

MACKAY / WHITSUNDAY SAFE COMMUNITIES PROJECT (MWSCP)

Progress Update 2 June 2001



This is the second of regular progress updates that will be released on a six monthly basis.

Background:

As a response to above average injury rates identified in the Mackay / Whitsunday area, the MWSCP was established to address this issue and help the region become Queensland's first internationally recognised Safe Community.

This long-term project is a World Health Organisation (WHO) supported approach to community injury control that aims to reduce injury in the Mackay / Whitsunday region by 30 % over the next 4-5 years. It will be guided by the criteria and processes of the WHO's Safe Communities framework which has proven to be an effective means of reducing injury throughout the world, including Australia.

Telephone Survey

In July/August 2000, a random public perception telephone survey of 461 local residents was undertaken by a PhD student from James Cook University through sponsorship by the Tom and Dorothy Cook Fellowship. The major findings of this survey were as follows:

- Subjects overwhelmingly agreed that injuries can be prevented. However few were aware of specific accident prevention or safety programs. The majority of subjects perceived prevention to be the responsibility of the individual experiencing the injury.
- The street and the motor vehicle were perceived as the most likely locations for injury, whereas most injuries occur at home.
- The majority of subjects complied with three or more safety practices (eg smoke detector, handrails, hot water tempering valve). Increased compliance with household safety practices was associated with increasing age.
- The 16-29 year age group were correctly perceived as the most likely group to be injured.

For a complete copy of survey results please contact: Tony Carter, James Cook University PhD student on 4722 5749.

Collection of Injury Surveillance Data

Injury Surveillance Data is collected at the emergency departments of all public hospitals in the region (Clermont, Dysart, Mackay, Moranbah, Proserpine and Sarina) and now the Private Medical Service at the Mackay Mater (from September 2000). This surveillance data is analysed



Members of collaborative injury research working group (L to R): Tony Carter; Associate Professor Rheinhold Muller (School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, James Cook University); Dr Dale Hanson and Paul Vardon. Some members absent.

at a state level by the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit (QISU) and at a regional level by the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, James Cook University, in collaboration with Queensland Health and QISU. This provides a powerful tool to study the cause and impact of injury and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Healthy Homes Plan Program

The Senior Safety Working Group in Mackay has established a Healthy Homes Plan Program to share information with older people about falls and their prevention in a fun and non-threatening way using a group setting. The program is facilitated by volunteers, with support from the Aged Care and Disability Unit of Mackay Community Health Centre. If you would like to know more about the program or refer older people to the educational session, please contact Jane Paine, Clinical Nurse Consultant Aged Care and Disability Unit, Mackay Community Health Centre, Queensland Health - phone 4968 3823.



Left to right: Sue Langmead (Community Health Nurse, Aged Care & Disability Unit, Mackay Community Health, Queensland Health) with Rube Stevens (a volunteer peer educator of Healthy Homes Plan Program).

Mackay City Council as an initiative of the Senior Safety Working Group launched a Safe Shop Program in December 2000.



Over 60 local businesses in the Mackay City Heart have joined the program, which aims to provide a safer shopping environment, particularly for older people. Participating retailers provide information services to shoppers, as well as offering to call emergency services if a customer is concerned about their personal safety. Shops are identified by a bright orange Safe Shop sticker. If you would like to know more about the Senior Safety Working Group and/or the Safe Shop Program, please contact Jan Kilbourne, Manager Community Development, Mackay City Council - phone 4968 4444.



SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

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The Just Walk It Program began in Mackay in April 2000 to raise the profile of walking, particularly among older residents. Just Walk It is a



community based walking program developed and supported by the National Heart Foundation. Currently five walking groups in Mackay are operating, including two at local workplaces. If you would like to know more about the Just Walk It Program, be a walk organiser or just join a walking group, please contact Jan Kilbourne, Manager Community Development, Mackay City Council - phone 4968 4444.

Operation BikeSafe

Operation BikeSafe, an initiative of the Child Safety Working Group in Whitsunday, was conducted from July to December 2000. Operation BikeSafe was a proactive program that used positive reinforcement as its strategy, utilising police, schools and the media. During the program, 30 local Whitsunday children aged 9-13 years were nominated by local police for their safe bike riding on local roads. A special thankyou to police and local schools for their collaboration on this project, plus ESA-Alpha Epsilon, Proserpine Lions and Whitsunday Toyworld for providing the major prizes.

Members of Child Safety Working Group (L to R): Constable Jodie McSweeney (Proserpine Police); Sergeant Kevin Harrigan (Officer in Charge, Proserpine Police); Laura Brown (Co-ordinator, Whitsunday Community Health Centre, Queensland Health); Paul Vardon, Nicole O'Bryan and Neil Tynan (Technical Officer, Works, Whitsunday Shire Council) with Monique Jerram (first student in Whitsunday to be nominated by Police for her safe bike riding). Some members absent. Photo courtesy of Proserpine Guardian.



Cannonvale, Hamilton Island, Proserpine and Whitsunday Christian Community Schools have joined the MWSCP to reduce injury. These schools are using KidPower, a new injury prevention resource kit. KidPower uses an injury committee that includes students and other members of the school community as a means of identifying potentially dangerous areas and behaviours within the school, and developing strategies to prevent injuries occurring. For further details, contact Paul Vardon, Senior Health Promotion Officer, Tropical Public Health Unit - Mackay, Queensland Health - phone 4968 3858.



New Working Group

In June 2000, a road safety community meeting was conducted in Mackay by Queensland Transport. At this meeting, the decision was made to establish a Road Safety Working Group as a component of MWSCP. Membership of this newly formed working group includes representatives from Queensland Transport, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health, Education Queensland, Mackay City Council,

industry/community members and Department of Main Roads. This working group has identified a number of key areas for strategic action, including driver fatigue, data collaboration and co-ordination, driver education, train crossings, target groups (especially young males), cyclists, alcohol, footpaths/bicycle paths and drug driving. For further information contact Nicole O'Bryan, Road Safety Consultant, Queensland Transport - phone 4951 8330.



Members of Road Safety Working Group (L to R): Dr Dale Hanson (Emergency Physician, Mackay Base Hospital, Queensland Health); Ian Single (Operator, Singles Transport); Nicole O'Bryan, Councillor Sel Payne (Mackay City Council); Gerhard Joubert (Manager Infrastructure Design Services, Mackay City Council) & Colleen Gunning. Some members absent.

A safe party kit has been developed by Queensland Transport, Queensland Health and the Queensland Police Service. The safe party kit 'Steps to a Smarter Party', provides tips for holding successful, enjoyable and safe parties specifically addressing antisocial behaviour, road safety and alcohol consumption issues. The kit will be available prior to peak party times from local councils, police, transport, community health offices and schools. For further information contact Colleen Gunning - Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Prevention Officer, Mackay Community Health, Queensland Health - phone 4968 3858.



Planned future activities include:

- preparation of a baseline monograph of injury in the Mackay/Whitsunday region
- child safety working group for Mackay
- working group to address injuries related to alcohol in the region
- senior safety working group for Whitsunday
- community safety week in Mackay, Sept 3 - 9, 2001

To find out more, to be involved, or to let the project management team know of existing local injury prevention and safety promotion activities please contact the project facilitator: Mr Paul Vardon, Health Promotion Officer, Tropical Public Health Unit - Mackay, Queensland Health - phone 4968 3858 or Email: paul_vardon@health.qld.gov.au

