

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Huon Valley Driver Mentoring – Gearing Up for Summer**

A morning tea was held recently to acknowledge the mentors from Kingborough helping young people get the driving hours necessary for their drivers licence.

The Huon Valley Council program 'GEARING UP' is one of the statewide Learner Driver Mentoring Programs (LDMP) promoted by Driver Mentoring Tasmania (DMT) operating in the Huon Valley and Kingborough municipalities.

These programs were established to assist disadvantaged learner drivers, by providing them with access to a suitable mentor driver (volunteer) and a safe vehicle to begin the licensing process.

Garry O'Byrne, State Coordinator for DMT says it is difficult for some learners to graduate from their L1 to L2 and L2 to Provisional licence.

"Some learners in these areas have no means to obtain safe driving experience during their L1 phase and to register their 50 logged hours in the L2 stage to be able to sit an assessment for their provisional licence.

"They may not have a suitable person to mentor them whilst on their Learners licence, they may not have access to a suitable vehicle or they may be unemployed or working part-time or casual hours and holding a health care card. All of these are factors preventing people from getting the necessary experience," he said.

"The Gearing Up program supported by the Huon Valley Council gives those that are disadvantaged in these ways, a helping hand to obtain their licence."



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Huon Valley Council Commissioner Adriana Taylor says obtaining a licence means a lot, especially in regional areas.

“Getting your licence is like a rite of passage we take for granted but to our learner drivers it can change their lives. Being a mentor is very rewarding as you are making a real difference to a person’s life.

“Some of our participants have part time jobs and or are studying at TAFE or university and college and others are depending on getting their licence to be able to get a job.

“Obtaining a driver’s licence allows local unemployed people in the Huon and Kingborough to be able to attend education and training, job interviews and gain employment.

“Mentors aren’t teachers, they’re not teaching the young people to drive. They provide supervision while the drivers get their hours up and we’ve found that those people who have gone through the Gearing Up Program have increased self-esteem and self-empowerment, not to mention a boost in their independence,” she said.

“We’re looking for new mentors in Kingborough and the Huon and we’re also looking for supporters to help us get an automatic car for our learners. If you’re an experienced driver and would like to help others get their licence or would like to contribute towards another car, give us a ring and we’ll tell you what’s involved. Your contribution can really make a difference,” Ms Taylor said.

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Kingston LINC's Alison Ekin, Huon Valley Council's Karen McCall, Mentor Denis Trayling, DMT State Coordinator Garry O'Byrne, Huon Valley Council's Tania Wilton and Mentor Jeremy Harris.



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