

ACT Road Safety Grant

Final Report

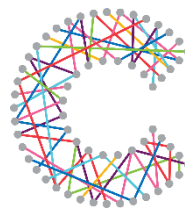
2019-2025

Easy P

Capital Region Community Services (CRCS)

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**Capital
Region
Community
Services**



Acknowledgement of Country



Inclusive Connections, by Sarah Richards. The key themes of *Inclusive Connections* are connection, journey and diversity. It is hoped that all who view the piece can feel that inclusion and connection to the CRCS journey.

Capital Region Community Services acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands across the Capital Region where we support community. We recognise that Sovereignty was never ceded, and the land always was and always will be Aboriginal lands. We pay our respects to the traditional Elders across the region, past and present, and thank them for caring for the land, waters and skies, and for their culture, teaching and knowledge passed down through generations.

CRCS's reconciliation journey began in 2012 when we launched our first Reconciliation Action Plan. Since then, we have proudly achieved the following:

- Commitment to Care for Country and Sustainability within our Early Education and Care Programs
- The development of two community gardens created by a local Indigenous Greening Australia Member, including bush tucker gardens
- Commissioned our own Artwork that depicts our journey towards reconciliation
- Included the acknowledgment of Country on our email signatures
- Expanded our organisation into the Capital Region and have made connections with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Participated in NAIDOC Week celebrations in Education and Care
- Commenced the Program Yurwang-Gulwan–Koori Girls (8-16 years).

Our second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will operate from 2025 – 2027, drawing on experience from the Implementation of our first RAP, we are now in the position to present a longer-term vision for CRCS's contribution to reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

Executive Summary

The *Easy P Program*, delivered by Capital Region Community Services (CRCS), was established to address barriers faced by vulnerable young people aged 16–25 in obtaining their learner and provisional driving licences. Funded initially in 2019 by the ACT Road Safety Fund, the program targets young people who face financial hardship, social isolation, and caregiving responsibilities—factors that often hinder their ability to access traditional driver education and training.

The program relaunched in 2023, following disruption from the global COVID-19 pandemic, with an improved model based on early lessons. The revised approach replaced volunteer-based instruction with professional driving lessons and integrated trauma-informed road safety education, including the P.A.R.T.Y. (Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth) program and partnerships with organisations such as the Alcohol and Drug Foundation.

Key outcomes from 2019–2025 include:

- **181 young people** completed the Pre-Learner program and passed their learner’s licence test.
- **33 participants** engaged in Easy P, of whom **19 obtained their provisional licences**.
- A tailored model of support allowed participants to receive professional instruction, ongoing case management, and individualised lesson allocations based on need.
- **Community partnerships** with Young Carers ACT, MARSS, and other youth services enabled more equitable access to resources and referrals.
- Three detailed case studies (Corey, Dylan, and Jesse) showcase the transformative effect of the program on individual participants, demonstrating improved independence, mental wellbeing, and life skills.

The program’s positive social impact, measured through surveys, case studies and feedback from facilitators, includes enhanced employment and education access, reduced reliance on public services, and improved road safety awareness. Waitlists for both Pre-Learner and Easy P phases indicate sustained demand. Feedback and outcomes suggest a reduction in risky driving behaviours due to comprehensive education and structured support.

Conclusion:

Easy P demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of accessible, youth-centred driver education. CRCS recommends continued funding to scale and sustain these supports and introduces a new proposed model—*Heads Up, Phones Down*—focusing on distracted driving, further education, and simulated training environments.

This report was completed by Jo Cole, Acting Executive Manager, Child Youth and Family, and Nicole Palmer, Program Manager for the Youth Engagement Team at Capital Region Community Services, based on previous reports, historical correspondence and direct experience managing the program since July 2024.

INTRODUCTION

Original Funded Activity

The Easy P program was originally funded under an ACT Road Safety Fund Grant in 2019. The original design aimed to assist 20 young learners in two cohorts of 10. The support structure for the program included:

1. **Pre-Learner Licence Course:** Three-day course facilitated by BYC, which prepares participants for obtaining their learner's licence.
2. **Professional Driving Lessons:** Five lessons provided by a driving school.
3. **Driving Experience with Volunteers:** Sessions using a leased vehicle and Belconnen Community Service volunteers.
4. **Leasing Costs:** Vehicle lease, insurance, and maintenance.
5. **Staffing:** Volunteer coordinator (1 day/week) and Youth Engagement Coordinator (3 hours/week).
6. **Evaluation:** A paid evaluation by the University of Canberra.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a halt to the program, leading to incurred costs for vehicle leasing, marketing materials, and staff time. After the lockdowns ended, the focus shifted to more urgent community needs, delaying the re-engagement of the program.

The University of Canberra (UC) were engaged to develop the evaluation process in 2020. Some work was completed, including the design of surveys, ethics approval was gained and a data gathering protocol was designed. They were paid for this project, however, as Easy P did not progress at the time due to the pandemic, there were no results to evaluate. When the project was preparing to re-launch after the pandemic lockdown period, the team from UC reviewed and updated surveys and other evaluation materials (See Attachment B). It is understood that UC required additional funding to continue to work on the study and evaluation and expressed some concerns that the small number of participants would not provide a large enough sample for the evaluation to have significant meaning. At this time the decision was made to cease the involvement of UC in the evaluation. A significant learning for the future from this outcome is to arrange agreements with contractors to be fully paid after delivery of agreed outcomes.

Extensions to the original deed with TCCS were agreed upon by CRCS and TCCS in 2021, 2022, and 2024 due to unspent funds and ongoing participants still completing the program. The final variation was to allow for a final report and evaluation of the program with available information, which had not been completed earlier.

In February 2023, the Easy P Program had been re-launched with an adapted model that reflects lessons learned since the start of the course. The program now emphasised the importance of supporting young people who are vulnerable due to various factors, such as socio-economic status, personal circumstances, and lack of access to resources. This was due to having identified that this vulnerable group would benefit the most from the program and that the Youth Centre was well-placed to provide the needed support. Key challenges from the original model were that the original volunteers had health and safety concerns about being part of the program; sharing vehicles raised COVID-19 health concerns for both volunteers and participants and volunteer-led driving lessons lacked a standardised method to assess driving quality.

To address these issues, the program shifted its approach by partnering with a professional driving school that prioritises safety, empathy, and patience in working with vulnerable young people. This ensured that

the program continued to focus on young learners, providing them with the skills necessary to progress from their learner's licence to their provisional licence. The restructured program included:

1. **Pre-Learner Licence Course:** A three day-course, delivered by the Belconnen Youth Centre (BYC), followed by the participant completing their Pre-Learner Assessment and achieving their Learner Drivers Licence.
2. **Case Management Support:** Providing tailored guidance to each young person, ensuring they safely progress toward obtaining their provisional licence.
3. **External Agency Partnerships:** Including collaborations with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) to offer resources and education focused on reducing road trauma and risky behaviours among vulnerable young drivers.

METHODOLOGY

Program Structure and Collaboration

In 2023, BYC staff became qualified facilitators for the ACT Road Ready program, enabling the delivery of a three-day Pre-Learner Course, which includes:

1. **Road Safety Education:** Addressing the risks of alcohol, drugs, and other risky behaviours that affect driving safety. (How long?)
2. **Trauma-Focused Education:** The P.A.R.T.Y program. A 2-hour session facilitated by the ACT Trauma Unit, sharing real-life stories of young people affected by road-related trauma due to risky behaviours.



Figure 1: Nardine Johnston Delivering her important message from the P.A.R.T.Y program

The three day Pre Learner's Program operates eight times a year at Belconnen Youth Centre. From this program, young people apply for Easy P directly or they can be being referred from external agencies, particularly those who are vulnerable and face additional barriers to accessing driving lessons. Once accepted into the program, participants agree to:

- **Goal Setting:** Committing to at least one driving lesson per week.

- **Ongoing Support:** Participating in safety and risky behaviour education as part of their driving lessons, led by a compassionate and patient driving school that understands the unique challenges of vulnerable young people.

Currently, the Pre-Learners Program is scheduled a minimum of 8 times per year and referrals come from multiple agencies and community organisations across Canberra, such as ACT Education (around 50% of referrals), UnitingCare, ACT Health, and University of Canberra refers international students studying in Canberra. There are waiting lists for Pre-Learners and Easy P, and changes were made to eligibility of Easy P program due to sheer volume of requests. See Attachment D for the application form that was used for participants to provide information to the team for their participation.

Community and Industry Partnerships

The Easy P Program has been strengthened by several partnerships that support its focus on vulnerable young people:

- **Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF):** ADF provides financial support, as well as educational resources focused on reducing alcohol and drug-related harm, especially in relation to driving. Since 2023, they have also provided additional funding for the Easy P program as it currently stands, to the amount of \$45,000 over the life of the project.
- **Driving School Partnerships:** Partnering with a qualified driving school ensures participants receive professional instruction, offered at a reduced cost, with a focus on empathy and understanding of the specific needs of vulnerable young people. Attachment A includes a testimonial from our partner, The Road Ready Centre.

These collaborations are crucial for enhancing the program's ability to reduce road trauma and empower young people, particularly those facing vulnerabilities, to become responsible and safe drivers.

During 2024 a collaboration was made with other Youth Services that provide Pre-learners. Partnerships were also made with Young Carers ACT and Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS) as organisations to support young people obtain free driving lessons. This opened a pathway of referrals and support for young people. We also introduced a minimum 3 meetings spent with a Youth Worker meeting personal goals and developing a personal plan to assist young people reach their full potential outside driving lessons.

When assessing applicants for Easy P the below criteria is considered:

- Did the young person have access to a vehicle after obtaining their licence
- What was the reason for young person obtaining their provisional licence
- Was the young person engaged in education or work or were they intending to be
- Was the young person a carer or in a caring role for another person
- Did the young person play professional sport or is a part of an art or musical group
- Did the young person have means to pay for the lessons without our support
- Does the young person have family or friendship support in Canberra
- Number of lessons young person may need

Based on the answers to the above questions, the BYC team consider whether the young person is eligible, and whether they could be referred to have some of their lessons supported by alternative services such as

Young Carers or MARSS. Young people were informed of the result, including assistance to referral to alternative organisation if needed, planned support with youth workers, package type approved by Youth team (number of lessons), and goal setting.

With their consent, details of the young people were then sent to the driving school who then set up their login and package details so they could book weekly lessons. Young people are required to book no less than one lesson per week, and these were tracked by the driving school and provided to us in detail each month or upon request.

Supporting Participants in Overcoming Barriers

To ensure equitable access and opportunity for all participants, we offered additional support for those who do not pass the initial Pre-Learners test. These individuals are invited to return and participate in one-on-one sessions with a youth worker. During these sessions, the youth worker assists the participant in understanding the test questions and provides tailored guidance to address any concerns. This personalised support helps break down barriers such as test anxiety and fosters a sense of confidence and safety. Ultimately, this approach enhances the likelihood of successfully passing the test on their next attempt.

Expenditure

CRCS have received a total of \$66,675 worth of funding from TCCS for the Easy P program. Below is a summary of the expenditure since the original grand funding in 2019.

	Year Ending 30-Jun-20	Year Ending 30-Jun-21	Year Ending 30-Jun-22	Year Ending 30-Jun-23	Year Ending 30-Jun-24	Period Ending 30-Apr-25	TOTAL
Grant - TCCS	33,500.00	-	-	25,000.00	8,175.00		66,675.00
TOTAL INCOME	33,500.00	-	-	25,000.00	8,175.00	-	66,675.00
Activity Expenses	5,946.62	1,394.00	-	-	31,216.11	4,007.03	42,563.76
Vehicle Costs	4,682.16	-	-	-	-		4,682.16
Rent (External) - secure garaging	500.92	-	-	-	-		500.92
Administration	6,700.00	-	-	5,000.00	5,208.93		16,908.93
Employment Costs	494.38	1,524.85	-	-	-		2,019.23
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	18,324.08	2,918.85	-	5,000.00	36,425.04	4,007.03	66,675.00

When the project was relaunched in 2023, the expenditure was primarily for the cost of driving lessons and the cost of administration of the program.

RESULTS

During the period of funding from TCCS, we had **181 complete their Pre-Learner program** and pass the assessment to receive their Learner's licence. During this same period, 33 young people engaged in the Easy P program, and from this group **19 obtained their Provisional Licences**.

See below for a summary of this data.

	Number of participants	Number of completed lessons	Number of cancelled lessons
Completed Pre-Learner's course including P.A.R.T.Y. and passed test	181		
Achieved Provisional Licence	19	501	13
Currently having driving lessons	2	38	5
Ready to commence driving lessons	1		
Applied and being assessed	3		
Enquired but not returned application	16		
Did not complete the 100 hours and achieve Provisional Licence	6	66	12
Applied and did not meet criteria	12		
Number of people on waitlist	42		
Total number of Easy P Participants to May 2025	33		

Between 2023-2025 while using the driving lessons, we found that each young person's needs were unique to their situation, including number of lessons required. Some needed additional support to be able to participate. Allocation of lessons was therefore tailored to individual needs and circumstances.

	Number of lesson hours used			
	100 hrs	50 hrs	20hrs	10hrs or less
Participants	1	10	11	11



Figure 1: Easy P participants taking part in the Pre-Learner's course. (Permission obtained).

Other data related to the 33 Easy P participants appears below.

Number of Participants completed Easy P by Year of birth										
1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	unstated
2	2	2	1	1	5	3	5	5	6	1

Cultural Identity of Easy P Participants							
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Australian	Australian-Egyptian	Chinese	Morocco	Iranian	Syria	Unstated
1	20	2	3	2	2	2	1

Referral Source									
CCCaes	CRCS Family Support	CRCS Youth	CYF	Family member	Marymead Catholic Care	Self-referred	Smith Family	UC Canberra	Unstated
1	1	6	3	5	1	5	3	4	3

Participant by ACT Region (including those that did not achieve Provisional Licence)						
Belconnen	Canberra Central	Gungahlin	Molonglo Valley	Tuggeranong	Weston Creek	Woden
12	5	7	3	3	1	2

Facilitator Feedback

During the period that CRCS ran this program, we experienced a Global pandemic and change over of key employees. To ensure we were able to report on as full a picture as possible, we also sought feedback from the Facilitators of the Easy P program.

Facilitator and Manager

The opportunity for young people to access free driving lessons and obtain their provisional license at no cost has had a profound and far-reaching impact. We have seen it has significantly boosted their self-esteem, provided a sense of independence and confidence that empowers them in other areas of life. With the ability to drive, many young people that have completed the Easy P program are now better able to support their families through employment or caregiving responsibilities, contributing meaningfully to their households.

This program has increased participants personal wellbeing by reducing social isolation and increasing access to education, training, and employment opportunities. It has also lessened the strain on community and social services by enabling young people to take greater responsibility for their own mobility and reduce reliance on public transport or emergency assistance.

We also saw a significant number of young people's attitudes towards driving change over the time they participated in the program, from Pre-Learners to gaining their Provisional Licence. Many joined believing that gaining their licence was a 'right' and that it would be easy to go through the processes. During the program they learned that they needed to know their road rules, practice, listen, and learn and to understand how to take responsibility and the consequences of not driving safely. Over time these young people came to understand that driving was a responsibility and that they needed to take it seriously.

Overall, this initiative represents a transformational step toward youth empowerment, inclusion, and long-term social and economic wellbeing.

Facilitator and Case Manager 2

In my role supporting the Easy P program, I've observed a range of positive outcomes for the young people involved. Beyond gaining hours towards their licence, many participants showed increased confidence, independence, and motivation in goal setting more generally. For some, this was their first experience of setting and working towards a long-term personal goal. The driving lessons became more than just skill development—they were a gateway to broader social and economic opportunities, such as increased confidence in achieving employment or education access.

A particularly powerful aspect of the program was how it helped young people engage with the principles of safe driving. Through structured lessons with driving instructors, attendance at the PARTY program, and consistent support, participants developed a strong understanding of road safety, responsible decision-making, and the importance of patience and focus behind the wheel.

Some participants shared how the program helped them overcome initial fears or anxieties about driving. With support, they gradually built the confidence to navigate complex traffic situations, understand road rules, and adopt safe driving habits. This not only prepared them for their driving tests but also laid the foundation for a lifetime of safer driving practices.

Barriers did exist, including inconsistent access to vehicles outside the program, anxiety or low confidence at the start, and sometimes difficulty coordinating lesson times around other commitments. Despite this, the feedback and observed growth in participants suggest the experience was overwhelmingly positive. Several young people expressed pride in their progress and a sense of control over their future that they hadn't felt before. These personal and social shifts aren't easily captured in standard data but were clear through their attitude, commitment, and increasing independence.

Facilitator and Case Manager 3

In my experience working with young people through Easy P, we've seen a wide range of positive outcomes. For disadvantaged youth who have taken on family responsibilities, getting their license has enabled them to support their families—driving relatives to medical appointments and siblings to school, improving reliability and independence.

Others have gained confidence and freedom, using their new licences to secure employment and demonstrate reliability to employers. Overall, Easy P has boosted young people's self-esteem and opened up new opportunities for work and personal growth.

Audio Case Studies

Three young people who participated in the Easy P program agreed to be interviewed as part of the evaluation and reporting for the program. Videos of these interviews, as well as transcripts of the videos, can be accessed in Attachment C. The young people gave their full consent for this information to be used in support of the program.

The story of each young person, based on their own perspective and those of the youth workers they engaged with through the program, has been included in the case studies listed below.

Case Study Analysis: Corey (Access Corey's video here: <https://youtu.be/EbzF8ku6Jac?feature=shared>)

Background

Corey, now 26, is a young adult who has been engaged with the Youth Centre for about 6 years until he turned 25, when he reached our program's age limit. Corey's journey with the Centre began in 2019, when he participated in the Pre-Learners pilot program at the Belconnen Youth Centre. At that time, the program was still new, and staff had only recently become qualified facilitators. Shortly after Corey's engagement, the Covid-19 pandemic forced significant changes, and Corey transitioned into Easy P.

Challenges

Corey faced multiple challenges throughout his adolescence:

- **Academic Difficulties:** He struggled at school, impacting his confidence and future opportunities.
- **Social Isolation:** Outside of the Youth Centre, Corey found it difficult to make and maintain friendships. The Centre became his "home away from home," providing him with a vital sense of belonging.
- **Family Responsibilities:** As the eldest child in a large family, Corey carried significant responsibilities helping his mother care for his younger siblings, which often placed additional emotional and practical pressures on him.
- **Barriers to Employment and Volunteering:** Corey had a history of mistakes as a young person, which made obtaining a Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) card difficult. This barrier affected his self-esteem and limited his ability to access work and volunteer opportunities.

Support and Achievements

The youth team identified that gaining a driver's licence would be transformative for Corey's self-esteem, independence, and his ability to support his family:

- **Gaining a Licence:** Corey successfully obtained his driver's licence, significantly improving his confidence and daily functioning.
- **Family Impact:** With his licence, Corey now provides transport for his siblings, reducing the burden on local services and allowing his family to better access healthcare, education, and social opportunities.
- **Social Development:** Corey continues to attend groups and social gatherings, maintaining long-term friendships and building a supportive peer network.
- **Overall Wellbeing:** Corey's mental health, sense of purpose, and connection to his community have all improved markedly.

Conclusion

Corey's story illustrates the critical role that youth services play in providing consistent, tailored support for vulnerable young people. Through access to targeted programs like Easy P, Corey developed key life skills that not only benefited him personally but also positively impacted his family and broader community. His journey highlights the importance of perseverance, community support, and targeted intervention in achieving long-term wellbeing outcomes for at-risk youth.

Case Study Analysis: Dylan (access Dylan's video here:) <https://youtu.be/DVdWk01WZ50?feature=shared>

Background

Dylan, aged 23, has been a long-term participant at the Youth Centre. He lives with his two brothers: an older brother with a disability who requires ongoing support, and a younger brother. With both parents having left the family home some time ago, Dylan has assumed the role of primary carer for his siblings.

Challenges

Dylan has faced significant challenges throughout his young adulthood:

- **Family Responsibilities:** As the primary caregiver, Dylan manages household tasks including cooking, cleaning, and overseeing the general wellbeing of his brothers.
- **Financial Hardship:** Dylan has had limited financial resources, historically relying on casual funds from his mother, making it difficult to plan for the future or invest in personal goals.
- **Personal Development Barriers:** Balancing caring duties with financial management left Dylan with little time or resources to focus on his own growth and independence.

Support and Achievements

Despite these challenges, Dylan has shown remarkable resilience and commitment to improving his situation:

- **Pre-Learners Course Completion:** Dylan successfully completed the Pre-Learners course, a significant milestone in building his independence and confidence.
- **Participation in Easy P Program:** Dylan enrolled in and is actively engaged with the Easy P driving program, taking regular lessons as he works towards obtaining his provisional licence.
- **Life Skills and Stability:** Alongside working towards his licence, Dylan continues to manage the household finances and maintain the day-to-day running of the home, demonstrating strong organisational and life skills.

Progress and Future Goals

While Dylan has not yet achieved his provisional licence, he is consistently attending weekly lessons and showing determination to reach his goal. Successfully obtaining his licence will not only improve his personal mobility but also expand his opportunities for employment, further education, and better support for his family.

Conclusion

Dylan's case highlights the profound impact that caring responsibilities can have on young people and the importance of structured support programs. His achievements so far reflect immense resilience, responsibility, and commitment to his family. The continued support from youth services is essential in helping Dylan reach his goals and build a stronger future for himself and his siblings.

Case Study Analysis: Jesse (Access Jesse's video here: <https://youtu.be/N2bs5zRHp-o?si=SSUikwL4irxVfuGV>)

Background

Jesse is a regular participant at the Youth Centre, living with and caring for his mother, who suffers from chronic pain and arthritis. Jesse also lives with additional challenges, including ADHD and autism, which impact the way he navigates social and work environments.

Challenges

Jesse faces several overlapping challenges:

- **Caring Responsibilities:** As his mother's primary carer, Jesse balances personal growth with significant family responsibilities.
- **Neurodiversity:** Managing ADHD and autism presents additional barriers to employment, education, and independent living.
- **Employment Barriers:** Jesse has been seeking support to gain employment, needing tailored guidance and opportunities that align with his needs and strengths.

Support and Achievements

Despite these challenges, Jesse has made important strides toward his goals:

- **Completion of "Bridge to Brighter Futures" Program:** Jesse successfully completed this ACT Government-funded initiative at the Belconnen Youth Centre, run in collaboration with CIT, aimed at equipping young people with skills to either enter the workforce or return to education.
- **Work Placement and Employment Prospects:** Following the program, Jesse completed a work placement and now has a pending job interview, demonstrating growth in confidence and employability skills.

- **Driving Lessons:** Jesse is attending regular driving lessons through Easy P, recognising that gaining his driver's licence is crucial not only for his own independence but also to better support his mother's needs.
- **Supportive Learning Environment:** Jesse expressed the need for a patient and understanding instructor. The Youth Centre's partnership with a compassionate driving school has provided Jesse with an environment where he feels supported and encouraged.

Progress and Future Goals

Jesse is well on his way toward obtaining employment and achieving his driver's license. These accomplishments will significantly enhance his capacity to support his mother, strengthen his independence, and improve his overall quality of life.

Conclusion

Jesse's story highlights the importance of individualized, compassionate support structures for young people living with disabilities and caring responsibilities. Programs like Easy P and Bridge to Brighter Futures and tailored driving instruction have played a critical role in empowering Jesse toward a more independent and fulfilling future.

Participant Surveys

After ceasing involvement with the University of Canberra for evaluation, we had access to the surveys they had developed, and we distributed the surveys provided by them to our participants (see Attachment B for the survey and other evaluation materials). All of these were collected after participation in Easy P. We received 5 returned surveys, and the information collected from this appears below.

All the participants who returned their surveys were between 20 and 25. There were three males, one female, and one person who is nonbinary. Nobody identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and one person identified as having a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background. Four of the participants were not studying or employed, and one was casually employed and studying at University.

Participants were asked a range of questions about their attitudes towards driving. Due to the small number of responses, we did not statistically analyse these, however those that did respond agreed that they would be able to help out more once they had their licence, and 4 out of 5 agreed or strongly agreed that they were anxious about learning to drive. Three out of 5 also agreed that they felt confident about driving.

Participants wanted to get their licence to help with employment, supporting their families, and to be independent.

Three out of 5 respondents indicate that getting their Learner's licence had been hard for them, and this was due to difficulties with finding time, not liking to study, it was stressful, and not having money. One identified that having autism made it more difficult for them. One stated it was a priority for him, and essential, but he did not have family in Australia to assist him.

Barriers to accessing driving training included

- no access to a car
- not being able to afford lessons
- not being able to afford petrol
- no access to a licenced driver

- Licenced driver not having time to help
- No time to practice.

It is difficult to assess changes in attitudes and behaviours related to risky driving from these surveys. All respondents correctly identified the key elements as being part of safe driving that were included as responses in the survey. These elements are

- Knowing the road rules
- Driving the speed limit
- Not driving when tired
- Good reaction speeds
- Knowing what to do in an emergency
- Being patient
- Predicting potential hazards
- Avoiding peer pressure to take risks while driving
- Not driving after drinking or using drugs
- Being confident
- Knowing the road rules
- Using a seatbelt

Overall comments included

“The program helped me, I am so much more confident. (The facilitator) helped me a lot.”

“(The best thing was) getting help, I will be employable.”

“(The best thing was) how easy it was.”

“(The best thing was) not having to pay for lessons.”

“(The best thing was) getting driving lessons with a professional and getting my P’s.”

Overall, the responses to the survey were very positive and in free text questions, respondents suggested that more participants should have access to the program, more should know about the program, and said they had no suggestions for program improvement.

DISCUSSION

Facilitators and participants all reported positive outcomes from the Easy P program. Barriers to achieving a provisional licence were money, access to vehicles, access to a licenced driver, trouble studying for tests, balancing other responsibilities such as caring roles at home, neurodivergence, and social anxiety and worry. Easy P was able to support young people to overcome these barriers by providing free lessons, and case management support through difficult elements of the process.

Although there is limited available quantitative data assessing outcomes, Easy P has proven to be popular and highly successful, particularly through supporting the participants through their Pre-Learner’s phase, the strategic introduction of the *PARTY* initiative and our partnership with ADF for additional funding.

The acquisition of a driver's licence has been shown through the feedback provided to have a profound and lasting effects on young people, not just in terms of mobility but in their overall quality of life. With a licence, young people are no longer dependent on ACT Public Transport or external services, which often come with financial burdens. They gain the ability to attend appointments independently or assist family members in reaching appointments, alleviating the need for costly caregiving services or relying on others for transportation.

Furthermore, a driver's licence enables young people to access employment opportunities, providing them with a stable income that can positively impact both their lives and the lives of their families. Beyond practical benefits, having a licence also contributes to their social integration, giving them a sense of independence, self-worth, and a stronger sense of belonging within their communities. These outcomes significantly contribute to building their self-esteem and reducing their reliance on mental health and social support systems.

Easy P not only supports young people in achieving their goal of obtaining a driver's licence but also addresses broader social and emotional needs. By fostering personal growth, confidence, and independence, the program plays a crucial role in improving the lives of participants. We are committed to continuing this important work and appreciate the support from our funders in making these opportunities possible for young people in our community.

The sheer number of people on our waitlist is testament to the achievement of Easy P. While we run the Pre-Learners Program 8 times per year, we are unable to support as many as we would like to complete their provisional licence. On average we have a waitlist for Pre-Learners Program of 6 young people per session. These young people are referred to other Youth Services in hope they can complete their Pre-Learners with them as alternative before returning to us to apply for Easy P.

Overall, the outcomes of this approach indicate that the likelihood of young people obtaining their provisional licence and engaging in risky behaviours that could lead to harm or death to themselves or others is significantly reduced. The comprehensive education and planned support provided during this process are critical factors in promoting long-term safety and responsibility on the road.

CONCLUSION

The Easy P Program provides young people experiencing vulnerabilities with the opportunity to gain the skills and qualifications necessary for safe and confident driving. By partnering with professional driving schools, offering tailored support, and focusing on reducing road-related risks, the program plays a key role in fostering a new generation of responsible drivers. Through this innovative and adaptive approach, the Easy P Program aims to significantly reduce road trauma and contribute to the safety and well-being of the community, particularly for those most at risk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CRCS recommends that future funding for Road Safety initiatives continues to support those young people in the community that need additional support for obtaining their provisional licences. We recommend that for this group of young people the following could be important and valuable elements of a Road Safety Program:

- **Individualised Support Plans:** Ensure that each participant has a tailored support plan that addresses their specific needs, goals, and challenges. This should include regular check-ins with youth workers to monitor progress and adapt the program as needed.

- **Mentorship and Peer Support:** It could be helpful to introduce a mentorship program where young people are paired with more experienced drivers or individuals who have successfully gone through the program. This could help enhance motivation and provide real-life role models to inspire positive change.
- **Focus on Resilience Building:** Given the importance of resilience in overcoming barriers to success, the program should incorporate elements focused on building this skill. Workshops or sessions on skills related to resilience such as emotional regulation, self-awareness, problem solving, goal setting and creating support networks could further empower participants to stay committed to both the program and their long-term goals.

CRCS has submitted an application for the current Road Safety Grant round through TCCS, which proposes a 6 week group program (1 day per week) run 4 times per year through the Belconnen Youth Centre. The new model is called ***Heads Up, Phones Down*** and targets distracted driving and road safety education; excursions to meet with relevant services for support and information sources; skill building through formal driving lessons and the use of a driving simulator; and case management support to get through the program and after completing the program.

The ***Heads Up, Phones Down*** program is aimed at young people who have had contact with ACT Policing, Youth Justice, DVCS or Victims of Crimes and whilst it's open to all young people, it is tailored to young males, who make up 80% of young people that lose their life due to speeding related crashes (youth driver fact base) and is where the program can have the biggest impact.

The program has been tailored to this cohort because young people from the priority groups:

- They engage in risk-taking due to inexperience, peer pressure and lack of awareness
- They statistically have a higher risk profile
- Interaction with police can be an indication that the young person is potentially on a path towards dangerous behavior
- They may not have received formal or effective driving education

Evidence indicates that targeted road safety programs for young people in the Capital Region are critical, due to the over representation of young people involved in incidents and fatalities. Young drivers are significantly overrepresented in road crashes and fatalities, despite those ages 17-25 making up 10-15% of the licensed driver population. They account for 25% of all road deaths in Australia. A 17-year-old with a P1 license is four times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash, compared to someone over the age of 26 years old (Pediatrics publications, 2006). Speeding is the leading cause of death amongst young drivers, with young males making up 80% of this group.

The activities proposed for ***Heads Up, Phones Down*** have been chosen to provide and promote education, build social connections and provide young people with safe and supported places to explore their passions in a safe and positive environment. Referring agencies are encouraged to maintain connection with the young person (if relevant) during their time on the program and continue to work with the young person to build/nurture a strong relationship, to support the young person to continue to reach their goals during and after the program.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Testimonial from Road Ready Centre

Attachment B - UC Survey and Semi structured Interview (attached in separate file)

Attachment C – Links to Video Feedback from 3 participants

Attachment D – Easy P application form

Attachment A – Testimonial from the Road Ready Centre



Stephen Lake, CEO, Road Ready Centre, reports:

The Road Ready Centre and Revolution Driver Training is very pleased to partner with Capital Region Community Services, to put into place a program which provides a simple solution to youth in Canberra who do not have easy access to a vehicle to get the practice, instruction and mandatory driving hours on their learner drivers licence to be able to progress to a provisional licence.

There are many young people who are not able to obtain a provisional driver's licence, and then onto a full licence, simply because they don't have easy access to a vehicle or supervising driver. This limits their ability to participate in and contribute to our community in the way they would like to.

This program offers young people education and training to obtain a learner licence, professional driver training and contributes to them achieving the minimum hours of practice they then need to move onto a provisional licence.

The Easy P program has proven to be very effective in helping young people to achieve their desire to obtain a driving licence giving them the independence and mobility most of us take for granted, improving their employment opportunities and providing much greater access to services.

We are very proud to be part of this program.

Attachment B:

Documents provided by University of Canberra:

Questionnaire and Semi-structured Interview

Email invitation

Privacy and Consent

(Provided in a separate document)

Attachment C – Links to Audio Case Studies

Dylan (Access video here) <https://youtu.be/DVdWk01WZ50?feature=shared>

Transcript: (Minor edits for clarity)

Y: So what is your name

D: My name is Dylan

Y: and Dylan how old are you

D: I am 25 tomorrow

Y: 25 tomorrow. Dylan how long have you been coming to the youth centre

D: um I would say about two three years now

Y: excellent and Dylan did you do your pre-learners here with us

D: uh yes I did

Y: yeah and did you pass

D: yes I did

Y: and how was that experience?

D: it was a good experience down here, it was educational, it helped me understand the variables and all that

Y: were you part of the party program, was Nardine here to do the party program with you

D: not party no

Y: I'll just we'll just take that as a no okay yeah so Nardine maybe wasn't part of the program when you did it so was that back in 2023 or 2024

D: 2024 I think it was

Y: yeah yep awesome, so from there you went and did your Easy P, so your provisional licence?

D: uh no not all my Ps, I'm on my Ls still

Y: yep but you're doing lessons

D: yeah

Y: so how many lessons have you done so far? I'll take that eye roll as you have no idea so we'll go as an ish

D: yeah i've done at least more than 20

Y: more than 20 awesome and what do you think?

D: um it's good a little terrifying at first but you know once you get the practice in you get used to it and it just becomes a bit easier and not stressful

Y: yep so I guess the question is why do you think the program is important for people like Yourself?

D: it helps um skill for people to need because we get like cars nowadays that's like a mode of transportation and public transport gets a bit crowded and all that so you would want to have the freedom um to drive a car to go wherever you want to go without needing to go bus stops and then A B C D all that you just go from A to B car so

Y: So would you be able to um have otherwise learned how to drive without this program?

Do you have access to a car and someone to teach you how to drive?

D: not at the time no and even now not really but like with this course it did help me get a chance to learn how to drive and get all the experience you know to drive where I couldn't at the time so um yeah thank to the thanks to the course I was able to you know get that experience driving need to worry about if I have a car to drive as of now

Y: awesome thanks all right

Cory (access video here: <https://youtu.be/EbzF8ku6Jac?feature=shared>)

Transcript: (minor edits for clarity)

Y: hey so um how about we start with your name?

C: I'm Corey

Y: hey Corey and tell us about why you come to Belconnen Youth Centre to do your pre-learners.

C: I came here to do it cuz I thought it was a really good opportunity to get my Ls and to get my Ps going

Y: yep um so we were chatting just before you actually did it twice, so tell me what happened then

C: so the first time I did it, I didn't actually go in and actually get it kind of in time, yeah i was too too shy to go in yeah, okay so I passed but I didn't never went in with the paper okay yep so I the paper expired

Y: okay so you reset it again

C: i redid it again last year with the centre and passed again but this time around I did go in and get my Ls

Y: excellent what do you think changed between the first time and the second time?

C: I believe I did it with a staff member

Y: so you had support?

C: yeah staff member took me down

Y: yes excellent

C: sat with me and helped me through the process amazing um I believe was Maddie

Y: excellent so you went and completed your or got your learner licence and then we accepted you onto the Easy P program which is the lessons to get your provisional licence, how was that process?

C: it went really well, I was very anxious obviously but um it was really good um cuz I was close to aging out from the youth centre. I asked staff members to help me um crunch my hours so I could be successful and pass a program before I was cut off

Y: okay so cut off for the youth centre is 26 so you were able to Yes get all those lessons in

C: I was able to get it all done

Y: so how many hours was that?

C: I had to do 50 hours because of my age at the time and um and I crunched out 50 hours in two months

Y: two months incredible so you got your Ps?

C: yes I got my Ps like a week before my birthday or something like that like it was it was Yeah really close

Y: that's intense and what's the benefit?

C: the benefit is I have been able to help mum take my siblings to school, have a little bit more freedom to ask mom and be like "Can I borrow the car for the day to see friends?" Yep so it's been able to get me a bit more freedom and just more skills just in general.

Y: so you're a young carer?

C: no I just help mom support mum help mum support

Y: yeah yeah that's amazing excellent is there anything else you want to say for the program?

C: I think the program is really good for young people who do not have enough money to afford lessons and um the support of the youth team was really good during the whole process. I would keep them up to date and their support really helped me push to get through because it it was challenging times for me to get through it yeah so I do I genuinely believe without the youth team I don't think I would have a licence right now

Y: excellent thank you

Jesse (Access video here: <https://youtu.be/N2bs5zRHp-o?si=SSUikwL4irxVfuGV>)

Transcript: minor edits for clarity)

Y: what's your name?

J: My name is Jesse

Y: Jesse and how old are you Jesse?

J: I am 23 years old

Y: so Jesse, how long you been coming to the youth centre?

J: oh probably about a year and a half maybe two years now

Y: yep um and you did your pre-learners with us, how did you find that experience? so that's when you did your Ls

J: when I got to do my Ls, yep i found that very easy, very manageable yep like I got all the information I needed and all

Y: am I correct to say that that was you were part of our pilot program

J: yes

Y: so be honest, how was the pilot program?

J: it was good, there were obviously growing pains type thing um but nothing too crazy nothing too like anything I needed to like give input on yep so staff just navigating through the um the process of understanding the actual delivery of the program so I guess facilitating the program um

Y: and then part of that you would have met Nardine who runs the party program so what was that program about?

J: uh if I remember it was about like showing us the fatalities on the road and how severe it can be

Y: yep yep

J: and traumas um and risky behaviour

Y: exactly

J: and basically, do everything you can to minimise your risks on the road

Y: excellent yep so um at the moment you've got your learner licence correct?

J: yep

Y: and you've just been accepted to do your Easy P, okay um so um how do you think how do you feel about that?

J: I feel pretty happy yeah, I can't wait to get on my Ps to then hopefully get on my you know on my Ps and then go to my full licence

Y: yep can you explain what getting your licence would mean to you?

J: it would mean that I'm able to help my mom out a lot more y um if it means like going down to the shops, getting her medication, doing grocery shopping is a lot easier um I'll be able to drive to jobs um my work I'll be able to drive there instead of taking buses or Ubers or getting my mom to drive me

Y: so it would make life a lot easier?

J: it would make life a lot easier and it would also getting my full licence would also mean that I'm able to then go for a motorbike licence

Y: amazing, so that's your big goal?

J: yes i would love to be riding motorcycles which I know is more dangerous but I love the freedom of the motorbike

Y: yeah how exciting well we can help you with that

J: sounds good

Y: thanks Jesse

J: not a problem

Attachment D

CRCS Easy P Application Form

Easy P supports young people to progress from a Learner's Licence to a Provisional Licence, providing support from a Youth Worker and lessons with a driving school. To be eligible for the program, you must:

- be aged 15 years and 9 months to 25 years old
- hold a current Learner's Licence
- be able to commit to a minimum of one lesson a week
- have circumstances that mean you need additional support to achieve your Provisional Licence.

Note: Easy P undertakes individual assessments for each referral to determine eligibility, and there is a waiting list. Making a referral does not guarantee acceptance into Easy P. The information on this application will be assessed to determine acceptance into the program.

For information on how CRCS collects, stores and uses personal information, please refer to our privacy policy at

<https://crs.com.au/about-crcs/privacy/>

About you

First name		Last name	
Preferred name		DOB	
Pronouns			
Phone number		Email address	
Street address			
Suburb		Postcode	
Best time to call	<input type="checkbox"/> 9am to 12pm <input type="checkbox"/> 12 to 3pm <input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 5pm <input type="checkbox"/> Any time		
Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not yet completed <input type="checkbox"/> Year 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Year 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state):
Have you completed any tertiary qualifications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate I, II, III or IV <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree or equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> None of these	
Are you currently employed?	Name of qualification:		
What type of home do you live in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Part time	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Casual <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Seeking Word
Who is currently living with you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency, transitional or supported accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/> Shared rental <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state):	
Are you a carer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Relative	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (not family)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: caring for parents <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: caring for children <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: caring for relative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: other <input type="checkbox"/> No	

About driving

How do you think obtaining a Provisional Licence will benefit you?

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What are the reasons you need Easy P instead of learning to drive another way?

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Do you have other ways to practice driving outside the program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please provide details)	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have access to a registered and road-worthy vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you commit to booking and attending at least one driving lesson a week?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have a Learner's License?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: How many hours have you done?	<input type="checkbox"/> No, but I am willing to acquire one as soon as possible.

X

Name

Date: