



Hurunui Driver Mentor Programme

A community led solution to driving challenges

Overview



Hurunui district is a vast rural landscape with a large geographical spread that has many rural communities, this can often create social isolation, transport issues, a lack of social connectedness and community participation.

Young people in the Hurunui district continue to face many challenges that come with living rurally and currently there are very limited services available to them, this includes no public transport. The only way to break down this barrier to finding employment, or accessing services and making social connections is to drive.

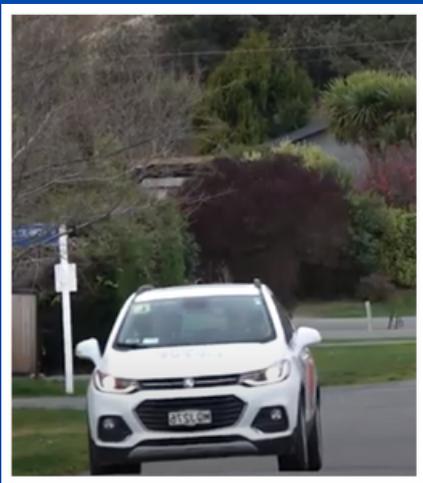
New families to the area, particularly migrants, are often challenged with restricted access to driving lessons and support but have an essential need to drive children to school and access shops etc. We want to keep our rural roads safe and our answer was to develop the Hurunui Driver Mentor Programme.

Our Solution

We adopted the Community Driver Mentor Programme framework supporting good driving through mentorship at a community level.

A pilot programme was set up in Culverden, after connecting with a local Fire and Emergency New Zealand member Craig Richie, mentors were found to match with 5 young people.

A council car was temporary located in Culverden to start the driving lessons until a lease vehicle was arranged. The Amuri Vehicle Trust have offered access to a community vehicle moving forward.



Steering Group Partners:



Challenges and Lessons

- 1** For Hurunui residents access to driver practice in nearby Rangiora to provide a 'test like' environment poses a time challenge for mentors and mentees. It goes well above the recommended one hour lessons, instead they have to factor in 3-4 hours to get to Rangiora, practice and return home.
- 2** This has highlighted the need to find creative solutions so that not all mentors are required to make the long drives eg car pool of learners, leaning on other local mentors to support.
- 3** Car costs, fuel costs and wages for a coordinator are the biggest costs.

Outcomes

The success of the pilot led to the establishment of a Driver Steering Group in July 2022 and employing a coordinator on a 12 month fixed contract, 20 hours per week.

Representatives around the table include Fire and Emergency New Zealand, Police, our area schools, Welcoming Communities, Youth, Hurunui Road Safety, community representatives, the Amuri Vehicle Trust, Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, Ministry of Education and migrant support.

Looking ahead

- Maintain funding avenues.
- Develop a Hurunui wide Driver Strategy to encompass learners through to positively ageing members of the community maintaining their license.
- Build on work in schools eg RYDA, learner theory and provide support for those going restricted to full, defensive driving or renewing license.
- Whānau workshops to share tips and tricks for family and friends helping someone learn to drive.



Screenshot from our pilot programme video.
<https://youtu.be/8hCXnZ8qiWs>

“With no public transport in Hurunui, one of the biggest barriers for getting a job is learning to drive. Not everyone has a legal car at home to learn in, or someone to take them for lessons. It’s about upskilling, eliminating bad habits, and providing whānau training as well so good habits and confidence that can be passed on.”

- Jo Carter, Youth Development Officer

“It’s a lot easier to give driving lessons than cut people out of cars.”

- Craig Ritchie, Mentor and local Fire Chief