

Councils across NSW

Free Cuppa for the Driver scheme

Introduction

Driver fatigue is a unique and complex problem. Unlike speeding and drink driving, there is no legislation, assessment or enforcement to regulate or detect the fatigue levels of car drivers, but it is just as dangerous.

In 2010, The 'Free Cuppa for the Driver' scheme was piloted in Parkes, Forbes and Condobolin and over the years has expanded, evolved, improved and continued to save lives.

The scheme is an incentive program that encourages drivers to stop and take a break at participating businesses and are rewarded with a free cuppa.

In 2022, the scheme is operating in 21 regional council areas in the Western, South Western and Hunter regions of NSW in partnership with Transport for NSW.

How it works

Visiting drivers are defined as drivers who are more than 100 kms away from the address on their licence. These drivers are entitled to a free cup of tea or coffee at any participating business between 1 March and 31 May each year.

The councils and Transport for NSW administer and market the scheme while participating businesses provide the free cuppas.

Snapshot

- ▶ The 'Free Cuppa for the Driver' scheme runs annually from 1 March to 31 May.
- ▶ Participating businesses encourage drivers to take regular breaks by offering them a free cup of tea or coffee if they are more than 100 kms away from home.
- ▶ This year, the scheme is operating in 21 local government areas in partnership with Transport for NSW.
- ▶ The scheme has been operational since 2010. Since its inception more than 27,000 free cuppas have been given away in 265 participating business across 91 towns, villages and cities in regional NSW. Over this period in NSW, fatigue related crashes have fallen by 19 per cent.

Promotion

The scheme is promoted via the following channels: online at www.freecuppa.com.au, pop up community engagement events that target traveling drivers, roadside banners that are on entry roads to towns, online directory indicating participating business locations, fatigue information and a coupon drivers can use to redeem their free cuppa.

Promotional materials are also given to participating businesses which include: decal sticker which advises they are a participating business, outdoor signage (bali banner, sandwich board sign and smaller version of the roadside banner) and branded take-away cups.

Project outcomes

Since its inception in 2010, the scheme has seen more than 27,000 free cuppas given away in 265 participating businesses across 91 towns, village and cities in regional NSW. There are five businesses that have been participating for 10 years. Across NSW during this time, fatigue related crashes haven fallen by 19 per cent.

Summary

Issues

- ▶ The scheme is sometimes confused with 'Driver Reviver'.
- ▶ The scheme is seasonal (doesn't run all year), however drivers can be fatigue at any time of the year. Hopefully by using the scheme, drivers realise the importance of stopping and taking breaks.
- ▶ It would be great if the geographical footpath of the scheme was larger. By operating in more areas, it would mean more participation from businesses and the scheme would be more meaningful for travellers.

Solutions

- ▶ The 'Free Cuppa for the Driver' scheme is an incentive program developed to encourage drivers to stop and take a break at participating businesses, whilst travelling in the Western, South Western and Hunter regions of NSW, and be rewarded with a free cuppa.
- ▶ The scheme is a win for road safety as tired drivers stop and have a break and it's a win for local towns and businesses as they attract more visitors and customers.