

Blue Datto: Keeping Safe Program

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Vision

The Blue Datto Foundation has a vision that: each person has the right to enter adulthood carrying positive attitudes and behaviours, supported and encouraged by their families, friends and communities. In order to achieve this vision, Blue Datto provides attitude and behaviour courses to year 10 age students in schools, community groups, and to young people in need. Participants attend a half-full day workshop that provides tools to empower them to speak up as passengers, to behave responsibly when they become drivers, and pledge to do so. The program encourages conversations between young Australians and their families at home, at school and in their communities.

The Foundation was established in memory of Philip Vassallo who passed away in a car crash when he was 17, in which both drivers were red 'P' platers.

Changing the culture of young drivers in NSW through educational workshops

Keeping Safe Program

Blue Datto™ Keeping Safe workshops encourage young people to make good decisions when faced with risky driving situations, both as passengers and drivers. Keeping Safe is about changing attitudes and behaviours – not driving skills. Students participate in workshops, presentations and talks on young driver facts and a real life case study. They also create their own personal safety plan so they'll be prepared when dealing with difficult and unsafe driving situations.



Educating youth in Keeping Safe™ before they start driving

The peer-based driver education is aimed at year 10 students based on a whole car approach, highlighting that every person in the car has a role to play: the driver, their driving teacher, and the passengers. The optimum time for students to undertake this program is before they begin driving or when they are applying for their learner driver permit.

The Keeping Safe program is provided to the whole year or community group, and includes a range of whole group and small group workshops of up to 20 students. The Peer Mentors run the small workshops. They are university students (near-peers) who have been specifically trained by Blue Datto to facilitate the workshops. As they are close in age to the school students, they open up a different level of conversation than others might, and can become role models. In undertaking the training and running of the courses they become road safety ambassadors and are a wonderful resource for the community and Blue Datto.

To begin the day as a whole group they are presented with an introduction to the day and to Blue Datto. Workshop 1 addresses the values of the students and their rating of risks. Through the interactive activities in this workshop students become aware of the complications and distractions which can arise when in a car. The whole group then combines, where the police provide a Young Driver Facts presentation, and the students are then presented with the interactive Rescue Services Case Study. Workshop 2 concentrates on skills to assist the students in speaking their mind when in tough situations, and they are assisted to create their Keeping Safe Personal Safety Plan. The whole group then gathers, where the students present to school and community leaders their ideas for keeping themselves and their communities safe. Here the students, school and community leaders make a commitment to Keeping Safe plans, and students write a personal pledge. The Pledge is then emailed to them around their birthday and at other significant milestones until they are 21, to remind them of their pledge to Keeping Safe™.

Officially starting in term three 2016, close to 1000 students have undertaken the Keeping Safe program from five schools and community groups. Term four should see a further 10 schools complete the program and bookings are still being taken. The Blue Datto Keeping Safe program is delivered free of charge to schools in New South Wales. This is made possible through sponsorship and community support.



Figure 1. Information to guide parents in their support of learner drivers

Parent Keeping Safe Program

Parents and driver trainers play a crucial role in the safety of young adults on the road. Recent research shows that more experienced drivers and new drivers see a very different road.

Unfortunately, many parents aren't up-to-date with teen behaviours, attitudes and experiences let alone current road rules. There are few resources available to this group.

The parent program is under design and aims to provide guidance for parents to assist in supporting and educating their learner drivers. (See Figure 1). Further information about parent information evenings and support forums are available by signing up to the newsletter at bluedatto.org.au or on Facebook at Blue Datto Foundation.

Evaluation

Through the Blue Datto Keeping Safe program young people are being empowered to develop strategies to keep themselves and their community safe on the roads. The workshop is led by university students who themselves become safety ambassadors. The program is currently being evaluated by a research team at Western Sydney University, and the accompanying Parent Program is under design.



Peer mentors at a school