

# **BURNIE DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM REPORT**

“WHO’S DES TONIGHT?”



## **Community Road Safety Partnership**



## **BURNIE COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Who's Des Tonight? 2005 Program Report**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

##### **1.1 Background**

The Burnie Community Road Safety Partnerships (CRSP) Committee identified the issues of drink driving and pedestrian safety as high priority matters, which needed addressing. It was therefore decided by the committee that the concept of a designated driver program should be explored, with a view to implementing a program in Burnie. A sub committee was formed, which quickly identified the need for a holistic community approach involving residents, business organisations, community groups, government organisations and local police.

##### **1.2 Perceived Road Safety Needs**

The designated driver program would address the need for a responsible alternative to drinking and driving. Non-drinkers would hopefully be more socially accepted. By introducing a designated driver program a reduction in drink driving offences would hopefully occur. In 2004 an average of 18.3 motorists a month exceeded the legal blood alcohol limit. As a consequence of addressing drink driving there would hopefully be a follow-on effect over time in reducing crashes, where alcohol was involved.

For the period 1999 - 2003, by municipality, Burnie was rated the 5<sup>th</sup> highest for pedestrian casualties. There were 42 people injured and 3 killed. It was believed through anecdotal evidence that some of these people had been drinking. (Pedestrians are not tested for alcohol unless they are killed.) It was hoped that by having a Designated Driver Program, the casualty rate could be reduced. A sober person could help keep their friend safe.

##### **1.3 Other Community Benefits**

Secondary community needs for the program centred on public place assaults and vandalism, which were on the increase in 2003.

It was considered that a Designated Driver Program may reduce the incidents of vandalism. There can be long waiting times for taxis. By having a sober driver to immediately transport friends home, people are being removed from the CBD area more quickly, which may prevent assault and vandalism crimes occurring.

The Designated Driver Program would also hopefully support existing programs such as Responsible Serving of Alcohol, Safe Partying, Recording Artists, Actors & Athletes Against Drink Driving (RADD) and the recently introduced Good Sports Program.

## **2. AIMS**

The primary aims of the program were to:

- Reduce the number of drivers driving in Burnie under the influence of alcohol
- Reduce the number of intoxicated pedestrians on the streets of Burnie
- Encourage mates to be more responsible for planning safe transport options when drinking alcohol.

## **3. ACTIVITIES**

### **3.1 The Who's Des Tonight? Program**

A "Who's Des Tonight?" program was developed in collaboration with local hotels, the Australian Hotels Association and other community representatives. The program was launched in Burnie on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2004. The following licensed establishments participated in the program: Beach Hotel, Burnie Yeoman Cricket Club, Club Hotel, Green's Hotel, King of Burnie Hotel Motel, Mallee Grill, Sirocco's Bar & Night Club and Top of the Town Hotel

The program defined a designated driver as a person who agrees not to drink any alcoholic beverages so as to provide safe transport to one or more nominated passengers. The program was a cooperative agreement with pubs and clubs to recognise those people who choose to be a designated driver

### **3.1 Incentives**

As part of the program participating venues provided free soft drink. Drivers could also register at participating venues to participate in a fortnightly "reward" draw of a \$50.00 petrol voucher.

### **3.2 Marketing**

A range of supportive marketing material was developed including posters, promotional flyers, radio ads and newspaper advertisements. Community support was crucial to the marketing of the program, and many businesses and organisations embraced the opportunity to be involved. This support included:

- 4 Neighbourhood Watches delivered flyers outlining the program to 3,500 Burnie homes.
- SeaFm radio station offered one for one ad deals as a community service
- Road Safety Task Force provided \$1,000.00 support for radio advertisements
- Metro agreed to have Designated Driver posters displayed in their buses. Later Metro approached the committee about calling themselves Des for New Years Eve Event, when they provided a free bus service for Burnie citizens.
- Posters were displayed in 60 businesses and bottleshops.
- A local business, Xerox, provided free lamination for the posters.
- Licensees promoted the program within their establishments
- The Commander of the North West Police District endorsed the program

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- RADD (Recording Actors, Athletes and Artists Against Drink Driving) made several ads with national and local “champions” identifying and supporting “Who’s Des Tonight?” Some champions were Ricky Ponting, David Foster, Russell Robertson, and Jimmy Barnes

### **3.3 Budget**

• Posters	\$ 556.00
• The Advocate Newspaper ads	\$1370.00
• Radio Advertising- CRSP	\$1012.00
• Prizes	\$ 400.00
• Wristbands	\$ 300.00
• Plaques	\$ 450.00
• Flyers	\$ 120.00
• Catering	\$ 320.00
• Sea Fm	\$1,000.00
• Road Safety Task Force	\$1,000.00
• <b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6528.00</b>

NB. The cost of the RADD advertisements was not easily quantifiable but unofficially valued in the thousands of dollars.

## **4. DATA COLLECTED**

A major aim of the program was to reduce the numbers of drink drivers in the Burnie area. The success of the program was measured in the following ways:

- Comparison of the average monthly Random Breath Test (RBT) ‘exceed’ offences in Burnie over the 5 month operational period of the program (Jan 05 – May 05) with the average monthly RBT ‘exceed’ offences for the previous year (June 04 – May 05).
- A comparison of the average monthly Random Breath Test (RBT) ‘exceed’ offences for Burnie with a similar ‘control’ community, which did not have a community designated driver program.
- A reduction in the number of alcohol related crashes in Burnie (including pedestrian crashes)
- The number of Des Driver registrations
- Feedback comments collected from participants, publicans and Tasmania Police.

### **4.1 RBT Exceed Offences**

The term ‘exceed offence’ is defined as a driver who has exceeded the legal alcohol limit.

Tasmania Police provided data detailing the ‘exceed offences’, for both Devonport and Burnie for a 12 month period. Being the nearest major centre, Devonport was used for a comparative assessment as the ‘control’ community.

It should be noted, while the Des Driver program has been in operation the Burnie and Devonport Police and the Road Safety Task Force have continued to conduct RBT campaigns as normal in the district. No significant increase or reduction in operations

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has occurred, as stated by Inspector Darren Hopkins, Western District. (Refer Appendix C).

Table 1 shows the number of RBT 'exceeds' for the Burnie area from January 04 – May 04

Jan 04	Feb 04	March 04	April 04	May 04
12	12	25	24	19

Table 2 shows the number of RBT 'exceeds' for the Burnie area from May 2004 – May 2005.

June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May
33	26	18	28	12	22	17	12	12	9	12	17

Table 3 shows the number of RBT 'exceeds' for the Devonport area from May 2004 – April 2005.

June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
40	25	34	13	12	26	21	32	19	27	26	15

The figures for Burnie for the 5-month period from January 05 to the end of May 05 show that the number of 'exceeds' was noticeably below the monthly average. ie the average for the five months was 12.4 exceeds compared with the year's monthly average of 18.16 exceeds. (refer Table 2)

By comparison Devonport, which does not have a designated driver program, remained closer to the monthly average for exceeds for the same period. ie. In the same 5-month period the average number of exceeds was 23.8 compared with the monthly average of 24.16. (refer Table 3)

When comparing Tables 1 and 2 it is evident that there is a reduction in the exceed offence rate for Burnie, between Jan - May 04 and Jan - May 05, with the months in 2004 averaging 18.4 exceeds a month and in 2005, 12.4 a month.

## **4.2 Accident Data**

Accident data was obtained from DIER Traffic Accident database

### **4.2.1 Drivers/Riders Exceeding Alcohol Limit involved in Reported Crashes**

In 2004, from January to May, there were 7 drivers in Burnie who exceeded the limit, and who were involved in reported crashes. In 2005 for the same time period there were 3. (Refer Appendix A Table 4)

In Devonport, for January to May 2004 there were 3 drivers who exceeded the limit, and were involved in crashes. In comparison for the same time period in 2005, there were 10 exceed drivers in reported crashes. (Refer Appendix A Table 4)

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Although there has been a reduction in the number of crashes involving drivers exceeding the alcohol limit, in the Burnie area, it is considered that the sample is statistically too small to establish conclusively that it has resulted from the Designated Driver program.

#### **4.2.2 Hit Parked Vehicle Crashes – Where Alcohol Is Believed To Be A Contributing Factor**

Data was collected where police had indicated on their accident report form that they believed alcohol may have been a contributing factor to the crash. Police may have tested drivers who do not exceed the limit, but there was a positive return of alcohol. They also may have not attended the scene but due to witness evidence, they had cause to suspect alcohol involvement.

In Burnie, from January – May 2004 there were 21 hit parked vehicle crashes where alcohol is believed to have been involved. For the same period in 2005, there were 13 reported incidents. (Refer Appendix A Table 5)

In Devonport for the two periods there were 17 parked vehicle crashes reported, where alcohol was believed to be a contributing factor. Devonport has had no change from 2004 to 2005, unlike Burnie where there has been a reduction. (Refer Appendix A Table 5)

Although there has been a reduction in the Burnie area in the number of hit parked vehicle crashes involving drivers suspected of consuming alcohol, it is considered that the sample is statistically too small to establish conclusively that it has resulted from the Designated Driver program.

#### **4.2.3 Pedestrian Crashes**

Although revealing a reduction in pedestrian crashes in Burnie, the data collected is considered statistically too small to be relevant. (Refer Appendix A Table 6)

#### **4.2.4 Police Assault/Vandalism Data**

The data for Jan 04 - April 04 compared to Jan 05 – April 05 shows a significant reduction in public assaults and vandalism in Burnie. For the same periods Devonport, while showing a reduction in vandalism, has a marked increase in assaults. (Refer Appendix A Tables 7 & 8)

### **4.3 Des Driver Registrations**

Up until the end of May there had been 139 formal registrations forms obtained from the participating establishments. For the following reasons this is not a true reflection of the number of actual participations:

- Some venues failed to register drivers at the start of the program
- Two establishments have misplaced their forms, believed to total approximately 54 registrations.
- At all premises there have been Des drivers who have not registered

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- In some larger premises they ran out of forms and didn't print any off
- The restaurant and the sporting club participants elected not to register their designated drivers.

In the beginning, the uptake was slow. However, after the initial phasing in period, the registrations increased dramatically. At one particular establishment the licensee stated that he felt there would be hardly any registrations at his pub, as "his patrons wouldn't be interested much in being a designated driver". The hotel has had 24 registrations.

#### **4.4 Anecdotal Comments From Participants, Tasmania Police And Licensed Establishment Personnel**

Anecdotal comments from participants, Police and publicans recognise a range of benefits of the Burnie Designated Driver Program. As can be seen from the comments there is clearly ongoing support for the project. (Refer Appendix B)

### **5. MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

The primary aims of the Burnie Designated Driver Program were to encourage people, when drinking alcohol, to have a designated driver, to help get them home safely and to reduce the incidence of drink driving.

On the figures available the campaign does appear to have reduced the number of persons drink driving in the Burnie area. Also, although data is limited, it appears that parked vehicle crashes, often associated with drink driving, and general public order offences in the Burnie area, were reduced during the project period.

Comparisons with Devonport, which was used as a 'control' community, indicate that Burnie had noticeable reductions in the above behaviour while the monthly data for Devonport revealed little variation.

While it is uncertain whether these behavioural changes can be wholly or directly attributed to the Who's Des tonight campaign, it remains that no other explanation for the changes is evident.

Furthermore it appears from anecdotal evidence from participants, publicans and Police (refer Appendices) that the program has been widely accepted by the community.

### **6. CONCLUSION**

The statistical evidence combined with the police reporting of drivers being Des and returning a zero reading, is consistent with the campaign having led to a greater awareness of drink driving as a road safety issue for the Burnie community.

As a result of the success of the program the Burnie licensed establishments unanimously agreed to continue the program. As a result the program has been extended and will be monitored closely during 2005.

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There has been extensive interest from other local government authorities and Tasmania Police to establish the program in other areas of the North-West and also more widely across Tasmania. To assist this process a promotional package, detailing Burnie CRSP's approach to Who's Des Tonight? is being developed to assist other communities.

Report prepared by:

Michelle Powell      Road Safety Consultant (DIER)

Geoff Frier            Project Manager, Community Road Safety Partnerships (DIER)

## APPENDIX A

**Table 4 DRIVERS/RIDERS EXCEEDING ALCOHOL LIMIT INVOLVED IN REPORTED CRASHES**

		5 Year Average 1999-2003	2004	2005
<b>BURNIE</b>	January	0.2	2	0
	February	0.6	1	0
	March	0.4	0	2
	April	1.8	1	0
	May	0.8	3	1
<b>DEVONPORT</b>	January	0.6	2	3
	February	1.0	0	1
	March	0.8	0	2
	April	1.2	0	2
	May	0.6	1	2

**Table 5 HIT PARKED VEHICLE CRASHES – WHERE ALCOHOL IS BELIEVED TO BE A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR**

		5 Year Average 1999-2003	2004	2005
<b>BURNIE</b>	January	3.8	3	2
	February	2.2	6	2
	March	2.4	3	1
	April	2.8	7	2
	May	2.8	2	6
<b>DEVONPORT</b>	January	3.2	2	4
	February	4.8	6	5
	March	4.0	2	1
	April	3.0	3	5
	May	4.6	4	2

SOURCE: TRAFFIC ACCIDENT DATABASE AS AT 27 JULY 2005.

**Table 6 PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS**

		<b>5 Year Average 1999-2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>BURNIE</b>	January	0.2	1	0
	February	0.2	2	0
	March	0.8	0	0
	April	1.6	0	1
	May	0.8	1	1
<b>DEVONPORT</b>	January	0.8	0	0
	February	0.8	0	0
	March	0.6	0	0
	April	1.4	2	1
	May	0.8	1	0

**Table 7 BURNIE STREET OFFENCES DATA**

January 1 – April 30 2004	January 1 – April 30 2005
Person Offences – 29	Person Offences - 11
Vandalism Offences – 22	Vandalism Offences 16

62% reduction in person offences (assaults against another)

27% reduction in vandalism

**Table 8. DEVONPORT STREET OFFENCES DATA**

January 1 – April 30 2004	January 1 – April 30 2005
Person Offences – 12	Person Offences - 14
Vandalism Offences – 45	Vandalism Offences 15

16.6 % increase in person offences

46% reduction in vandalism

## **APPENDIX B**

### **DES DRIVER'S COMMENTS**

"I thought it was great that I was being recognised (by getting free soft drink) for bringing my mates across from Ulverstone. I think the program is a great idea. Be good to see it in other areas." Dean Cooper

"I was Des as I picked my boyfriend up from The King. He lost his licence some time ago for 6 months. I think the program is great. Get rewarded for doing the right thing." Stephanie Jones

"I think that it is terrific that I can sit and drink soft drink and because of the program it is more acceptable. If anyone stirs me, I just say I am Des. I lost my son in a car accident years ago and I am all for this." Annette Haines

"I was Des because I wanted to make sure my friends were safe. I lost my licence for six months for drink driving, and I've learnt my lesson." Anita Bakes

### **POLICE COMMENTS**

"As a general observation there have been regular instances in this region of intercepted drivers carrying passengers, producing zero blood alcohol readings and identifying as Designated Drivers. This tends to confirm other feedback to the effect that the Designated Driver Program is widely known in the Burnie area, and is being well accepted."

Inspector Bill Wynwood, Burnie Uniform Section February 2005

"There has been a marked reduction in the number of drink driving offences and public assaults. It's a very positive road safety initiative. It's bound to affect our road toll and reduce the number of fatal or serious accidents." - The Advocate

Inspector Darren Hopkins North West Traffic Services April 2005

Only one motorist was charged with drink driving following a police random breath-testing blitz at Camdale yesterday. "We did stop a number of vehicles which contained people returning home from nightclubs and parties. But with the exception of one, the man charged, they all had designated drivers who did not record an alcohol reading." - The Advocate

Sergeant Nick Clarke, North West Traffic Services, June 2005

### **MAJOR MARKETING CONTRIBUTOR TO THE PROGRAM - RADD**

"Having viewed other Designated Driver Programs throughout Australia I would have to say that Burnie's program is the most professional I have seen. Every angle seems to be covered and there is so much community support. We are more than happy to support the program and have developed new ads in light of the licensed establishments wanting it to continue."

Peter Rubinstein, Director, RADD Australia, Radiowise Media Networks

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## **LICENSED ESTABLISHMENT PERSONEL**

“We love it! It’s a great thing. Should continue all the time. So much easier for people who want to drink soft drink and for people to get home safely The young kids aren’t embarrassed to be Des. In fact, they come in and say no to their name being used, if they are being Des for the night, ask me to call them Des. Terrific name that was chosen. It caught on really quick”

Annette Graues The Club Hotel

“The feedback from the customers has been fantastic. They can have a soft drink and are not stirred up about it. Don’t have the worry about serving them and worrying about them getting home safely. There is a problem with taxis, so it is really great.”

Tamara Bartsch The Club Hotel

“We fully support the program and think it is great. It helps Burnie in so many ways. We will keep running with it.”

Paul Halton Sirocco’s Nightclub

## **PARENT COMMENT**

“My children have been excited about the Designated Driver Program, as they live 32km from Burnie. They go out sometimes in Burnie because they like the nightlife, but because of the distance, taxis are not an option. Before Des it was always hard to find a driver. Now Des is the in thing and they fight to be Des. They have a roster system. I have heard this from quite a few other people. It’s fantastic.”

Jenny Gossmith, Tasmanian State School Parents & Friends Association Inc.,  
Flowerdale

APPENDIX C

**Statement by Inspector Darren Hopkins, Tasmania Police**



**WESTERN DISTRICT**

Ref: W-

Inspector's Office  
District Support  
Police Headquarters  
88 Wilson Street  
PO Box 19  
Burnie 7320

Tel: (03) 64345214

12 August 2005

Michelle Powell  
Road Safety  
32-34 Marine Terrace  
Burnie, 7320

**DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM - BURNIE**

Dear Michelle,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in relation to the Designated Driver program, which you have introduced into the Burnie area over recent months. Again I would like to reiterate my support for the program. Incidentally, I first became aware of a similar designated driver program when I was travelling in Canada. It had been in place there for some time and police were having excellent results with it. I was so impressed I also made attempts to introduce it here back in the early 1990's, with support by the AHA, but unfortunately failed to gain enough departmental support. I am please to see that your initiative has been successful so far, I can only wish you continued success.

In relation to your questions surrounding drinking patterns in the Burnie and Devonport area, I am able to confirm that apart from greater visibility of police through increased urban and metropolitan RBT operations, there have been no specific changes in the way the drink driving offenders are policed, this is also the case with regard to the Road Safety Task Force.

I have witness and received reports from general duties police that they are intercepting motorists who a carrying passengers and have identified themselves as designated drivers. This has also been the case in Devonport area, although I am aware that the DES program isn't formally running there yet, but it is encouraging to see the message is spreading across the coast. Those drivers have all returned a reading below the legal limit.

I have had the opportunity to view the last 13 months of breath analysis readings recorded at Burnie Headquarters. As you can see from figure 1, with the exception of June this year, the number of detections has steadily fallen. It is also pleasing to see that the number of youth detected between 16 and 25 years of age, being the largest percentage age group detected, 47% of the total, has also fallen considerably over that period with again the exception of June this year.

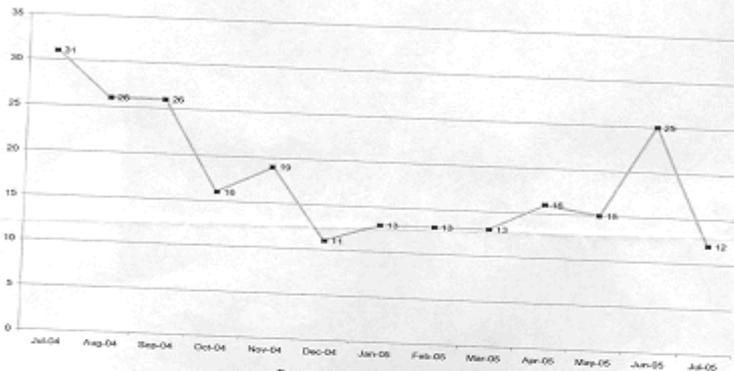


figure 1 - Burnie BAS tests.

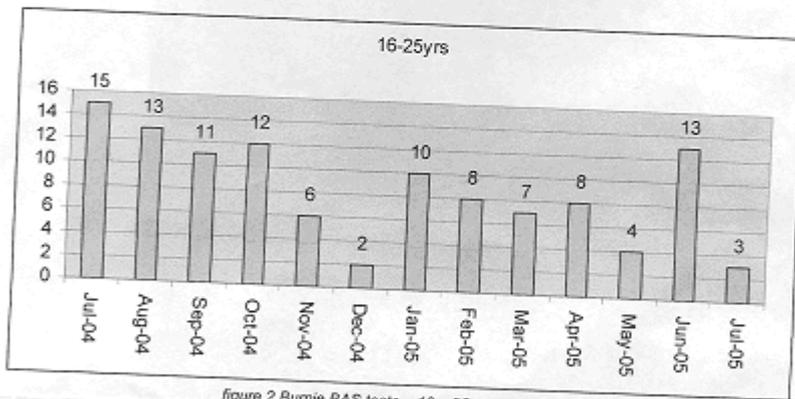


figure 2. Burnie BAS tests - 16 - 25 year age group

I trust that this information will assist you in your efforts to have the designated driver program extended.

Yours Sincerely

Darren Hopkins  
Inspector  
District Support