with the "Buckle Up EveryTime" slogan were placed at two high traffic areas throughout the campaign period. Twenty Buckle Up 4-wheel drive covers were used as give-aways to reward people for the doing the right thing. This was coordinated with the Police as they were conducting RBT and other Highway duties. Police has no trouble allocating these wheel covers to appropriate drivers and they were extremely well received by motorists. During the 2002 and 2003 campaign, large yellow Buckle Up Everytime truck signs were installed on the

back of local stock freight trucks which travel all major highways throughout the state and inter state, hence spreading the message far and wide

During the observational surveys it became apparent that council outdoor workers were prime offenders for not wearing seatbelts. As a result of this an internal council education campaign via the e-mail was conducted during the campaign. Information on the new demerit points and increased fines were communicated on numerous occasions and outdoor staff were personally advised at their staff meetings of the new legislation.

7. RESULTS

In the pre-and-post campaign observational surveys, the incidence of non-compliance with searing seatbelts reduced from 421 (May '01) to 80 (Sept '01). The biggest improvement was in compliance of male truck drivers, at sites such as the sale yards and the industrial area. At each phase of the police enforcement, numbers of non-compliant road users also reduced dramatically. During the first intensive three-day seatbelt enforcement operation, a total of 143 infringement notices were issued. This figure was reduced by almost 50% during the second period of enforcement, and then continued to reduce dramatically during the next enforcement period.

Enforcement	2001	2002	2003
Phase 1	143	86	52
Phase 2	76	40	18
Phase 3	19		44

The reason for the unexpected increase in the third phase of the 2003 enforcement operation is due to the fact that this enforcement took place in the outlying centres of Gunnedah and Quirindi who had not had been exposed to the same level of Police enforcement as Tamworth motorists. Unfortunately, Data from the third phase of the 2002 operation was lost in the police computer system.

Summary Results for Buckle Up EveryTime Campaign Surveys 2001-2003

Site	Wearing Rate Jul 2001	Wearing Rate Sep 2001	Wearing Rate Mar 2002	Wearing Rate Apr 2002	Wearing Rate Jun 2002	Wearing Rate Apr 2003	Wearing Rate Jun 2003
1. Sale Yards	76.2%	95.7%	85.7%	95.7%	86.2%	86.0%	83.8%
2. Kent Kathleen	94.8%	97.9%	97.4%	92.3%	99.0%	97.0%	97.84%
3. Marius and Fitzroy	93.7%	96.2%	85.6%	96.2%	98.5%	97.8%	98.41%
4. Peel and White	95.1%	96.7%	86.7%	96.7%	95.0%	98.0%	99.32%
5. Jewry and Carter	93.4%	97.8%	93.8%	97.8%	98.6%	97.5%	96.93%
6. Vera and Goonoo	95%	98.5%	95.5%	98.5%	99.6%	99.03%	99.1%
7. Jerwy and Belmore	97%	97.5%	92.6%	97.5%	99.7%	98.5%	96.3%
8. Robert and Duri Rd Road roundabout	88.6%	96.5%	96.1%	96.5%	98.5%	98.6%	98.0%
9. Vera and Hillvue	96.7%	98.0%	97.6%	98%	98.0%	96.75%	99.0%
10. Ebsworth/ Bridge						97.9%	98.8%
Total	93.8%	97.2%	92.25%	95.95%	97.0%	97.6%	97.9%

The result indicate that the Buckle Up Everytime campaign has played a major role in improving seatbelt compliance in the Tamworth LGA and surrounding areas of Quirindi and Gunnedah from a wearing rate of 93.8% in 2001 to a 97.9% compliance rate at the end of the 2003 campaign. With the campaign now in its third year, It is interesting to note that the higher starting compliance rate for the 2003 campaign seems to indicate that behaviour may have been changed permanently.

These results were conveyed to the community via local media outlets, including newspaper, TV news items and radio. These results have also been presented at a number of forums across the state. The paediatric Case Manager, New England Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program presented the results at a forum of rural Brain Injury Rehabilitation Programs in Sydney in November 2001. This has provided information to other key health workers across the state to be involved in similar road safety projects.

8. DISCUSSION

The committee evaluated the results, and decided that it was important to take a cyclic approach to seat belt safety, to prevent the community from becoming complacent. It was resolved that a similar campaign be held in April/ May 2002 and 2003. These have now been completed and included screening of the TV ads produced in 2001, as well as the erection of 32 "Buckle Up Every Time" signs on the exits of major shopping centre and Council car parks and trucking company yards. In addition a major stock freight company donated metal signs, which the committee had painted with the Buckle Up EveryTime logo. These signs are now affixed to 16 stock trucks and travel the highways throughout the state carrying the "Buckle Up" message.

Credit for the campaign's success must also be given to the fact that seatbelt laws changed during the campaign period, which complimented and gave extra media coverage to this issue. The high level of enhanced enforcement was the single biggest deterrent to people considering not wearing a seatbelt. The enforcement acted as the lever to force people to change their behaviour or run the very REAL risk of being caught. Using all forms of local media, the reasons why it is imperative to wear a seatbelt, the life saving nature of these devices was constantly reinforced thereby legitimising the need for the enforcement in the first place. The encouraging latest results seem to indicate that attitudes have changed along with the change in behaviour, meaning the behaviour change has become permanent.

The results of the **Buckle Up EveryTime** campaign have demonstrated an outstanding change in driver attitude and behaviour towards the wearing of occupant restraints. The Tamworth Road Safety Committee has demonstrated enthusiastic commitment to improved compliance to the wearing of seatbelts and as such has taken steps to educate the wider community of the Oxley Local Area Command. Follow-up surveys will be required to keep track of seatbelt compliance rates and determine whether there has been a permanent change. This campaign has laid the important foundation for future campaigns.

References

NSW Police Service Enhanced Enforcement data 2000-2002

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Tamworth Road Safety committee including Sergeant Denis Humphreys, Marg McPherson, Alex Beale, Detlev Litzkow, Annie McIntyre, Barry McDonald, Councillor Ray Tait, Max Cathcart, Donna Hurley, Gary Olsen and Ilze Ireland who generously give of their time each month to attend meetings and give willingly of their talents and resources to improving road safety in our local community

Keywords

Partnership, commitment, community, involvement, strategic coordination, continuous improvement

