

‘Learn, Drive, Survive: Drives for Learners in the Moreton Bay Region’ (Queensland) – A practical tool for Supervisors and Learner Drivers

Kerrie, Doherty^a, Shannon, Finn^a and Helen, Scifleet^b

^a Moreton Bay Regional Council, ^b Department of Transport and Main Roads

Abstract

A practical and collaborative approach has been undertaken to develop and implement phase one of the ‘Learn, Drive, Survive - Drives for Learners in the Moreton Bay Region’ booklet. Based on fatality and injury statistics as well as research that identified the need to develop the skill and knowledge base of drivers in the learner licensing stage, the booklet of driving routes and road safety information provides an educational tool for supervisors and learner drivers. Building and expanding on a road safety initiative from NSW the booklet provides a total of 13 routes covering the Moreton Bay Region in Queensland. The routes contain a variety of drives across the region including different road types, driving conditions and from rural to urban. Each drive has detailed instructions, maps and all the details required to complete the Queensland learner driver log book. The booklet creates access, ideas and opportunity for valuable on-road driving time and experience for learner drivers working towards accrual of the 100 hour minimum state government driving requirement to obtain a provisional licence (P1). Partnering with the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) and working with Queensland Police Service (QPS) provided important linkages of knowledge and expertise in the development of the booklet. Launched in December 2014 over 8,000 copies of the booklet have been distributed across the region.

Introduction

The 'Learn, Drive, Survive - Drives for Learners in the Moreton Bay Region' booklet links with the Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) that has been operational across Queensland since 2007 by providing opportunity for learner drivers to accrue credible driving time toward the 100 hour minimum on-road supervised driving time requirement. The booklet is aimed at providing practical options for learner drivers to gain as much on-road supervised driving experience on roads throughout the Moreton Bay Region whilst in the learner licensing phase. Young drivers are one of Queensland's most ‘at risk’ road user groups and account for approximately 13% of all licence holders. An abundance of research illustrates a range of factors that contribute to crashes involving young drivers including inexperience, inattention, over confidence, less developed visual/perceptual skills, deliberate risk taking, alcohol/drugs and limitations in responding to risks or hazards whilst driving.

Queensland's road crash data (Webcrash) identified that during the 2009-2013 period, 27% of drivers and riders in the Moreton Bay Region were aged 17-24 years, where age was known. Of these casualties 14 were fatalities and almost 1405 were hospitalised or required medical treatment. A total of 34% of single vehicle casualties were attributed to drivers in the 17-24 year age group. This age group also represented a total of 21% in multi-vehicle casualties for the same time period.

Objectives

The goal of the booklet is to reduce the fatality and injury rate of novice drivers across the Moreton Bay Region by providing a practical educational tool based on best practice guidelines and to raise awareness of the importance of on road driving skills to develop safer driving habits. Specifically, the objectives included providing a practical tool for learner drivers, supervisors and community organisations to utilise in planning formal drives in the Moreton Bay Region; to increase the opportunity for learner drivers to experience a wide range of driving conditions and develop safer driving habits; to provide learner drivers the opportunity to plan drives with the view to accrued driving time toward the minimum 100 hour requirement of on road driving experience in the learner phase of the GLS; and to deliver a key action within the Moreton Bay Regional Council *'Road Safety and Strategic Action Plan 2010-2014'*. Specifically Action no: 9.1.3 'Develop and produce a 'Drives for Learners' booklet as a practical tool for supervisors and learner drivers in planning a variety of drives to gain driver experience'.

Method

A booklet containing current road safety content consistent with core state government road safety messages, current road rules legislation and a total of 13 drives encompassing the Moreton Bay Region was developed for distribution.

Working in partnership with TMR and QPS provided opportunities to utilise TMR driving examiners and police officers to drive and test the routes contained in the booklet. These agencies enhanced the booklet by offering knowledge and expertise in their particular field.

The evaluation component of the booklet included quantitative data collection. This involved the distribution levels of the booklet and the number of locations throughout the region. A voluntary questionnaire was also developed to provide feedback on the relevance, usefulness and usability of the booklet.

Results

Seed funding for the booklet was provided through the TMR 'Community Road Safety Grants' to develop the 'Drives for Learners in the Moreton Bay Region' practical booklet including the content, graphic design and initial print run utilising the original booklet idea from the Macarthur region in NSW. Content of the booklet was consistent with core state government road safety messages and current road rules legislation.

Reviewing the Macarthur booklet identified the opportunity to expand not only on the content, map and route delivery, but to include practical considerations including making the booklet larger in size (A4) and the role that colours play in relation to colour blindness and reader ability.

As part of the development of the booklet it became apparent that there was a need to provide etiquette and awareness tips – this resulted in creating the 'handy tips' throughout the booklet. For example, 'always indicate left to exit a roundabout' and 'stay wide of the rider – a minimum 1 metre gap when passing a cyclist in a 60km/h or less speed zone'.

The project team recognised the opportunity to source learner drivers from the region for the 'photo shoot' and these images have been used throughout the booklet. Utilising 'real life' images of learner drivers added to the authenticity of the booklet along with ongoing community recognition of the learner drivers.

The 'Drives for Learners in Moreton Bay Region' booklet was launched mid-December 2014. Interest in the booklet is increasing throughout the region with more than 8,000 booklets currently distributed. Data from TMR indicates there are approximately 30,000 licenced learner drivers in the

region. A web friendly pdf version of the booklet can be accessed on line through the Council's website <https://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/roadsafety/>

Process evaluation includes distribution of the booklet to a range of government and non-government organisations incorporating community centres, council offices/libraries, TMR customer service centres, high schools, local youth organisations and driving schools throughout the region. Promotion and distribution also occurs at events across the region, for example, more than 300 booklets were distributed at the 2015 Fatality Free Friday and Farm Fantastic events and it is envisaged this number will grow with future planned events.

Impact evaluation is also undertaken with a voluntary survey. The survey has a few short questions seeking feedback on relevance, usefulness and usability of the booklet. Due to the voluntary nature of completion to date results from the survey have been sporadic, however, anecdotal verbal evidence from driving schools, customer service centres and the community is that the booklet is a great resource and highly appreciated in the community. Promotion of the feedback survey is now enhanced with a survey notice insert to the booklet.

Discussion

The more opportunities learner drivers have to drive on different road types and conditions during the learner driving phase increases their depth of driving experience and capabilities to draw upon when they are driving solo.

The aim of the booklet is to provide a practical educational tool that is easy to use and raises the awareness and importance of on road driving skills to develop long term safer driving habits.

This booklet provides the learner driver and supervisor with a hands-on approach with the comprehensive maps and instructions and offers them a wider range of driving experiences.

The ultimate outcome for this booklet is working to decrease the fatality and injury rate of novice drivers across the Moreton Bay Region.

The next phase of the Learn, Drive Survive project includes developing workshop information and presentations for supervisors. This will provide supervisors with the tools to coach their learner drivers on how to be safer drivers.