

## **‘It’s exactly what we needed’: A process evaluation of the DriveSafe NT Remote driver licensing program**

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### **Abstract**

*DriveSafe Northern Territory (NT) Remote* was implemented by the NT government to increase driver licensing in underserviced remote communities. This process evaluation triangulates informant interviews, program observation, program data and de-identified licensing data.

DriveSafe is accepted by remote NT communities, and impacting driver licensing rates in these settings. There was a greater increase in licences at intervention sites compared with other remote areas. A dose-response relationship showed greater licence outcomes at communities that received higher levels of program delivery. Interviewees regarded DriveSafe as highly engaging and flexible. DriveSafe’s culturally responsive and innovative approach should lead to further positive licensing outcomes.

### **Background**

The Northern Territory (NT) has the highest rate of road transport-related injury of any jurisdiction in Australia, and the Aboriginal people in the NT have a fatality rate due to road transportation more than double the rest of the NT population (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2012, p. 24). This has been attributed to known risk factors for transport-related injury in Aboriginal communities: remoteness, non-use of seatbelts, alcohol use and vehicle overcrowding (Clapham, Senserrick, Ivers, Lyford, Stevenson, 2008; Henley & Harrison, 2013). Unlicensed driving is also common due to the vastness of the region and the complex range of barriers to licensing in remote Aboriginal communities (Elliot & Shanahan Research, 2008; Helps et al., 2008; Job & Bin-Sallik, 2013). The *DriveSafe NT Remote* program was implemented in 2012 by the NT Government to address barriers to licensing faced by remote NT communities. DriveSafe facilitate proof of identification, deliver road safety education, professional driving lessons and administer the Learner and Provisional tests. Similar programs have been developed and implemented previously yet many have proved unsustainable due to inadequate funding and an inability to demonstrate outcomes. Further, licensing support programs are under-evaluated and there is limited evidence to establish best practice for program development. This process evaluation reviews program implementation and explores whether DriveSafe is addressing the needs of the target communities.

### **Methods**

A mixed-methods approach triangulated NT licensing data, program data, program observation and informant interviews (n=30). Interviews were audio recorded and professionally transcribed; a general inductive approach to the analysis was employed. Program data (April 2012 to June 2014) and de-identified licensing data from the NT Motor Vehicle Registry were analysed for trends in service delivery and licensing rates pre and post-program.

### **Results**

Interviewees reported strong support for the program, and regarded the program as highly engaging and acceptable. Adaptations to program delivery in response to implementation challenges have prioritised community capacity building and the sustainability of the program. There was a dose

response relationship with greater licence outcomes at communities that received higher levels of program delivery. Trends in licences showed a greater increase in new licences at intervention sites (Learner 24% and Open licence 18%) compared with other remote areas (Learner licence 13% and Open licence 8%).

## Discussion

The DriveSafe program is achieving licensing outcomes and has demonstrated capacity for a flexible approach that is responsive to remote communities. Variation in program delivery across regions predominately reflects flexible service provision adapted to meet community needs. The variation in delivery is also indicative of community capacity and engagement with the program. Notably there was a positive association between areas that received a high dose of the program and communities that had increased licensing outcomes post program delivery. This relationship was reinforced by staff reports that program delivery is strengthened in communities that actively engage with the program. DriveSafe's innovative delivery and culturally responsive approach should lead to further positive licensing outcomes. Process evaluations of multi-site community programs provide a valuable and pragmatic approach to ensuring the intervention is being implemented as intended to impact the target population.

## References

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