



Final Evaluation Report

Pilot Adult Migrant Driver Education Program

November 2012 - June 2015

Introduction

In November 2012, the Minister for Roads, Honourable Terry Mulder funded and formally launched the RoadSTART pilot program, aiming to respond to barriers experienced by newly arrived adult migrants and refugees in achieving their probationary driver's licence. People within this target population have limited financial income for private driving lessons, experience language and cultural barriers and lack the extensive family and social networks of people with licences and vehicles to learn to drive. The benefits of this program included increasing access to employment and training opportunities, increasing mobility in caring for families and increasing social connectedness.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the pilot program in accordance with the evaluation framework. The Report details the program model, including information on improvements made throughout the pilot phase, illustrating resultant enhancement to program outputs. The Report concludes with recommendations and options for the future delivery of similar driver education programs.

Pilot Program Model and Delivery

The RoadSTART program was initially developed through the Rotary Club of Flemington and was modelled upon both the previous Moonee Valley Legal Service Driver Education Program and the VicRoads youth driver education program, L2P. An aim of the pilot program was to establish and refine a strong model that could attract more sustainable funding and able to be replicated in other locations. The final model is the product of knowledge gathered and refinements made throughout the course of the Pilot Program.

The RoadSTART model operates by linking adult learner drivers with volunteer mentors who provide supervised driving sessions. Participants for the program are selected through open application and referral from agencies with the satisfaction of key criteria essential for enrolment. This criteria, requires participants to be from a migrant or refugee background, have already attained their Learner's Permit, be 21 years of age or over, and have limited access to a car or suitable driving supervision.

Volunteers are trained through the L2P mentor training program delivered by Holmesglen Institute. Interviews, police background checks, and a driver history check are carried out for all prospective volunteers to determine their suitability for the mentor role. Dedicated RoadSTART vehicles are used for driving sessions and these are garaged at the Flemington Police Station where Police Officers are responsible for signing out vehicles to participants and volunteers. Participants pay \$15 per one hour session to subsidise fuel and running costs. A program officer administers the bookings of the vehicles in coordination with participant and volunteer availability. The Pilot began delivery of supervised driving sessions in March 2013 and concluded at end of May 2015.

Evaluation and Monitoring Framework

The RoadSTART Pilot Program evaluation framework tracks the implementation, supports the identification and resolution of issues throughout the cycle of the program and provides a tool to measure the outcomes at completion of the pilot. Throughout the implementation of the Pilot, an evaluation process has allowed the Steering Committee to capture the successes, learnings and ensure a continuous improvement approach.

Table One provides the RoadSTART Evaluation Framework objectives that were adopted at the outset of the program.

Table One: Program Objectives from Evaluation Framework

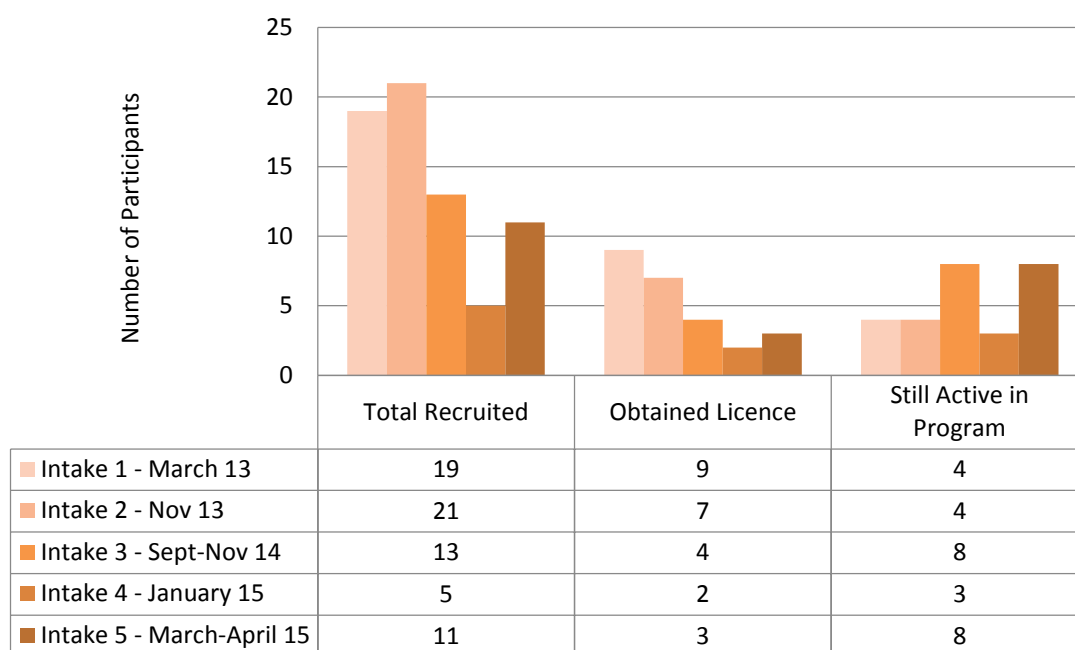
1. Program Participants
a. Program participants to be inclusive of gender and cultural backgrounds
b. Participants are successful in gaining their Probationary Drivers Licence
c. Document and review unmet demand of residents seeking to participate in program
2. Volunteers
a. Program volunteers to be inclusive of gender and cultural backgrounds
b. RoadSTART program provides a positive experience for volunteers
c. Retain volunteers throughout the mentor/mentee cycle of the program
3. Program Partners (Steering Committee)
a. Decisions are made through the Steering Committee and documented accurately
b. Program partners expertise is utilised through Steering Committee
4. Broader Community Impact
a. Employment outcomes for both learners and volunteers
b. Raise awareness of road safety
c. Create opportunities for positive messages in media regarding Flemington Housing Estate

1. Program Participants

A total of 69 participants were enrolled in the program with more than 2,300 hours of supervised driving practice delivered across the 27 months the program was active. Twenty five participants have achieved their Probationary Licence. Currently the program has twenty seven active participants, with fifteen completing over 40 hours of supervised practice and are planning to sit their probationary tests shortly.

Figure One displays the intake period of participants throughout the life of the program to date. Included is the proportion who went on to attain a probationary licence and those who are still active in the program.

Figure One: Number of Participants



Smaller intakes conducted more frequently were preferred in later enrolments as this allowed the program to better monitor, manage and support participants. As participants completed the program and learner numbers decreased, small intakes allowed program staff to effectively fill vacancies/availability and maintain driving hours.

Through the evaluation framework, exit interviews were conducted with all participants. Participants exited the program because either they attained their licence (there is no provision for a learner to stay in the program after this time), experienced personal circumstances preventing them from continuing, or were removed by program staff.

Personal reasons for leaving the program prior to achieving their licence included pregnancy (the physical, financial, and time stresses made continuing difficult), gaining employment (reducing eligibility and availability), the difficulty and effort required in learning to drive exceeded participants' expectations, or they could not be matched with a volunteer they wanted to learn from, particularly female participants requesting female volunteer instructors.

Participants who were removed from the program by staff resulted from a persistent disregard to supervisor instruction, a lack of demonstrated driving skill required for participation, and repeated lateness or absenteeism.

Another notable feature of **Figure One** is the four participants still active in the program from Intake One in March, 2013. This demonstrates the high level of support some learners require and the difficulties experienced in gaining the skills to learn to drive. The program resources utilised to address these particular cases was found to be beyond what RoadSTART could deliver per participant and changes were made to program policy to limit a six-month participation period for all participants. This allowed for a greater number of learners to access the program and resulted in a more efficient use of resources. This policy is explained in greater detail in a later section of this report.

Objective 1a. Program participants to be inclusive of gender and cultural backgrounds

RoadSTART participants are selected by open application and referral. This ensures that the process is fair and equitable for all who wish to apply. The selection criteria and testing for participant enrolment was refined over the program's lifespan. Conditions of entry at the conclusion of the program were that applicants:

- Hold a valid learner's permit
- Are over 21 years of age
- Are of a migrant or refugee background
- Have had driving lessons previously (or at least some driving experience)
- Have a basic level of English
- Can afford \$15 per session
- Can attend lessons in Flemington
- Receive government financial support / benefit

In order to be accepted into the program, applicants must meet requirements including verbal English language, recognition of road signs, and demonstrate basic vehicle control through a driving assessment, which is undertaken by a professional instructor.

Promotion and recruitment for the program focussed on the Flemington and Ascot Vale Housing Estates where a large population of people are from the horn of Africa resulting in a large proportion from this cultural background represented in the program. In addition to participants from the horn of Africa (Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Sudan), participants in the program have been from East Timor, Iraq, China, Morocco, India, and Vietnam.

Figure Two: Participant Gender Ratio - Overall

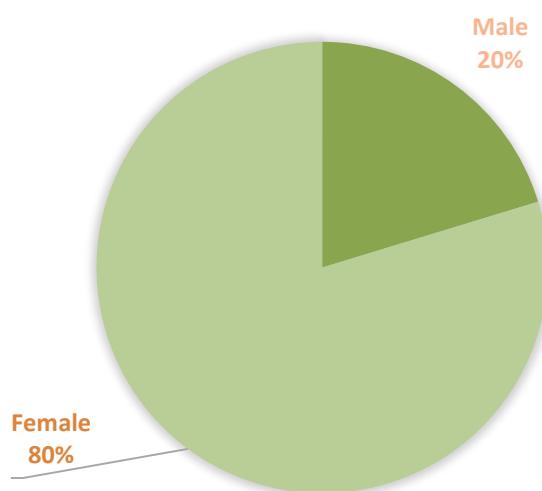


Figure Two illustrates, throughout the course of the program, there have been significantly more female learner drivers enrolled. There are a number of potential reasons for this including:

- higher proportion of females on the Flemington Estate;
- higher rate of female-lead, single parent families with less time and finances for driving lessons; and

- anecdotal evidence of a general trend in many cultures serviced by RoadSTART suggests that family and community resources are disproportionately prioritised in order for men to gain a licence. The same resources are often not afforded for females in these communities.

This trend has continued with females totalling 92% of current learner drivers enrolled.

Objective 2a. Participants are successful in gaining their Probationary Drivers Licence

As indicated, the benefits to attaining a driver's licence are many. There are both perceived benefits and actual benefits for those who wish to attain a licence. The following describes these benefits through a case study of a former participant and then evaluates the proportion of participants who attain a probationary licence from enrolment in the program.

A Story of Licence Success

Roza Fetene, is a 37 year old mother living on the Flemington Housing Estate, after migrating to Australia in 2010 from Ethiopia. Without a license, achieving required daily tasks of caring for her children, getting them to school, and shopping for the family groceries were very difficult. Searching for jobs was also a frustrating experience as many employers request a licence and prioritise candidates accordingly. The prospect of commuting to and from a place of employment was also daunting for Roza as most of the jobs on offer were in the northern suburbs not easily accessible by public transport. The lack of mobility Roza experienced when coming to Australia was isolating and led to a loss of confidence and self-esteem.

Roza found professional driving lessons far too expensive to gain the experience she required to attain her licence. Over the course of 40 driving sessions with the RoadSTART program, Roza developed her driving skills whilst simultaneously building her levels of confidence and self-esteem. Roza then passed her probationary licence test and was finally able to drive independently. Roza felt that after achieving her licence – a proud feat in itself – that possibilities were now open for employment, social connections, and better care for her family. Roza is now looking for work with a newfound confidence, managing the shopping for her family, and feeling more in control of her life.

Licence Statistics

Twenty five RoadSTART participants attained their licence over the course of the pilot program. These twenty five licences came in nine quarters of program delivery, or 2.8 licences per quarter. For a point of comparison with a similar driving program, the youth L2P program statistics from 2012 recorded average licences attained across all fifty five of its program sites, where 1.5 licences were attained per quarter, per program.¹

Of the twenty five participants who attained their licence, six achieved this after moving on from the program. All six were successful within one year of concluding their enrolment. This demonstrates that many participants continue to persevere after their enrolment in an effort to achieve their licence and the RoadSTART program contributes to this achievement.

¹ Freethy, "L2P – learner driver mentor program: extending driver licensing reach in disadvantaged communities" Journal of the Australasian College of Road Safety, Vol 23, No. 4, 212, page. 48.

Figure Four: Proportion of participants who have attained a probationary licence

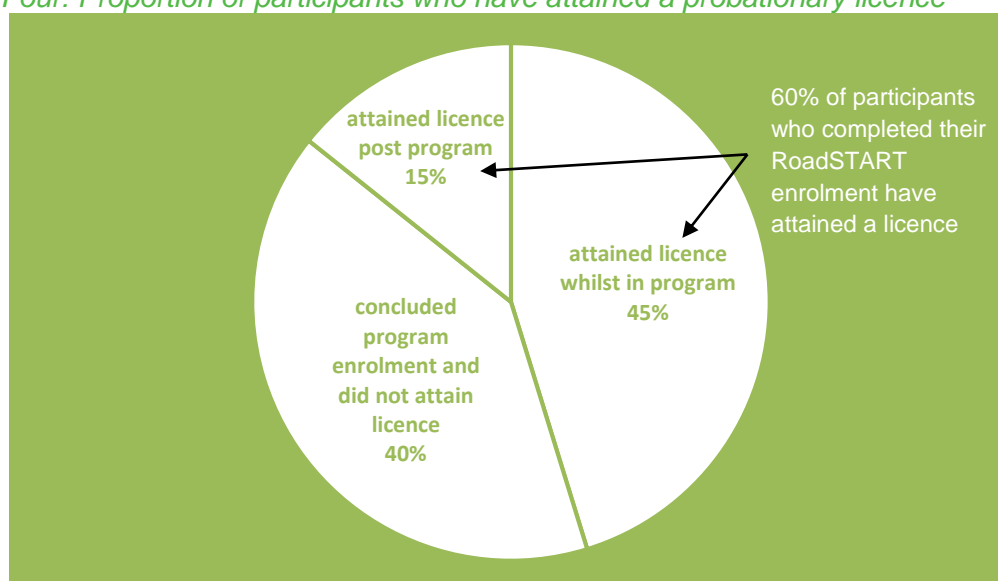
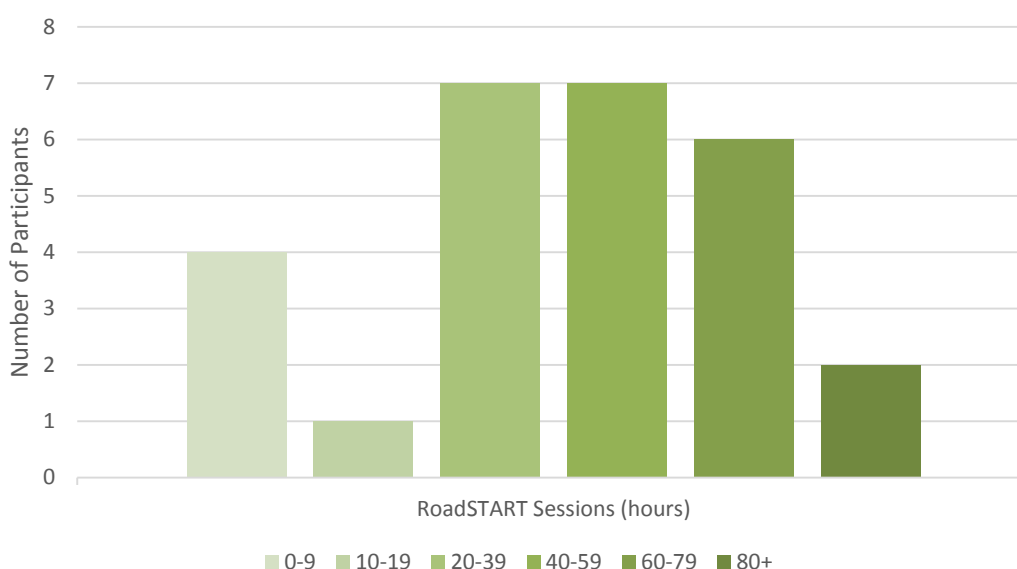


Figure Four illustrates that a total of 60% of participants attained a probationary licence.² It should be noted that early learner intakes for the Pilot comprised entirely of learners who remained on the waitlist for the previous Moonee Valley Legal Service Driver Education Program. These participants were challenging cases as they were the most inexperienced drivers to apply for the former program. The figure of 60% is significant in view of this fact. Of the participants still in the program (27), 81% have had 20 sessions or more, and 56% have had 40 sessions or more.

Figure Five illustrates that the current pool of learner drivers are experienced, with many expected to sit drive tests in the coming weeks. Many more licence successes are therefore anticipated in the near future.

Figure Five: Current participants – number of sessions taken with RoadSTART (hours)³



² This figure excludes the 27 participants who are still in the program and have not yet completed their enrolment.

³ It should be noted that, in most cases, participants have had driving experience prior to their RoadSTART enrolment, making their overall experience greater than that illustrated by figure five.

Objective 1c. Document and review unmet demand of residents seeking to participate in program

There has been significant ongoing demand for participation in the RoadSTART program from its launch in 2012. The initial demand for this program was identified by several local agencies. Across 2010 and 2011 Moonee Valley Legal Service (MVLS) delivered a small scale driving program which had considerable outcomes for the local community given its limited resources.

On completion of the program, there was an extensive waiting list of over 300 people still requiring support, prompting partners to investigate and advocate for further resourcing. This culminated in funding for the RoadSTART program. The Legal Service reviewed the previous waitlist and transferred those applicants who were able to be contacted and who were still eligible and interested, to the RoadSTART program. These applicants comprised the first and second intakes of participants. Applications after these intakes were then opened to the wider Moonee Valley community.

Learner demand has been strong throughout the program's lifespan with regular enquiries made to reception of Flemington Community Centre without any promotion. Unfortunately demand has always far exceeded supply and identifying the best strategy for taking expressions of interest was an evolving process. After the initial intake from MVLS a waitlist was not established for RoadSTART to avoid raising expectations of applicants, particularly when the timeframe and parameters of the program were still being tested. In the latter stages of the pilot program the prerequisites for entry into the program were tightened to best utilise program resources.

In August 2014 the RoadSTART program held a participant enrolment day with 65 people expressing interest, with 38 meeting entry criteria for the program. Of those that were not successful many lived outside the program area, did not have valid Learners Permit or could not demonstrate adequate English language skills.

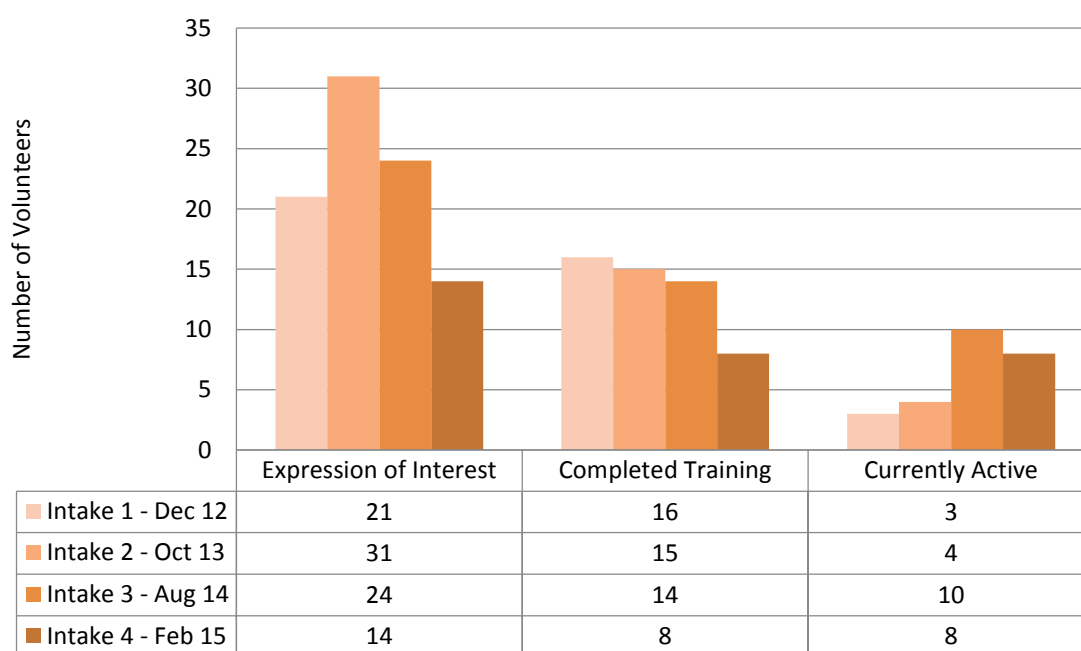
After the list of applicants from this enrolment day had been assessed and transferred onto a waiting list, it enabled a more regular participant enrolment process. Subsequently, the RoadSTART program trialled smaller, more frequent application sessions which occurred once a month for two to three hours on a set day and time. The most recent sessions in May and June 2015 had twelve and thirteen applicants respectively, meeting the initial criteria, and have been added to the waiting list. The promotion for these sessions was limited to Flemington and Wingate Avenue Community Centres.

This new method of having set dates in which applications are received was introduced to better structure the process of taking expressions of interest. This utilised program staff time more effectively, where in the past interested parties would attend the RoadSTART office all times of the week. From these sessions the current waiting list stands at 45. This wait list grows faster than the program can admit new participants.

2. Volunteers

RoadSTART sessions were delivered by a dedicated pool of volunteers who contributed their time to supervise learner drivers on the road. In total, 90 people submitted an expression of interest to become a volunteer with the program and 53 of these completed the compulsory training. Over time 25 volunteers left the program with 25 currently active and three away on leave.

Figure Six: Number of Volunteers



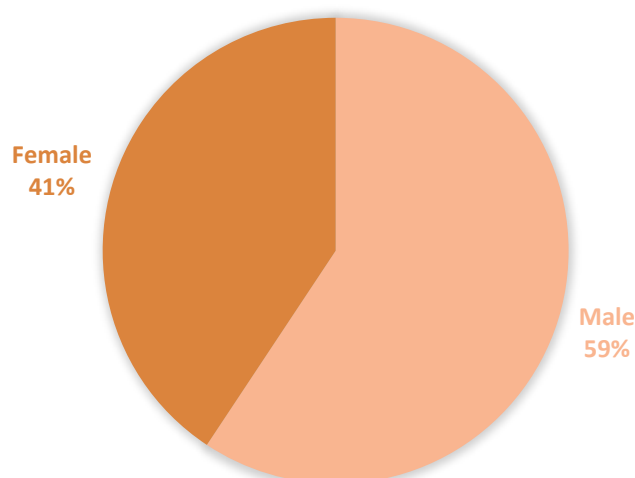
To join the program, volunteers were required to undergo an application and assessment process to ensure their suitability for the program. The RACV conducted training for the first two intakes of RoadSTART volunteers, with subsequent intakes linked in with VicRoad's L2P training delivered by Holmesglen Institute. This partnership with VicRoads resulted in a more efficient use of resources with both RoadSTART and Moonee Valley L2P programs coordinating combined training sessions. Training sessions aimed to educate volunteers on the phases of learning to drive, the mentoring role of a driving supervisor and practical supervisory experience in the car.

Objective 2a. Program volunteers to be inclusive of gender and cultural backgrounds

The majority of volunteers found out about the program from Council staff, including Flemington Community Centre, fliers, family and friends and word of mouth. A smaller number found out about volunteer opportunities through Flemington Rotary and the Flemington Police Station.

Around two thirds of volunteers currently in the program are male. Over the course of the program it has been more difficult to attract female volunteers to the role. A number of participants preferred female volunteers and if not met were more likely to leave the program early.

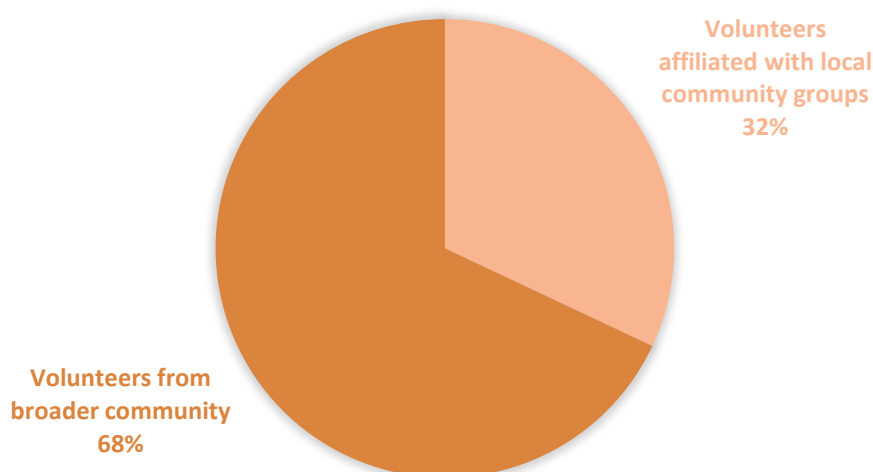
Figure Eight: Overall Volunteer Gender Ratio



Conversely, many learner drivers have also stated that they prefer male supervisors as there is a cultural perception amongst some that men will give them better driving instruction. Positively, despite these misperceptions, four of the eight volunteers trained in February 2015 were female and all are still active in the program.

The initial model aimed to primarily engage with people from the Flemington Housing Estate for volunteer positions as a means of supporting the development of employment skills. However, there proved to be less capacity and interest than anticipated with many potential supervisors working casually or in shift work and were unable to commit to scheduled sessions. Recruitment was then directed further afield. Eight of the 25 current volunteer pool have ties to the local migrant communities, either living within the community or having social and family connections. The remaining seventeen are from the broader community with no direct ties.

Figure Nine: Proportion of current volunteers with ties to migrant and refugee communities



Having a mix of volunteers from both the local and broader community gives the program a rich and diverse range of knowledge and experience from which to draw. This mix was seen as ultimately important to program success: too many broader community members and the program may lose legitimacy with local migrant community groups; too few volunteers from broader community and the program will lack the skills and expertise of potential supervisors who have been driving on Australian roads under Australian rules for long periods. Both are essential demographics for a successful RoadSTART volunteer pool.

Objective 2b. RoadSTART program provides a positive experience for volunteers

Through the evaluation process, volunteers advised why they wished to contribute to the RoadSTART program. For many volunteers, the focus was on contributing and giving back to the local community and more specifically supporting newly arrived migrants and refugees.

“[I joined RoadSTART] to counter some of the anti-migrant sentiment...[and] hopefully demonstrate that a majority of citizens are pleased to have people joining us from other countries”

Volunteer Supervisor

Many volunteers stated the experience was an opportunity to give practical support to those in need. Helping learners achieve their driver's licence was a hands-on and attainable goal that volunteers felt would assist directly with employment and family life. Several volunteers also reported that it was a convenient way to help local community members whilst either working part-time, unemployed, or retired as the one hour sessions easily fitted into their schedules.

“I enjoy participating in something positive in our local community...[and] contributing to improving opportunities for the individuals involved...”

I am gaining [a] cultural exchange which is enjoyable and enriching [as well as gaining] experience and skills in training and instruction which I can transfer into future endeavours...”

Volunteer Supervisor

In order to make the experience a positive one, volunteer feedback is an important aspect to the program model development and this has been listened to and acted upon throughout the program. Volunteer feedback cited several difficulties in successfully mentoring learners. Cancellations of lessons occurred due to illness of the participant or their children, doctor's appointments, lack of financial means to pay, study commitments, and being unable to find child care. These cancelled lessons meant participant progress was often slow with intermittent sessions causing learners to forget what had been taught and merely refreshing previous knowledge and skills. In response, program policies were introduced to address cancellations and ensure swifter learner progress. A three-strike policy was implemented as well as the two sessions per week becoming a requirement.

Case Study of the Volunteer Experience: Sharyn Raffa

Sharyn was part of the first intake of volunteers for the program, supervising a total of 105 sessions with three female participants between March and November 2013.

Sharyn reported that she enjoyed volunteering as it was inspiring and gave her the opportunity to meet some wonderful people. The impetus for her joining the program was to give migrant and refugee women independence and confidence, to connect with multicultural residents, and make the community's roads safer. These aspects of the program she found very rewarding. Sharyn was also proud to be interviewed by SBS World News for a segment about the program and received a Meritorious Award from the Spirit of Moonee Valley for her contribution to RoadSTART.



Sharyn contributed greatly to the initial stages of the program, both in her commitment to supervising many sessions over a number of months and the feedback she gave the program to ensure continuous improvement. This was a pivotal part of the evaluation in gaining insight from mentors who were in the vehicles experiencing first-hand the positives and challenges that RoadSTART presented in its early stages.

Objective 2c. Retain volunteers throughout the mentor/mentee cycle of the program

As a consequence of positive experiences and program improvements, volunteer retention has improved significantly over the last two intakes.

Figure Ten: Volunteer Retention

	Completed Training	Supervised One Lesson or More	Still in Program after 3 months	Still in Program after 6months	Still in Program after 12months
Intake 1 (Dec 2012)	16	14	6	4	2
Intake 2 (Oct 2013)	15	10	7	4	4
Intake 3 (Aug 2014)	14	13	13	13	n/a
Intake 4 (Feb 2015)	8	8	8	n/a	n/a

In response to previous issues, retention was a focus of intakes three and four, with all but one prospective mentor going on to supervise lessons after the training and subsequently remaining in the program. This is in contrast to intakes one and two in which only 88% and 67% respectively of those who completed training supervised one lesson or more, and then only 38% and 47% respectively were still in the program after three months.

The reason for this improved retention rate is a concerted effort towards increasing volunteer engagement, including:

- Improved lines of communication with program staff
- More responsibility and accountability through reporting on lesson outcomes
- More opportunities for volunteers to meet and share experiences through social engagement, recognition events and volunteer development meetings with guest speakers

Challenges with volunteer recruitment

Challenges with volunteer recruitment were the limited training sessions available throughout the course of the program. The program received expressions of interest continually, not just in response to periodical recruitment drives, and it was often difficult to place them in training in a timely fashion. There were regular situations where volunteers would lose interest or find alternate volunteer opportunities before training could be arranged. The option was available to link applicants with L2P training sessions being held across Melbourne. However as all metropolitan L2P programs contend for any extra places so competition is tight and the sessions that were held in accessible locations often did not have the space available to allocate extra places for RoadSTART applicants. It was not always practical or possible to run a dedicated session for RoadSTART as we were not able to meet the required a minimum 12 participants. Efforts were made to coordinate shared training sessions with Moonee Valley L2P and these were largely successful with several training sessions being shared in the latter stages of the program.

3. Program Partners (Steering Committee)

The Rotary Club of Flemington was instrumental in making this program a reality, bringing together the partnership of the RoadSTART Steering Committee and undertaking the advocacy to achieve pilot funding. With Moonee Valley City Council as the lead agency, the formal partnership included the Rotary Club of Flemington, VicRoads, New Hope Foundation, Moonee Valley Legal Service, Wingate Avenue Community Centre and Victoria Police. All partners are represented on the Steering Committee which is responsible for monitoring and guiding the direction of the program and ensuring continuous improvement.

Objective 3a. Decisions are made through the Steering Committee and documented accurately

The RoadSTART Steering Committee has met on twenty occasions since drafting its Terms of Reference in October 2012. All policy decisions and program changes made throughout the program have been discussed and determined within these meetings along with specific individual case decisions. Two specific examples that affected change include:

- A new model was proposed by project staff to the Steering Committee and was approved in January 2015. The model was then implemented in February 2015.
- On two occasions in 2013 (March and April respectively) the RoadSTART Steering Committee considered and approved the removal of participants who were found to be unsuitable candidates for the program subsequent to their enrolment.

Objective 3b. Program partners' expertise is utilised through Steering Committee

The Steering Committee Membership was initially based on services that had been involved in the previous program at Moonee Valley Legal Services or expressed interest in the development of the pilot program. The breadth of expertise in the group was highly beneficial in guiding the development and change, listed below are the key agencies involved and their area of expertise provided over time:

Moonee Valley City Council

- Knowledge of the local community and experience volunteer based programs
- Experience in management of the L2P program

Rotary Club of Flemington

- Experience in volunteer based programs
- Knowledge of the local community

Wingate Avenue Community Centre

- Knowledge of the local community
- Experience in volunteer based programs

Moonee Valley Legal Service

- Knowledge of the local community
- Experience in management of the previous adult migrant driver education program

VicRoads

- Knowledge gathered from oversight of the state wide L2P program
- Understanding of road safety issues and policy

Victoria Police

- Knowledge of the local community, specifically regarding road safety issues
- Advice on legal requirements

New Hope Foundation

- Knowledge of the local community
- Knowledge of issues facing newly arrived and refugee communities

4. Broader Community Impact

The evaluation framework includes monitoring the broader community impact of the program which incorporates community connectedness, road safety awareness and promoting a positive image of Flemington and its residents.

Objective 4a. Employment outcomes for both learners and volunteers

It is important to note the benefits of increased mobility on a participant's ability to access training and employment. Twelve of RoadSTART's past and present participants have been linked in with Flemington Neighbourhood Renewal's Career Link program. This is a valuable collaboration of programs as it ensures that when a learner attains a probationary licence their employment and training search is already underway.

"I can get a job anywhere not just locally"

Former Participant

A specific partnership was established with Matchworks, a local Job Service Agency, enabling them to directly refer and fund clients into the program. Matchworks referred a total of four clients into the program, with two going on to attain their licence after sessions with the program.

"RoadSTART was just the beginning...I got involved in childcare training [through Career Link] and with my licence I can get to job interviews"

"...because a lot of jobs ask for licence, I can apply for more jobs"

Two Former Participants

One female volunteer has used this role to explore her options for future employment. She has investigated two employment possibilities directly related with her experiences gained as a RoadSTART volunteer: language interpreter and driving instructor. After being in the program she has seen the need for more female interpreters and driving instructors from her cultural group. With help from Career Link she is currently investigating business loan options to help finance a qualification in interpreting services.

Objective 4b. Raise awareness of road safety

In a direct sense the program improves road safety by ensuring each learner has adequate driving experience before driving unaccompanied with their probationary licence. Indirectly, the RoadSTART program builds driving capacity and knowledge within new and emerging communities. Each graduate of RoadSTART – whether or not they achieve a licence – takes knowledge back to their social networks and shares the experiences gained. This promotes attitudinal change within community groups about road safety and the importance of appropriate licensing.

"I'm new to Australia, so [RoadSTART] helped me a lot with being confident about the road laws"

Former Participant

Through the FNR Board further resourcing and effort should be considered to develop and deliver a broader road safety education program involving more than just the participants enrolled as participants.

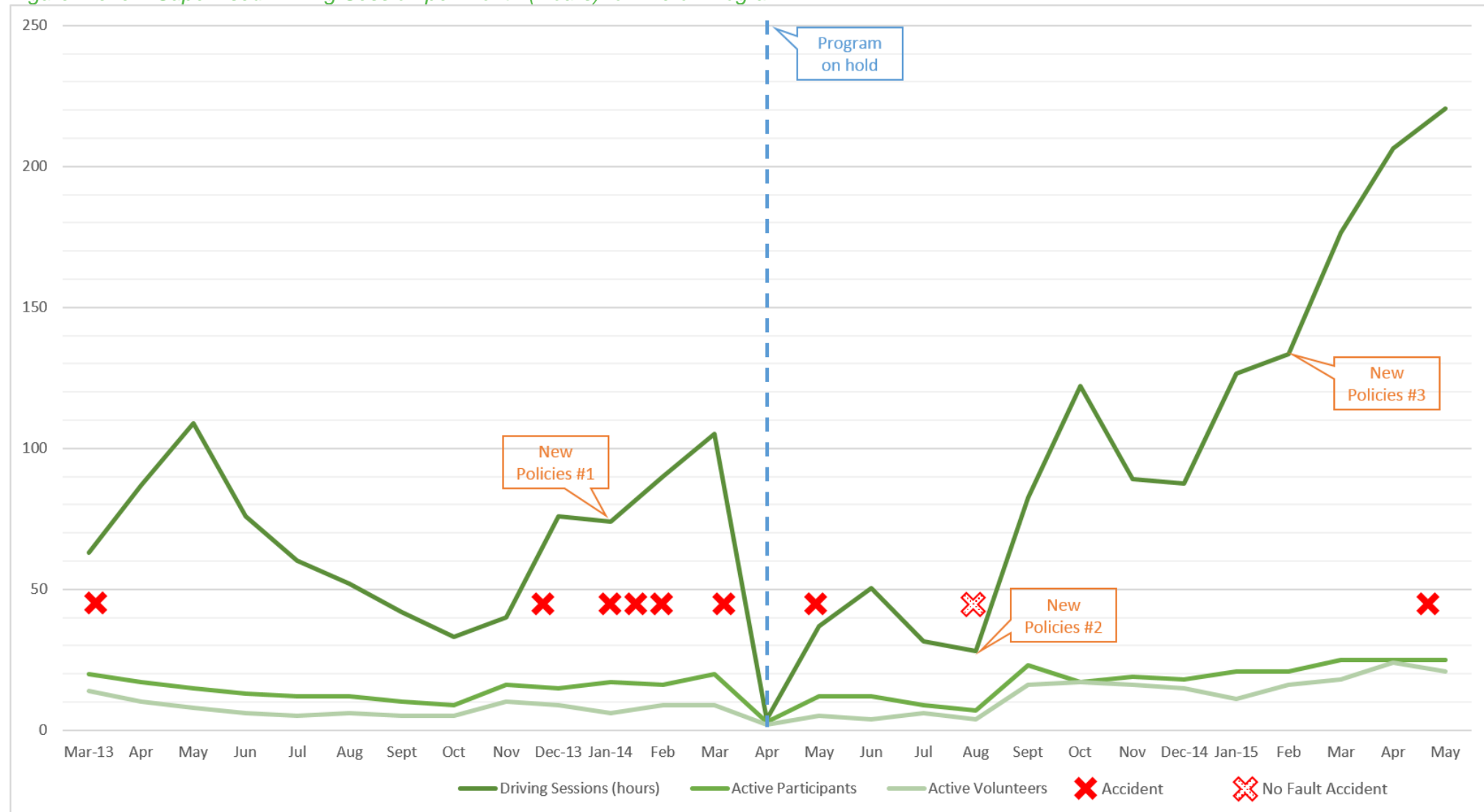
Objective 4c. Create opportunities for positive messages in media regarding Flemington Housing Estate

Positive media messages were developed through several articles highlighting the success of the RoadSTART program in local media. The RoadSTART program was also highlighted on SBS television news.



Session Data and Car Usage

Figure Eleven: Supervised Driving Session per Month (Hours) for Life of Program



The car usage data at Figures 11a and 11b, demonstrate the periods of change that RoadSTART underwent over its program life. The funding agreement provided a target of 20 hours per car per week of supervised driving, as there were two vehicles, the target for the program was a total of 40 hours per week or 174 hours per calendar month. The program achieved this target in the last three calendar months following significant policy and process changes was trending upwards into the future (March 176.5, April 206.5, May 220.5). For a point of comparison with a similar driving program, the youth L2P program statistics from 2012 recorded average lesson data across all 55 of its programs of 72.7 hours of lessons per calendar month for a single vehicle.⁴

The raft of improvements to program policy particularly those made in August 2014 and February 2015 have resulted in drastic returns on lesson hours delivered to participants.

It is important to note the period of April 2014 in which the program was suspended while funding was confirmed and staffing changed.

Important periods to note that regularly effect lesson numbers:

- The Christmas period: many volunteers are unavailable for the Christmas holiday period. This is also a time when many participants travel as their children have a lengthy break from school
- Ramadan: the Islamic period of fasting causes many participants to halt lessons for the holy month. As can be seen in the lesson data above, Ramadan began in 2013 on July 9, and in 2014 on June 29 (the decrease in lessons over these periods has been compounded by the fact that Ramadan has fallen in Winter for the past two years)

Accidents in the RoadSTART vehicles were of notable improvement over the last year of delivery with only one reported accident the fault of a participant or volunteer.⁵ The increase in monthly sessions over this period makes this an especially stark improvement with many more individuals driving the cars more often resulting in fewer accidents. This can be directly attributed to many of the improvements to participant enrolment criteria noted in the following section. It is important to add that there has never been an injury as a result of a RoadSTART vehicle and all accidents have resulted in very minor damage to vehicles.

Accidents in RoadSTART Vehicles

Date	Notes
26-Mar-13	minor scratch whilst learning to park
20-Dec-13	reversing from a car park
08-Jan-14	minor scratch whilst learning to park
21-Jan-14	Right-hand side mirror broken (driver's side). Car not drivable due to safety
16-Feb-14	minor scratch whilst driving
17-Mar-14	car accident with another vehicle
07-May-14	minor scratch whilst driving
01-Aug-14	<i>No fault</i> – hit and run by other vehicle at roundabout in Flemington – damage to RoadSTART vehicle
16-May-15	minor damage to front side of vehicle whilst reversing

⁴ Freethy, "L2P – learner driver mentor program: extending driver licensing reach in disadvantaged communities" Journal of the Australasian College of Road Safety, Vol 23, No. 4, 212, page. 48. It is important to note that L2P reports on 'matches' between participant and volunteer and not on hours per week *per se*; this is merely a point of comparison with a similar Victorian program.

⁵ There was one additional accident in August 2014 that was the fault of another driver in a 'hit and run' incident.

Program Resourcing

The RoadSTART program was initially funded with a \$100,000 grant from the Minister for Roads as well as over \$25,000 in corporate sponsorship (including in kind usage of CityLink tolls). Council also provided significant in kind and actual funds. As this was the first program of its kind the initial budget breakdown was an estimate only. Over the pilot period the expenditure pattern, including the number of cars, experience required of staffing and volunteer support requirements varied.

The table below outlines average the costs associated with the final program model to be used as a guide for any organisations interested in replicating the program. This budget is based on RoadSTART's delivery in Moonee Valley, with two vehicles and a Band 5 Project Officer three days per week.

Figure Twelve: Average annual budget model

Budget		Notes
Income		
Lesson Payments	\$23,400	\$15 per lesson, 30 lessons per week
Expenditure		
Staffing and on costs	\$46,000	Program Officer (LGA Band 5, FTE 0.6)
Vehicle Costs	\$6,000	Fuel, maintenance, insurance and repairs
Professional Lessons	\$5,880	Average 10 per month (\$49 each with RACV)
Operating Costs	\$3,000	Printing, catering, training and venue hire
Total		
	\$37,480	Ongoing annual costs

The RoadSTART Pilot Program initially included reimbursement to volunteers at \$10 per session, although this was later limited to volunteers on a low income/concession card. Individual programs would need to consider the viability and necessity of reimbursing volunteers.

There are many options for sourcing a vehicle, including purchasing outright, leasing, or seeking sponsorship. The initial RoadSTART funding included an allowance to purchase three vehicles, however the steering committee had chosen to only purchase two and extend program timelines through the pilot phase. Additionally the number of vehicles would need to be considered according to demand and staffing hours. The RoadSTART Pilot often felt strain on staffing in delivering up to 50 hours of sessions on staffing of 3 days per week.

Continuous Improvements to Program

There have been considerable learnings from the program, with many progressive changes throughout to improve the program. Broadly, these can be categorised into three phases as follows:

Phase 1 Improvements: January 2014

- 3-strike policy introduced due to recurrent lateness and absenteeism from learners
- 10 minute late cancellation policy introduced
- 2 session per week minimum requirement introduced to ensure learner skill progress
- Second vehicle moved from Moonee Ponds Police Station to Flemington Police Station due to lack of use

Phase 2 Improvements: August 2014

- Participant enrolment prerequisites introduced: road sign test, basic English test, and 'stage 2' driving assessment conducted by the RACV
- Measures aimed at volunteer engagement included improved lines of communication through reporting on lesson outcomes and regular meetings with guest speakers.

Phase 3 Improvements: February 2015

A further six months of funded delivery and a milestone review, inclusive of analysis of program data, identified further opportunity to refine the program, particularly with vehicle use still under anticipated usage. A final program model was developed and introduced. This included:

- A six-month participation window for learner drivers (six month enrolment). Giving the program a finite duration put the onus back on participants to be proactive and engaged in the program, allowing the RoadSTART program to reach and benefit more learners in need
- This would allow participants to receive a minimum of 52 sessions over the period of enrolment
- Each participant was subject to a one-month probationary period in which all program conditions needed to be satisfied in order to continue in the program for the remaining five months.

Other changes added to the new model included:

- A waiting list was re-established to enable regular enrolment of participants once availability opens up, this reduced the resource intensive enrolment day process, which took significant time to promote and manage and created confusion as to how to register.
- Volunteer reimbursements were only offered to those on a Centrelink benefit, which provided savings to the program to assist in sustainability
- Cancellation policy was extended to 48 hours prior to lesson to allow adequate notice to volunteers and allow reallocation of lesson time
- Participants had to pay the full \$49 fee for the RACV assessment and were reimbursed \$34 after the lesson was attended reducing expense to program for people who do not attend their appointment. Participants who were unsuccessful on their first assessment attempt were charged \$49 for subsequent attempts without reimbursement.

These improvements resulted in increased numbers of lessons being delivered weekly, higher volunteer retention and satisfaction, and an increase in the number of licences achieved. There were also fewer accidents and less damage to vehicles.

Recommendations for Future Programs

The RoadSTART Pilot Program has positively impacted upon people's lives and has been in high demand throughout its tenure. The evaluation indicates the ongoing improvements made throughout the Pilot Program, resulted in the development of a sustainable and efficient model. The changes made in phase two and three were particularly effective in increasing program outputs and reducing risks. This section provides information for other localities who would wish to adopt a similar program model. It includes recommendations for potential future improvements to the model and options for programs in other localities.

Further improvements for consideration

The following are reflections on further potential improvements that could be considered for similar 'RoadSTART' programs run in the future:

- Utilisation of software for reporting session data ('MMARS' used by L2P could be explored as one option)
- Explore the possibility of participants and volunteers booking vehicles for sessions in an online calendar. This is, of course, contingent on the computer literacy and access of all involved, though a portion could be found to be capable and this would reduce part of the administrative burden of lesson bookings
- Clarify and strengthen new targets for program delivery (including participant and volunteer numbers, sessions per week and per annum, and licences obtained)
- Explore options for more timely and convenient volunteer training to ensure retention of those who express interest
- Investigate the possibility of linking with organisations who can provide opportunities for large volunteer intakes

Options and opportunities for other localities

Each program site adopting a model similar to RoadSTART is likely to have their own unique set of circumstances requiring alterations to the model. In order to deliver the appropriate driving experience for local conditions alterations would need to be made. For instance, a program adopted in a rural area may need to have a focus of driving on unsealed roads and sharing roads with livestock, with less of a focus on city driving. Sites may also need to consider their own policies regarding participant fees and volunteer reimbursements.

Throughout the delivery of the RoadSTART program, the steering committee identified a number of additional opportunities and requirements for road safety programs. For example driving related literacy such as reading understanding road signs and the saturation of wider road safety campaigns such as installing child car seats and 'dob-a-hoon'. Responding to these requirements requires further resourcing than provided within the RoadSTART model.

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