

School Holiday Road Safety led by the Little Blue Dinosaur

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Abstract

Our keystone campaign, “It’s Holiday Time!” was launched following Tom’s coronial inquest that highlighted the environment of Macmasters Beach as a contributing factor to the accident. It is prudent to remind the community of road safety during the 3-4 months of the year children are outside of school zones and often in public, recreational areas.

The campaign enhances safer ‘holiday town’ road environments through seasonal installation of strikingly colourful, road safety signage to appeal to drivers and pedestrians alike.

The signs target our three key audiences:

- Drivers: ‘Slow Down, Kids Around’
- Parent/Carers & children: ‘Hold my Hand’

Approach

Focusing on the beach hamlets of the Central Coast where Tom’s accident occurred, the foundation was able to pilot their ‘Holiday Time’ campaign in the environment most comparable to that of Tom’s accident. In doing so, we were able to collaborate with the local government, Gosford City Council, to create a seasonal campaign suited to the size, style and demands of the busy holiday-maker region.

Seasonal Installation

To increase the campaign’s impact, the signage is installed seasonally; put in place during the last week of the school term and taken down as schools return. By only erecting the colourful signage during school holidays, it will ensure the public are not desensitized to its message, especially locals who frequently use these roads.

Campaign expansion

It has since been replicated in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Shoalhaven as well as Bemm River in Victoria.

The areas targeted are primarily coastal towns with:

- Aging or non-existent infrastructure
- Aesthetically non-metropolitan looking streets (mainly beaches)
 - Lack of curb and guttering
 - Unsealed/unmarked roadways
 - Less frequent traffic lights and pedestrian crossings
- A tendency to attract large amounts of holidaymaking tourists (particularly families) during school holiday periods

Centring on the notion that road safety is a 365-day conversation, our campaign aims to encourage conversations between children and their parents about road safety during holidays while reminding the general community of this increased presence of children in the area.

Restraining a child is a key step in educating children of the dangers associated with roadways while addressing their limited cognitive abilities. Our 'Hold my Hand' signage is addressing children's risk taking behaviour due to their changing hormonal levels (Bjork et al., 2004; Steinberg, 2007; Steinberg et al, 2008) by reminding adult carers to hold hands with children in their care.

Statistical data from Destination NSW was used to see where people are spending their holidays and what activities they are conducting in these locations. For example, last year the Central Coast of NSW received 1.3million domestic overnight visitors, of which 45.8% identified 'Holiday' as their purpose of visit (Destination NSW 2015, para. 4). Likewise, The Hunter area accommodated 3.1million domestic overnight visitors and 41.6% identified 'Holiday' as their central purpose (Destination NSW 2015, para. 4).

Incorporating the media

Local media and radio assisted the campaign by spreading the key messages over their respective platforms. Raising awareness through visual, audio and print allowed more children, their parents/guardians, as well as the general public to be reached at low cost.

Results

While we do not have a direct measure of lives saved through the campaign by avoiding a fatality or severe injury, council has conducted a survey in Shoalhaven and speed detection technologies have been measuring speed reduction in Bemm River, with the results of both due shortly. The results thus far have been based on community response and feedback from the Local Council's where we operate.

References

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