



## GIPPSLAND EAST ABORIGINAL DRIVER EDUCATION PROJECT (GEADEP)

### Project Development

The Let's GET Connected Transport project<sup>1</sup>, in consultation with indigenous support services and community groups across Gippsland East<sup>2</sup>, identified that unlicensed driving, unroadworthy vehicles, financial barriers, lack of personal identification and access barriers to education and training was a serious social and road safety problem within the indigenous community. Two of the major barriers identified were the financial hardship experienced by the indigenous community in obtaining and maintaining a drivers licence, costs associated with owning and maintaining a vehicle and personal identification.

A community partnership established and facilitated by the Let's GET Connected project in 2006 of over 23 leading indigenous and non indigenous specific organisations and agencies has come together to form the GEADEP Working Group. Mission Australia (Bairnsdale) was nominated as the *lead agency* to deliver the program on behalf of the GEADEP Working Group aiming to address the following issues:

1. Over representation of Aboriginal people in the court system;
2. The development of risk taking behaviours in young people;
3. Assistance with accessing birth certificates and registering births;
4. Greater access to training, education and employment; and
5. Overcoming the limited access to public and private transport
6. Access to 120 hours of driver education for disadvantaged young people and communities;

The GEADEP partnership since 2007 has been committed to acknowledging, linking and enhancing community strengths and the social capital that already exists within local communities.

The work carried out in this area was rewarded locally to Mission Australia and the Let's GET



Connected Project with a Recognition Award in August 2007, by the Gippsland Regional Managers Forum Reconciliation Committee, for contribution and development of the Gippsland East Aboriginal Driver Education Program.

Left to Right:

Bass Coast Mayor, Rhonda James & Sheryl McHugh  
Let's GET Connected Project, Lionel Dukakis Mission  
Australia and Minister for Transport Peter Bachelor –  
August 2007

<sup>1</sup> The Lets GET Connected Transport Project is a partnership between the Victorian Government and local communities

<sup>2</sup> East Gippsland and Wellington Shires – rural and remote Victoria  
12 August 2009

## Aboriginal Driver Education Training Initiative

As a result of setting up the project with Mission Australia, Exxon Mobil (through Mission's Corporate Partnership scheme) contributed over \$50,000 and \$5,000 funding from the Let's GET Connected Project along with in-kind support for partner agencies have all been instrumental in assisting the Gippsland East indigenous community obtain learners permits, driver licences, endorsed licences and birth certificates. The funding has also provided an opportunity to trial and evaluate the many issues involved in obtaining a drivers licence within the indigenous community.

### Project Success

Up to March 2009, the GEADep has supported the Gippsland East aboriginal community achieve 70 learners permits, 40 probationary licences, 4 endorsed licences, 15 employment outcomes, 13 enrolments to education and training and assisted over 300 people obtain their birth certificates or register their births for the first time. Mission Australia in Bairnsdale has also developed a tailored Driver Education Course in partnership with East Gippsland TAFE.



ADEP Vehicle



Bradley Hayes - Koori ID Project  
*The Unbearable Heaviness of Being No One*  
The Age, Jewel Topsfield- 23 January 2009



12 August 2009



## Vic Roads L2Ps Community Based Learner Driver Supervision Program

The introduction of the 120 hour minimum experience requirement for learner drivers under the graduated licensing system will have beneficial effects on the safety of young drivers, but will challenge learner drivers who do not have easy access to suitable supervising drivers or a suitable motor vehicle. It is important to ensure that these young people are not disadvantaged by the new experience requirement.

GEADep recently successfully received L2Ps VicRoads funding, auspiced by Wellington Shire Council for three years.

The ADEP L2P program is a community based program within a partnership/community development framework that provides experience to learner drivers who would otherwise find it difficult to accrue the minimum amount of driving experience – 120 hours.

The L2P program specifically targets young indigenous and non indigenous disadvantaged youth and involves:

- The recruitment and matching of volunteer supervising drivers from the local community
- Provides culturally sensitive training to all mentors prior to working with young people
- A learners permit support program that provides financial support and a minimum six driving lessons from qualified driving instructors
- 120 hour driver training with community mentors
- Access to two 5 star rated vehicles with appropriate insurance cover
- Assistance with obtaining birth certificates and appropriate identification
- Driver education training programs such as RoadSafe *Looking after Mates*, *Keys Please* and *Driving Straight*.



12 August 2009

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2009

### 'L2P' driver assistance for young East Gippslanders

A new road safety program to assist disadvantaged young people in East Gippsland get their probationary driver's licence has been launched by Mission Australia in partnership with the Lat's GET Connected Project, VicRoads and East Gippsland and Wellington Shire Councils.

Called the 'L2Ps' program it is designed to support young learner drivers who don't have access to a car or a supervising driver to clock up the 120 hours required to obtain their 'P' plates.

Mission Australia has now trained volunteer mentors and uses new cars provided by Fleet Partners, another program partner.

Program coordinator, Cheryl Seiby, said many local people will benefit from the program.

"There are about 27 people taking part at the moment," she said.

"The program is being offered to the wider community and will give young people access to



Jemma Balhas is all smiles as she tries out a new car under the 'L2P' program. (09)

services they might not otherwise have had.

"It's also about social inclusion and giving disadvantaged people access to the things a lot of us take for granted."

At the recent launch of the program, East Gippsland mayor, Cr Mendy Urie, congratulated the stakeholders who established the innovative program.

"It provides a practical solution for youngsters in need of access to a vehicle and people who have the time and the inclination to help," she said.

"By helping young people in this way we can improve their skills and confidence and help them become safer drivers."

East Gippsland Shire's transport project coordinator Rhonda James said she was pleased that three years of resourcing and developing the project had come to fruition.

"Mission Australia is keen to hear from young people needing driver assistance and others who would like to become mentors," she said.



## GEADEP Partners

The ADEP Working Group partnership consists of the following key stakeholders:

- Let's GET Connected Transport Project Coordinators
- Mission Australia (lead agency)
- Wellington Shire Council
- East Gippsland Shire Council
- Fleet Partners (donation of two vehicles)
- Exxon Mobil
- VicRoads
- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative
- Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation
- Lake Tyers Trust
- Moodji Aboriginal Cooperative
- VicPolice – Sale, Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance and Orbost
- East Gippsland TAFE
- RACV
- The Community College East Gippsland
- Departments of Justice, Planning and Community Development and Transport
- Gippsland East Local Learning & Employment Network
- Local Secondary Schools
- Centrelink
- Gippsland Lakes Community Health
- Exxon Mobil, Australia
- Gippsland Community Legal Services
- Bairnsdale Koori Court
- Kilmany Uniting Care
- Changing Lanes
- Men's Shed
- Smith Family
- The Age
- Bairnsdale Advertiser
- Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages



**For further information contact:**

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