



DriveSafe NT Remote fact sheet

DriveSafe NT Remote is helping to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage by providing greater access to driver education and licensing for residents of remote Northern Territory communities.

The program ultimately aims to:

- reduce the number of Indigenous people killed on our roads – Indigenous people represent 30% of the NT population but 50% of our road deaths
- reduce the number of Indigenous prisoners - almost half the court cases in remote NT communities are for driving related offences, about 82% of all NT prisoners are Indigenous and driving offenders make up about 25% of the prison population
- improve access to jobs, training, education and health services.



Providing a system for licensing drivers in remote communities in the Northern Territory is a major challenge because of:

- small scattered remote populations
- issues with evidence of identity
- literacy, numeracy and language barriers
- lack of access to qualified driving instructors, registered and roadworthy vehicles and supervising drivers during the learner licence period.

DriveSafe NT Remote was developed to address these problems. It is a two year initiative of the Northern Territory Government, and commenced in April 2012. It is jointly funded by the former National Road Safety Council, Territory Insurance Office, the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Department of Transport.

The program is being delivered in 14 communities over the course of the two year trial.

The program is free of charge to participants and covers the costs of a birth certificate if required, a learner licence, theory classes, driving lessons, a provisional licence, L plates and P plates.



Community consultation and engagement is a critical element. In each community, partnerships are developed with local organisations and other government agencies enabling the use of local networks and knowledge.

The DriveSafe NT Remote team works with communities to develop a tailored flexible delivery plan. This is an essential step in changing the culture of non-licensing in remote communities. Ownership of the program at the community level is required before the program commences.



The program has become extremely popular and demand has far exceeded initial expectations. The original aim of the program was to target 20 participants in 14 communities, a total of 280. Since the program began in April last year 379 Indigenous Territorians have earned their learner's licence and 89 their provisional licence.

The DriveSafe NT Remote team has spent more than 270 days in remote communities and given more than 1200 driving lessons.

Trial programs have been completed in Angurugu, Umbakumba, Yirrkala, Gunyangara and Tiwi Islands. Programs are currently being delivered in Gapuwiyak and Galiwinku and, subject to community consultation and preparedness, will be rolled out in another seven communities this year. Target communities include Maningrida, Ngukurr, Milingimbi, Borroloola, Robinson River, Numbulwar, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Lajamanu, Yuendumu and Ntaria.

The DriveSafe NT Remote team is supporting community organisations in Angurugu, Umbakumba, Gunyangara and Nhulunbuy (in partnership with Pacific Aluminium) in continuing to deliver driver education and licensing programs. An ongoing program is also being developed for the Tiwi Islands.

Lack of identity documentation is a major barrier to many people in remote communities who want to get a driver licence. The DriveSafe NT Remote Team works closely with community organisations, the registry of Births, Death and Marriages and other government agencies to assist people to gather the necessary documents.

DriveSafe NT Remote combines best-practice theoretical and practical driver education and training, with a strong emphasis on road safety awareness. It includes theory and practical lessons on a range of driving and road safety topics such as drink driving, seat belts, overcrowding in vehicles, emergency first aid and speed. Participants also learn about the responsibilities of being a driver and owning a vehicle.

The program is delivered over seven months. During the six month learner licence period, professional driving instructors make regular week-long visits. Through individual case management, participants are supported through each stage of the licensing process.

The program tackles the challenges of low levels of literacy and numeracy by using local interpreters as co-facilitators and offering verbal learner licence tests as an alternative to a written test.

The DriveSafe NT Remote team also provides on-site Motor Vehicle Registry (MVR) services to community members such as renewing and upgrading licences. When the DriveSafe NT Remote team members are not in the community, trained mentor drivers provide supervised driving sessions. This helps build community capacity to support learner drivers during the program and longer term.

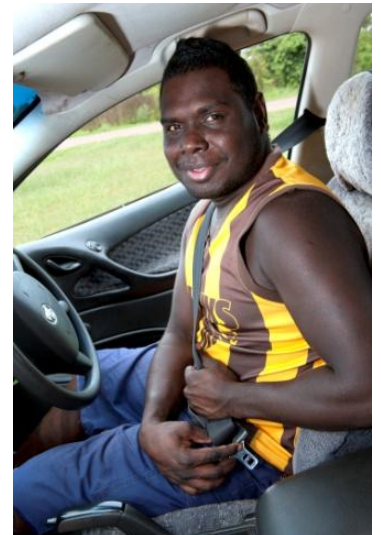
A formal evaluation of the program is being undertaken by the George Institute for Global Health (based at Sydney University and specialising in road safety research).

For more information:

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