

Driving Change: Process Evaluation of a Multi-Site Community Licensing Support Program

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Abstract

Driving Change is a NSW community-based Aboriginal licensing program that was implemented in 12 communities. This process evaluation triangulates interviews (n=22), focus groups (n=18) and participant data (n=820) to explore barriers and facilitators to implementation and impact.

Driving Change is reaching the target population, facilitating licensing access and is highly responsive to community and client need. While interviewees reported strong support for the program, challenges to implementation included supporting field staff to broker collaborative stakeholder relationships and maintain community engagement. This evaluation highlights the value of stakeholders working collaboratively to overcome implementation challenges, build capacity and positively impact Aboriginal communities.

Background

Aboriginal people are estimated to be significantly under-represented among licence holders in NSW comprising 2% of the eligible driver population but only 0.5% of all licence holders (Transport for NSW, 2014). Low levels of licence participation in Aboriginal communities is a significant contributor to higher rates of transport-related injury, infringements, incarceration and transport disadvantage (Styles & Edmonston, 2006). The NSW government has committed to supporting evidence-based initiatives to reduce transport injury and increase legal and safe driving in Aboriginal communities (Transport for NSW, 2014). Integral to achieving this is assisting Aboriginal people to access the licensing system.

The Driving Change program was implemented to address barriers to licensing in 12 Aboriginal communities across NSW. The program targets young people aged 16-24 years and includes facilitating access to local services, intensive case management and providing mentoring through the licensing system. While there is an identified need for licensing support for Aboriginal communities, few licensing support programs have been evaluated. Thus, little is known about the effectiveness and acceptability of such programs to Aboriginal communities. The Driving Change process evaluation documented program implementation, explored the impact on the target communities and provided valuable insight into best practice for developing and implementing sustainable community-based driver licensing programs.

Methods

Mixed methodology combined framework analysis of stakeholder interviews (n=22) and community focus groups (n=18) with descriptive analysis of participant data (n=820) collected April 2013 to February 2016. Triangulation of data provided a rich understanding of fidelity, dosage and the program context including barriers and facilitators to implementation. Community engagement and acceptability were explored to determine the program's responsiveness to community and cultural needs.

Results

The target population is being reached with the majority of clients aged 16-24 years (72%), unemployed (88%) and with multiple barriers to licensing (67%). Licensing outcomes were achieved at all sites with 33% of learner drivers attaining a provisional licence. Interviewees conveyed strong support for the program, reporting that it was highly acceptable and particularly responsive to clients with complex needs. Recruiting volunteer mentors and maintaining long-term community engagement were significant implementation challenges. Further, it emerged that consistent and active support from local stakeholders was integral to field staff capacity to assist clients and deliver licensing outcomes. Consequently, the program intensified support for field staff to broker collaborative relationships with communities. Overall, a high level of collaboration between community and field staff facilitated implementation and built ongoing capacity to promote sustainability of the program.

Discussion

Driving Change has assisted young Aboriginal people to access licensing services in NSW. The program is reaching the target population and delivers a sufficiently flexible program that is responsive to community and client identified need. This process evaluation highlights the value of involving community and government stakeholders to foster capacity building and ensure a culturally acceptable approach to reducing injury, promoting safety and positively impacting Aboriginal communities. Beyond feeding directly into program delivery, process evaluations assist ongoing innovation of the program, promote program sustainability and ensure that the intervention is being delivered as intended with a high level of impact.

References

- Styles, T., & Edmonston, C. J. (2006). Australian Indigenous Road Safety – 2005 Update. In Australian Transport Safety Bureau (Ed.). Canberra, ACT: Australian Transport Safety Bureau.
- Transport for NSW. (2014). *NSW Aboriginal Road Safety Action Plan 2014-2017*. (978-1-922030-43-6). Sydney: Transport for NSW.