

YOUTHSAFE'S THEORY OF CHANGE

What Youthsafe does

Youthsafe partners to prevent unintentional injury of young people.

Why Youthsafe does it

Compared to mature adults, young people are different in terms of their:

- brain development;
- gender physiology and conditioning;
- peer group and family influences and
- inexperience in challenging new contexts
- ability for processing critical information, perceiving potential harms and decision-making.

Linked with these differences, young people are disproportionately impacted by unintentional injury in comparison to any other age group. This is due to a failure to provide effective preventative infrastructure, such as policies, environments, training and education to support young people to optimise their safety. In adopting a Safe Systems approach¹ (widely embraced by national and international road safety policy makers and experts) *Youthsafe* recognises that:

- the human body has physical vulnerabilities and limits – which mean we can incur serious or fatal injuries;
- the environments in which we live, work, play and travel need to be forgiving of human error;
- a combination of approaches yields better results than single measures;
- the promotion of safety is a shared responsibility (between those who plan, design, and construct our environment and the equipment within it, policy makers, the educators, employers, family, community – and young people themselves);

The emotional and financial cost of serious unintentional injury of young people impacts on individuals, workplaces, services, families and the community at large, underscoring the need for a whole of community response.

Therefore, understanding the complex interaction between the individual and their immediate social, wider community and policy environments is key to developing effective and sustainable multi-level prevention strategies that have community 'buy-in' with government support.

Ultimately *Youthsafe* wants a world in which young lives are free from unintentional injury.

¹ World Health Organization (Ed.) Global status report on road safety 2015. WHO, Geneva - 2015

How *Youthsafe* generates change

Through its partnerships, *Youthsafe* seeks to build long-term, youth-focused change by building the capacity to promote safety, of all who influence the lives and environments of young people. A society's capacity to promote safety rests with individuals, agencies and communities being equipped, resourced, educated and supported to make safer choices through enhanced knowledge, awareness, skills and access.

Youthsafe develops and delivers evidence-based primary prevention programs that provide its partners with useful facts, practical tools and enabling strategies to be better equipped to address the safety of young people and to assist young people to manage risk and to contribute to building self-efficacy over time.

Impact is enhanced when different cohorts within the target population participate in and contribute to the primary prevention programs.

These efforts focus on environments and activities that statistics reveal have the highest risk for young people. These are:

- Roads
- Workplaces
- Sport and recreation
- Socialising.

Given this, the key influencers in the lives of children include but are not limited to:

- Parents, families and peers
- Teachers/educators and schools/TAFEs
- Government policy makers
- Architects, engineers, town planners
- Employers, supervisors and field officers
- Driver coaches/mentors
- Sports coaches and club managers.