

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release



Young driver awareness program saves lives!

A driver awareness program for students in Years 11 and 12 has shown significant improvements of up to 20 per cent in aspects of safe driving.

The Crossroads Road Safety Program is in its third year in the Hunter and has enhanced young drivers' skills in safety control, risk avoidance and driver attitude.

Significant advances in other driving factors were also recorded by the Thornton-based safety training company People and Quality Solutions Pty Ltd.

The first results from the program were presented at Singleton High School this morning pointing the way to a possible State-wide roll-out of the initiative.

Senior students from 25 high schools in the Hunter and a few in the Central West are already benefitting from the hands-on experience.

The Project Manager for the Crossroads Road Safety Program, Grant Godfrey, said \$50,000 had already been used to support the scheme and strategies were being explored to expand to any state high school.

"The survey has shown the program does change attitudes in young drivers on their Ls or Ps and this is the age group that has the riskiest road behavior and the least driving experience.

"As a result, they are over-represented in statistics for road deaths, trauma and penalties," Mr Godfrey said.

The Crossroads program intervenes at a stage when driving is first being taught so that sound safety values are formed during early driving experiences.

He said it was equally important that attitudes to road safety and responsibility were formed at the same time as driving skills.

"This program aims to empower young drivers with the knowledge that they have the choice to drive well and safely, and teaches strategies to resist pressures put on them to drive irresponsibly," he said

The trial program has been jointly funded by more than \$100,000 each from Xstrata Coal and Hunter Valley Training Company, with physical support for Mr Godfrey by the Hunter Valley Training Company.

The survey's results were provided to regional Parliamentarians and community leaders at Singleton High School this morning.

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