

**A Whole of Government approach to
reducing drink drive re-offending.**

The Success of the NSW Sober Driver Program.

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The Sober Driver Program

- Statewide education and relapse prevention program for repeat drink drivers.
- Must have committed two drink drive offences in 5 years.
- Participation in the program is part of drink drive sentence.

The Sober Driver Program

Developed by whole of Government committee made up of:

- Roads and Traffic Authority.
- Motor Accidents Authority.
- Department of Corrective Services.
- Attorney General's Department.

The Sober Driver Program

- Based on best practice elements pertaining to educating traffic offenders.
- SDP is a linear and interactive program reflecting key adult education and psychological principles.
- Guides participants from the 'big picture', passive learning environment to individually focussed active learning.

The Sober Driver Program

Delivered by Department of Corrective Services, Community Offenders Service through 51 district offices across 63 locations in NSW.

- Around 100 courses offered each year.
- Commenced as a pilot in 2002 and was rolled out statewide in June 2003.
- 5032 offenders have enrolled and 4223 have completed the program (84%).

Program Goals

- Provide accurate information about effects of alcohol on the body and ability to drive.
- Develop participants understanding of costs of drink driving on self and community.
- Assist participants to develop skills and positive attitudes for safe driving.
- Assist participants to develop and implement strategies to avoid relapse.

Program Formats

- Standard format
9 week duration, 2 hours per week
- Condensed format
Three weeks, one day per week
(six hours per day)

The evaluation

- Independent
- Program logic and realist approach
- Over seen by Interagency committee
 - Roads and Traffic Authority
 - Motor Accidents Authority
 - Department of Corrective Services
 - Attorney General's Department
 - Drug Health Services, University of Sydney
- Duration: July 2004 to March 2006

Evaluation Methodology

- Quasi-experimental design to measure changes in participant's knowledge, attitudes, self reported behaviour and drink drive offending behaviour.
- Pre, post and six-month self-completed surveys (all consenting participants from Sept 04 to July 05).
- 200 participants completed all 3 questionnaires. 42% consent rate and 49% loss through attrition.

Evaluation Methodology

- In-depth interviews at same time points with 56 participants.
- Survival analysis of re-offending rates of 1,740 SDP participants and 9,667 drink driver offenders in a comparison group.

Evaluation Methodology

Mixed methods to assess the effectiveness of implementation and explain observed impacts.

- Survey of 100 facilitators.
- Six discussion groups with court users.
- Semi-structured interviews with:
 - ❖ 20 magistrates
 - ❖ 30 facilitators
 - ❖ 40 DCS district managers

Results -Implementation

- Streamlined management.
- Consistent delivery.
- Well received by participating offenders.
- Well received by Community Offender Service.

Results -Effectiveness

SDP participants are

half as likely to re-offend compared with repeat drink drivers who have not completed a course and have similar characteristics (completed program).

- *Sober Driver*: 5% recidivism after 2 yrs
- *Non-Sober Driver*: 10%

Results -Impact

For every 1,000 Sober Driver
Participants

- About 50 fewer people charged with a repeat drink driving offence within two years

Reasons for the Impact

- Improved knowledge of the effects of alcohol on self and others.
- Changes to anti-social attitudes to drinking and driving.
- Assists many individuals to identify their own unsafe behaviour patterns.

Issues for the future

- Uptake of program by magistrates is uneven.
- Uneven delivery means relatively low referrals in some areas with high rates of drink drive offending.
- Many offenders are not undertaking treatment for alcohol dependency.
- Maintaining the success of the program.

Benefit Cost Ratio

- RTA commissioned an estimation of economic value or BCR of the Sober Driver program in 2006.
- Two BCRs were calculated:
 - one hypothetically calculated from when program started as 1.6
 - one for continuation of the program from 2007 onwards as 1.9
- From 2009 the yearly benefits are 2.3 times the costs.

Future of the Program

The Sober Driver Program is currently funded by the Roads and Traffic authority until July 2010 and will continue to be delivered by the Department of Corrective Services (DCS) under a memorandum of understanding.

The RTA will be working with DCS, the Attorney General's Department and the Chief Magistrate's Office to promote the Sober Driver Program and increase uptake of the program for eligible offenders.

Conclusion

The Sober Driver Program is an excellent model of how government agencies with different corporate objectives can work together to develop and implement an effective statewide program that addresses challenging road safety problems.

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