

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### ***Getting behind the wheel***

For many of us getting our drivers licence was one of life's pivotal moments, an opening of a door. The process felt really hard but probably wasn't all that difficult in reality.

Getting a drivers license in very remote communities in the Northern Territory however can be a real challenge for people living in these communities and not having a Drivers license can greatly reduce employability and social mobility.

It is no surprise then that one of the most common charges heard in the NT Magistrates court is driving while unlicensed. Add to this 32% of vehicle accidents in remote areas involve unlicensed drivers further points to a real problem. Having a large group of people offending is a big cost to the court system and leaves people with criminal records. Leaving people isolated in towns with little public transport is also a problem. Without a licence getting a job is much harder.

To help people get through the license process Roper Gulf Regional Council with Drive Safe NT have been running a driver training program. Since 2013 more than 62 learner's licenses and 22 provisional licenses have resulted from this training mostly in the towns of Ngukurr and Numbulwar.

This program provides the learner with an understanding of road rules and road safety and at least 10 hours supervised driving experience with an experienced driving instructor in a dual control vehicle. This prepares the trainee driver for the licence test run by NT Drive Safe assessors which usually occurs in the home community.

Roper Gulf Regional Council Driving Instructor Ole Anderson said,  
*"The driver training program helps new drivers around the obstacles, teaches good habits behind the wheel and can be pitched at those who are already competent but unlicensed and those who have never driven. We are also looking at training experienced drivers in how to instruct others. We can then provide good quality training for more people and better meet some of the cultural needs of our clients"*

The program also helps people with the process of getting adequate proof of identity, a potentially daunting process for many in communities. It also caters for varying language and literacy skills.

There are courses about to be run in the "top road" communities of Beswick and Barunga and more are planned. There is no cost for the training.

Enquiries can be made to RJCP consultants in local communities or on 08 89728300

For further details please direct your enquiries to  
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