

Project 85

Rnd 1 - Year 2

Community Road Safety Grants

EVALUATION

'SURVIVING NORTH WEST ROADS'



31st October – 2nd November, 2003

A RoadWise funded project carried out by Exmouth
Police in conjunction with local Government agencies.

Prepared by:
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Senior Constable 7144
Exmouth Police Station

January 12th, 2004

DISTRIBUTION LIST

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‘SURVIVING NORTH WEST ROADS’

(Reference TRN1221)

Background

In early 2003 concern was raised by Exmouth Police about the many vehicles travelling our roads with unstable / insecure loads. Some crashes had occurred where the incorrect loading of vehicles had been a contributing factor. In response, Exmouth Police initiated a program to address this and other road safety concerns by holding a public forum.

To target the problem, Police applied for and were awarded a grant from the Road Safety Council. A project aim was to educate road users when motoring, particularly in the North West. The project was part of a local road safety initiative with particular reference to movement of four-wheel-drive vehicles travelling on and off road in the Gascoyne/Pilbara region.

Due to the demographics of the region, towns like Exmouth and Coral Bay attract numerous tourists from all over. Most people arrive by private vehicle, predominantly using four-wheel-drives. These are usually fully laden, often with heavy roof racks and/or towing other vehicles such as boats, caravans or trailers.

The isolation and distances involved are vast and usually require a very long drive (min 4/5 hours +). This can be wearying and factors such as fatigue, heat, road trains and frustration can lead to silly mistakes with sometimes-fatal consequences.

The project, ‘Surviving North West Roads’ sought to demonstrate basic skills to improve road use. Its basis was to educate motorists by leading them on a practical convoy from Exmouth to Carnarvon. The exercise ran for three days, heading to Carnarvon via coastal off-road tracks and returning via the highway.

Assisting Police with the project were the Local State Emergency Service, RoadWise & CALM. Besides demonstrating correct road use, the project sort to build participant’s confidence & general driving skill when travelling on the north’s often lonely, isolated roads.

Aim

The aim of the project was: TO IMPROVE DRIVER SKILLS ON NORTH WEST ROADS.

Objectives

The objectives were:

1. To create awareness when driving on North West Roads with regard to loading, distance and fatigue.
2. To improve reaction time when braking in an emergency. ✓
3. To improve skills when reversing with attached second vehicle (trailer etc.)
4. To increase understanding of the bodies physiology when consuming alcohol.
5. To understand and reinforce road traffic rules.

Outcomes

The outcomes were:

1. Future reduction in vehicular crashes.
2. Improved driver skills.

Participants

Details of the project were advertised on local bulletin boards two months in advance. The project was well received and attracted widespread interest. To ensure safety and comfort, it was agreed to limit the number of vehicles to a maximum of ten. This quota was quickly filled and resulted in 28 adults attending.

The convoy travelled together, usually spread over a distance of approximately 3 – 4 kilometres, depending on conditions. There were no reported incidents and all participants returned safely without mishap.

A briefing was held several weeks prior to commencing the exercise. This was held to introduce participants & organisers and determine the level of expertise and special skills within group. The meeting included suggestions for provision of necessities such as; water, fuel, spares and food. The itinerary was discussed and also action in the event of an emergency.

How Were The Objectives Met?

The objectives were met by holding daily information sessions. These sessions were contributed by various agency personnel who had special skills or expertise in a particular area. The sessions varied in length from forty minutes to two hours and were held in an informal atmosphere. Many included demonstrations followed by practical application by participants.

How Did Agencies Benefit the Project?

Road Safety Council / RoadWise - The organisers incorporated several of the strategies targeted in the document 'Arriving Safely' Road Safety Strategy for WA 2003 – 2007.

Education and reinforcement of key behaviours included;

- (a) Speed v Distance - The correlation between travel speed and stopping distance while conducting practice in Emergency Stopping. In this session, the results of each vehicle were measured and participants were shown how a small increase in speed proved disproportionate when trying to stop.
- (b) Drink Driving – During the evening participants were asked to estimate when they thought they had a BAC of .05%. Many people estimated their level either well short of this or well over. This exercise helped people more accurately gauge their level and also identified the many factors affecting a person's BAC.
- (c) Fatigue – To demonstrate responsible driving, the convoy stopped hourly to have a break and allow drivers to refresh themselves. Participants were encouraged to adopt this habit as a way of maintaining concentration and reducing the danger of fatigue. Participants were also shown and encouraged to increase their visibility by following the example of government vehicles in using Daytime Running Lights.

WA Police Service

Road Safety is one of the priorities included in the Pilbara Police District Annual Business Plan 2003 – 2004. Part of the district focus is to support Statewide and National Road Safety strategies and work in partnership with the community to improve road safety behaviour.

The project followed this direction, integrating it at the grass roots level. As demonstrated above, it incorporated statewide strategies, and further, brought together other agencies to work in partnership within the community.

With the assistance of RoadWise, State Emergency Service and CALM, the project was able to provide expert skills in a proactive approach. The combined effort complemented the following areas of local concern, including;

- (a) *Correct Loading* - Interior / exterior and second vehicles, to ensure stability and reduce injury from projectiles.
- (b) *Emergency Braking* – Carried out at 50 and 70kph to improve reaction time, correctly manage skid control and demonstrate correlation between travel speed and stopping distance.
- (c) *Speedo Testing* – Vehicle’s speed measured against Police radar to ensure accurate calibration.
- (d) *Steering Control* – Timed speed weave to improve steering control.
- (e) *Road Rules Campfire Quiz Night* – Informal night aimed at improving participant’s knowledge of road rules with prizes awarded throughout the quiz. Also the new driver-training regime was explained and questions answered.

State Emergency Service

The SES gained benefits by hopefully reducing the number of callouts from motorists who become stranded through ignorance. In Exmouth during recent times, there have been several motorists lost or bogged simply through lack of knowledge or skill. This is a drain on resources and educating people will increase the chance of survival and decrease those callouts, which could be averted. For this reason two sessions were held including;

- (a) *Puncture repair* – Demonstration and safety advice when using lifting devices and ways to effect repairs.
- (b) *Winches* – Safe operation of electric and hand winches and other options for consideration when extricating a vehicle.

Conservation and Land Management

CALM reaped benefits of the project, as the area chosen is currently very topical and highly sensitive. There is statewide debate as to what is planned for the area and its future direction. CALM were invited to use the opportunity to speak with the group and correct some misinformation and allay fears. Several sessions were held on Landcare incorporating;

- (a) Environmental awareness when travelling off-road, highlighting the Tread Softly approach with regard vegetation and dune protection.
- (b) Destruction of animal habitats from indiscriminate and illegal collection of deadwood for campfires.
- (c) Beach driving with regard to turtles and nests.

Cost

Some costs were contributed by each agency, however general expenses were met using the \$1,000 grant. Approximate break-up of expenses is;

- (a) Fuel.....\$265.00
- (b) Equipment\$519.00
- (c) Food\$218.00

Media Coverage

Media coverage was arranged and resulted in articles featuring in print and radio. These articles were positive items and highlighted the good work being done by participating agencies to increase road safety (newspaper articles attached). It is expected to gain further publicity in the coming edition of the Police magazine, Newsbeat and SES magazine, FESA Western Alert.

Feedback

The feedback received from participants has been extremely encouraging. All stated they learnt various aspects and the practice has improved their road craft. Three letters were received commending the project and acknowledging the work of agencies (attached).

Towards The Future

Following the success of the project, it is hoped to continue raising the standard by offering this as an annual event. Another option being considered is making the core elements available in one-day segments. This has the advantage of meeting a wider audience.

Acknowledgement

Exmouth Police would like to acknowledge the continued assistance from The Road Safety Council in providing the funds to run this project. Without this funding, the project could not proceed.

Sincere thanks also go to RoadWise, Exmouth SES and CALM for their assistance in making the project a success.

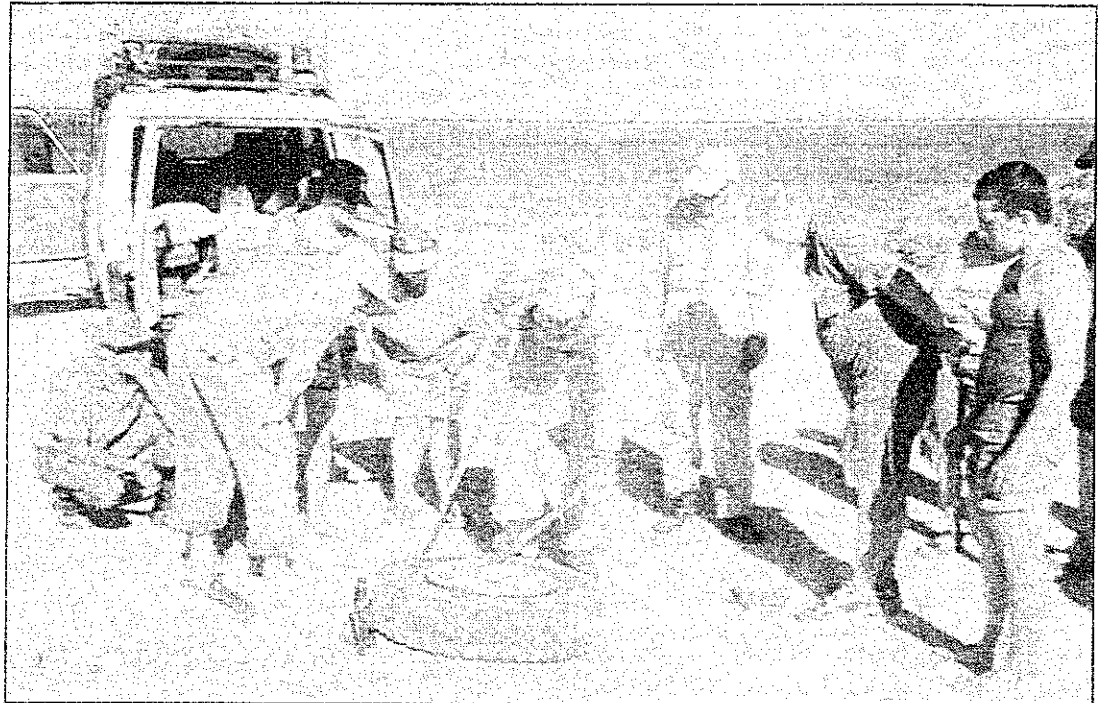
Further Information

Further information can be obtained from Senior Constable Stephen O'Meara at Exmouth Police Station on telephone 9949 2444.

APPENDIX

The appendix contains evidence relating to the success of the project and includes media articles, correspondence and sample photographs.

- Media article, West Australian
- Media article, Northern Guardian
- Correspondence – Bev & Bernie Brunning
- Correspondence – Steven & Janeen Bartholomew
- E mail – Jacqueline Hine
- Sample photographs



SES instructor Darren Brookes demonstrates how to repair a punctured tyre.

EXERCISE IN AWARENESS

EXMOUTH police officers recently conducted a driver awareness exercise along the Ningaloo coast.

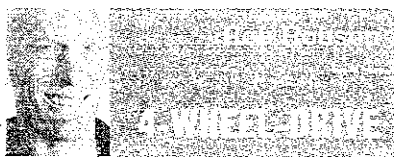
The aim was to demonstrate a wide range of driving skills,

particularly when using four-wheel-drive vehicles.

The three-day course was open to the public using

their own cars. It was funded by the Road Safety Council.

Local police officers led the course, with support from RoadWise, SES, CALM and off-road expert John Matten.



Thirteen vehicles were involved and organiser Sen. Const. Steve O'Meara said "all participants were keen to learn and utilise new 4WD skills while being made aware of the potential impact a vehicle can have on a delicate environment."

The group explored the pristine coastline from Exmouth to Carnarvon. Many of the tracks are normally off limits to the public but permission was obtained through the Carnarvon Shire and local station owners.

The group departed Exmouth on a Friday morning and travelled over Cape Range before heading south across Yardie Creek towards Warroora Station. Participants experienced various types of terrain including several steep sand dunes and a demanding rocky descent from the summit of the range.

During the afternoon, witches hats were set up for an exercise in steering control. Participants were asked to weave between the markers to improve co-ordination and control.

One vehicle experienced two punctures almost simultaneously, while heading towards the overnight camp. This provided an ideal opportunity for SES instructor Darren Brookes to

officers brought out a breath test unit and participants were invited to test themselves. This gave everyone a chance to monitor his or her blood/alcohol level and observe the rise after each drink.

"Everyone was surprised at how some readings were quite different even though similar amounts of alcohol had been consumed," O'Meara said.

"We explained that each person's physiology was different and this, plus many other factors, influence their blood/alcohol level."

The next morning, some vehicles were deliberately bogged so that snatch straps, airbags and electric winches could be used to extract them.

"The weekend was a great success and gave us the opportunity to provide the participants with driving skills that are particularly relevant in the North-West," O'Meara said.

One of the group, Helen Scott, said "the trip was great — not only did it teach me about using my 4WD on and off-road. It also taught me how I can minimise damage to the environment".

IF YOU have an interesting 4WD story or product contact

exmouth extra

Surviving North West roads

By Gerry Blum

THIRTEEN vehicles and 29 keen drivers and passengers took part in a four-wheel drive exercise organised by Sd Const. Steve O'Meara.

The exercise, "Surviving Northwest Roads" funded by RoadWise, was an initiative of the Exmouth Police.

The aim of the exercise was to improve the standard of driving.

The trip was run over three days involving two nights camping out, and was a unique experience particularly for novices who had little or no off-road experience.

The police vehicle led the convoy and during the trip the Exmouth SES, and local four-wheel-drive expert John Madden gave valuable assistance.

The route followed the coastal tracks from Exmouth to Carnarvon and returned via the highway.

The exercise involved a number of road craft skills including sessions on emergency braking, speedo testing, steering control, blood alcohol testing,

dealing with fatigue, four-wheel-drive recovery and correct loading.

A quiz on road traffic rules and regulations, with prizes donated by Exmouth businesses, was held on the second night.

Alcohol was permitted at the completion of each day's activities and police supplied a breath test unit for participants to "self test".

This enabled people to monitor their blood alcohol content and see how each standard drink affected their reading.

This was particularly interesting as no two readings were the same, even though similar amounts were consumed.

Participant and visitor from Traveston in Queensland Bev Brunning said: "We learned a lot from these exercises and it will help us travel safer when using our roads."

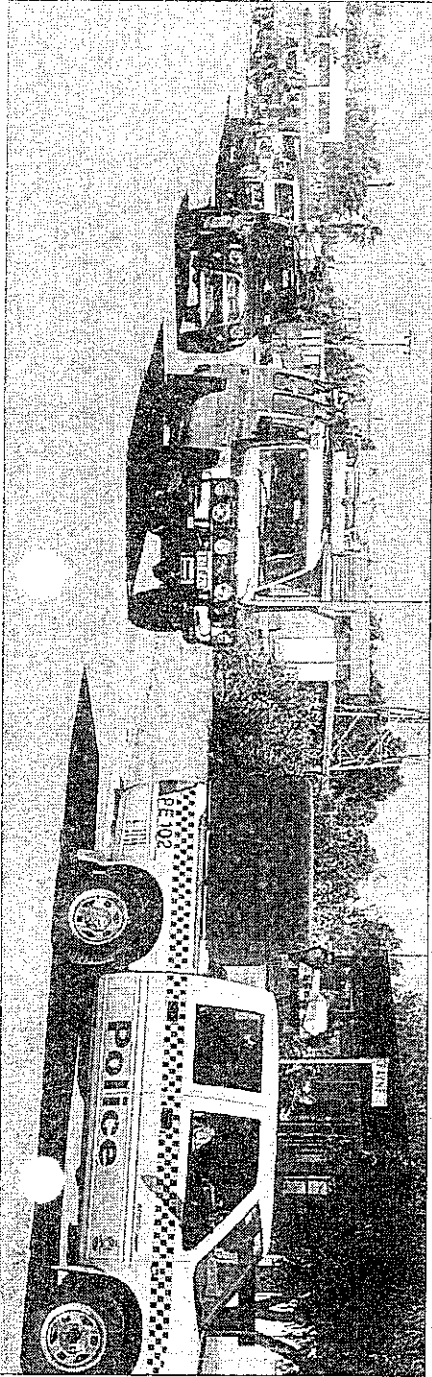
Police will donate the \$25 fee for each vehicle to the Exmouth PCYC Bait Youth Christmas Appeal.



JAC HINE uses an air bag to get her vehicle out of a bog.



JENNY CAREY prepares her vehicle to be pulled out backwards.



Hi Steve & Chris

Once again we would like to thank you for a wonderful weekend & for a visitor to your town. To have the opportunity to be able to participate in such an exercise.

We would also like to thank you for the training side of things;

Driving over sand dunes

Puncture repairs

Snatch Strap

Electric winching

We learnt a lot from these exercises & will help us during our travels & off road trips.

Keep up the good work

Regards

B & B Brunning

1964 Noosa Rd

Traralgon 4570

bevanabernie@bigpond.com

Bev & Bernie

Attention: OIC
Exmouth Police

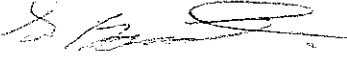
We attended "SURVIVING NORTH WEST ROADS" course prepared by Senior Constable Stephen O'Meara. Friday 31st October – Sunday 2nd November, 2003.

While attending this course we gained useful knowledge in emergency braking, load distribution by not overloading the roof rack with heavy items which helped while doing the steering control section of the project.

Also we learned to repair tyres multiple recovery scenarios all of which makes both my wife and I feel more confident with general driving. We would like to thank Police who attended and organise the course. Their jovial nature made for a pleasant weekend of touring. We look forward to attending another course in Roadwise

Yours truly,

Mr Steven Bartholomew



Mrs Janeen Bartholomew



O'MEARA Steve [PD07144]

From: Hine, Jacqueline [Jacqueline.Hine@health.wa.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 10 November 2003 14:06
To: O'MEARA Steve [PD07144]; Steven.O'Meara@police.wa.gov.au;
Stephen.O'Meara@police.wa.gov.au
Subject: 4WD weekend

Dear Constable O'Meara,

I would like to thank-you for a great weekend last week. I really enjoyed the trip and especially the numerous skills that I learn't along the way. I found it particularly helpful the skills that I will be able to take away and use, including use of low range, getting out of bogs, and emergency tyre patching. My confidence has imporved greatly as a result and I loved having a support crew while I was learning. My two friends who also joined me on the weekend also tell me they learnt a great deal and we all would love to participate again should another one be run.

I think that it is great road-wise, WA police, CALM, John Matten and the SES choose to support such a weekend and I hope they continue to do so.

Yours Sincerely,

Jacqueline Hine

