

Mount Austin high school students driving change

A group of senior high school students are about to kick-start their journey to achieving their provisional licence as part of the 'License for Change' partnership project between Wagga Wagga City Council, Mount Austin High School and the local Driver Training – Wagga and Regions.

Council was successful in securing \$50,000 in Youth Opportunities Program funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice for the joint initiative.

The grant funds are being used to purchase driver vouchers to access the safer drivers' course directly from NRMA, along with other resources to support the student learners.

Council's Community Development Coordinator Alex Osgood said the Mount Austin High School community had identified some of the barriers for students in participating in volunteering, employment and other opportunities after leaving school.

"Getting a licence is such a key turning point in many young people's lives on their journey to independence, but access and affordability and cost-of-living pressures puts this out of reach for many," Alex Osgood said.

"'License for Change' is designed to support 35 local young people from Mount Austin High School to gain their learner licence, through to obtaining their provisional licence.

"It improves young people's access and ability to participate by bringing the program directly to the students, using identified support networks that they trust, and minimising as many barriers as possible to being able to participate in a program like this."

Mount Austin High School Principal Michelle Waugh said the ability to drive is a critical skill for students transitioning to the workplace or higher education.

"The cost of driving lessons is prohibitive and sometimes there are other factors that might mean that students are unable to access all the hours they need to do while on their L plates," Ms Waugh said.

"It's about engaging young people in learning and supporting their education and employment pathways for the future, so they are well prepared for when they leave high school."

Christine Hillis from the Driver Training – Wagga and Regions is pleased to be working with the students, building their confidence behind the wheel, and preparing them for the test.

“We think it’s a really important program for the Mount Austin High School community and particularly for the students as it’s about more than just the skill of driving,” Ms Hillis said.

“When you see young people at this age and they’re struggling to get their licence, this program can be that sliding door moment when you know it’s going to make a difference, they’re going to get their licence and it will change their lives.”

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Contact 6926 9190 or media@wagga.nsw.gov.au

About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of \$240 million.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre, and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina, and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds, and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as ‘the City of Good Sports’.

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