

CASE STUDY ONE

Metropolitan program as part of wider support strategy

This program is run through an existing youth support service based in a metropolitan centre in NSW. The service provides counselling, training and education, clubs and activities, as well as casework. It was through this casework that staff found a need to support some clients to get their licence.

The clients needing support range in age from 16 to 23 years. They are recruited from the existing client base and referred to the program based on their need for help to get a licence to access education or job opportunities.

Participants do not need to have their learner licence before they start. They are given support to apply for their learner licence, such as access to the service's computers to practise the computer-based licence tests, help in getting necessary identity documents and to complete any forms or paperwork. Although not a key part of the program, external funding may also be sourced to help cover costs such as driving lessons or licensing fees.

Through government funding, the program has hired a coordinator on a part-time basis to develop the program – starting on three days a week for the first three months, then two days a week for the rest of the program funding, which is one year. The coordinator can get advice and guidance from the program committee.

The vehicle was bought from a local car dealer at a significantly discounted price and was paid for with government funding. It is maintained by a local vehicle service outlet. Labour is free and parts are provided at cost.

Apart from this sponsorship and the government grant, the local council has given funds through its community grants scheme, covering vehicle registration and CTP insurance.

The volunteer mentors are recruited through a successful community advertising campaign (local media, flyers and posters) or through word of mouth. They are then given a two-hour training session. There are seven mentors.

Once matched, the learner and the mentor are taken out for a session with a qualified driving instructor to help work out the best approach for them to take in their driving sessions. The driving instructor can also give the mentor tips on instructing and supervising at this time.

To ease the burden on volunteer mentors, caseworkers also help learners find other supervising drivers outside the program. Learners with their mentors can also apply for a session with driving instructors through the Australian Government-funded program [Keys 2 Drive](#).

Throughout the process, learners and mentors are invited to meetings to share their thoughts on the program and the coordinator tells them about developments and gives feedback on progress. The learner groups and mentor groups also meet separately.

The program coordinator also passes on information to learners and their mentors about any relevant events in the local area which may help with their supervised driving sessions. For example, the local council organises 'log book run' events. These are organised drives based on designated routes designed to provide a variety of driving conditions. Learners and mentors may want to take advantage of these events and can book the vehicle to take part.

So far about 25 people have completed their hours through the program, with five also supported to get their Ls.

As with all programs there are challenges. The main one is to keep up motivation and satisfaction in both mentors and learners. This aspect takes up a lot of the program coordinator's time and they have introduced several measures to ensure learners are supported to stay on track, including SMS and phone reminders before their session and an incentive program with pre-determined milestones along their journey. Recurrent funding is also a challenge, particularly as the coordinator position depends on the funding, which is only for 12 months.