Industry Road Safety Alliance
South West, Western Australia

Regional partnerships drive road safety improvements at work and in the community

Represented Organisations: 10
Employees: 10,000+
Organisation: Industry Road Safety Alliance - South West WA
Represented Organisations: 10 (South32 Worsley Alumina, Newmont Boddington Gold, Synergy, WA Police, Main Roads WA, Road Safety Commission, Shires of Collie, Boddington and Harvey, WALGA RoadWise
Employees: 10,000+

Case Study:
Local partnerships drive workplace and community road safety improvements

Key Outcomes:
- Industry Road Safety Alliances can be a powerful force to improve road safety outcomes across regional areas;
- Partnerships that bring together industry with local and state government authorities have a much stronger chance of creating change by combining those with a passion for road safety with agencies who have authority over the road network;
- Persistence is required to educate road users and change road user behaviour in the community and individual workplaces;
- Collective knowledge and action, working to consistent agreed priorities, has a far greater reach and chance of changing attitudes than individual action;
- When education results in workers realising the choices they and others make on the road affects everyone's safety, they can become road safety champions within workplaces and the community;
- Industry road safety alliances need to be proactive in remaining relevant and enthusiastic to continually demonstrate their value.

Synopsis:
Increasing demand on an ageing road network spurred local action to improve road safety in a fast growing region visited by millions each year. The resulting alliance of industry and local and state government authorities has resulted in multiple road safety initiatives that have improved crash rates and changed attitudes in workplaces and across the community.
Introduction

The South West region of Western Australia is well-known, among other things, for Margaret River and the surrounding wine region, world-class surfing and beautiful old growth forests.

However, for people living and working in the region, the need to often travel long distances combines with an increasingly ageing road network that services a growing population and regular influx of tourists to make road safety a key challenge.

An independent road safety study, commissioned by BHP Billiton Worsley Alumina in 2008, revealed at least 4500 vehicle movements a day would be added to the already busy road network in the near future. Since then, other major projects have also increased traffic volumes. The study recommended road safety improvements ranging from infrastructure upgrades to traffic coordination and education.

The South West region has WA’s fastest-growing population, increasing by 3 per cent annually, and the region hosts about 4 million visitors a year. According to Worksafe WA, in the seven years to 2012-2013 vehicle incidents were the second highest cause of work-related fatalities in Western Australia. On average four people are killed at work each year in WA because of vehicle crashes. In addition, between 2009-2010 and 2011-2012, each Lost Time Injury caused by a vehicle incident resulted in an average of almost four months without being able to work.

All those factors add up to road safety being a significant challenge – and opportunity – in the state, particularly in the South West.

An Alliance is Formed

Major industries operating along the access routes to Collie, Boddington and the Peel region in WA’s South West recognised their employees, contractors and service providers travel long distances between towns on a road network that is increasingly busy and old.

Those companies also realised they could not address road safety in isolation, nor did they have authority over the local road network and so, in 2009, the South West Industry Road Safety Alliance was formed.

The SW Alliance was also formed as a response to local concerns about long distances and ageing infrastructure as well as the expansion of the Worsley Alumina workforce.

The SW Alliance includes members of major road users in the region and brings together local corporate operations, local governments and state government departments. Since the inception of the SW Alliance, it consists of the Shires of Boddington, Collie and Harvey; the Office of Road Safety (now Road Safety Commission); WA Local Government Association (RoadWise); WA Police; Main Roads WA; and local corporations BHP Billiton Worsley Alumina (now South32 Worsley Alumina), Newmont Boddington Gold, The Griffin Group, Wesfarmers Premier Coal, Verve Energy (now called Synergy) and Perdaman Chemicals and Fertilisers.

The SW Alliance aims to reduce trauma on road networks within its sphere of influence by:

- Driving a coordinated and proactive approach to road safety
- Identifying and addressing road safety hazards
Participating in road safety improvements on local road networks that service the SW Alliance membership, and

Improving road safety and reducing road trauma by working together to educate workforces and communities.

SW Alliance members, whose organisations engage more than 10,000 employees and contractors, meet every second month to work collectively and cooperatively to address all aspects of road safety in the region, with a particular focus on Safe Drivers in Safe Vehicles travelling at Safe Speeds on Safe Roads and Roadsides. These four cornerstones of road safety are also the foundation of WA’s Towards Zero road safety strategy and the United Nation’s Decade of Road Safety campaign.

Replicating the Model

The South West Industry Road Safety Alliance was the first joint private-government road safety approach of this size and scope ever undertaken – and has attracted widespread interest as a road safety model around Australia and across the world.

The model has been replicated with similar alliances in WA’s Pilbara, Mid West-Gascoyne and Goldfields-Esperance regions, with each alliance sharing the primary goal of improving road safety and reducing road trauma locally by bringing together the region’s main industry bodies, relevant government agencies with responsibility for road safety, peak advisory bodies and key corporate organisations.

In the early stages of the SW Alliance, the National Transport Commission, the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation and the World Bank expressed interest in replicating the alliance model on a wide scale and, at a corporate level, BHP Billiton is examining the success of the SW Alliance and how it can replicate its good work around road safety at its other operations around the globe.

The SW Alliance has also been recognised with many awards, including the 2009 Local Government Road Safety Awards, the 2010 Insurance Commission of Western Australia Road Safety Awards for Most Innovative Road Safety Project, and the Partnerships Excellence Award in the 2014 Injury Control Council of Western Australia (ICCWA) Injury Prevention and Safety Excellence Awards.

As the South West Industry Road Safety Alliance is the longest running and largest industry road safety alliance, this case study will focus on what it has achieved and the challenges it has faced in establishment, implementation and gaining community support and employee engagement.

South West Industry Road Safety Alliance member Simon Dent (centre), from BHP Billiton Worsley Alumina, accepts the 2014 ICCWA award from CEO Deborah Costello and Chief Medical Officer Gary Geelhoed.
**Delivering Results**

The SW Alliance has achieved many positive road safety outcomes by bringing together local decision makers and stakeholders to address all aspects of road safety.

It’s a coordinated, community-wide approach that’s delivering results through the development of initiatives at grass roots level.

Anecdotal and statistical evidence indicates that the SW Alliance is making a significant difference towards reducing death and serious injury, a decrease in speeds and an increase in road safety awareness in local communities. For example, there was a decrease in the number of crashes during the Worsley Alumina expansion period, which translates into a reduction in potential injury and increased productivity.

By working together and sharing expert knowledge, SW Alliance partners achieve much more than they could separately. For example, mining industry members have shared their alcohol and drug testing procedures, and all road safety programs are coordinated through the Road Safety Commission to maximise the chance of success and deliver consistent messaging.

The SW Alliance has resulted in intersection upgrades, installation of street lighting, numerous road surface improvements and road line markings, roadside billboards displaying safety messages, public holiday education campaigns and reduction of traffic and fatigue via the introduction of bus services and encouraging car pooling.

The SW Alliance's involvement with local industry helps ensure safe vehicles with the highest ANCAP safety rating are purchased and there are signs of a clear positive change in road user culture across the region. While difficult to measure, anecdotal indications suggest people driving to work are reducing their speed and risky driving.

Public education campaigns, which have included television advertisements, have drawn community endorsement, including feedback supporting industry for taking action on road safety. Such campaigns build on education campaigns within workplaces, with employees spreading road safety messages ‘by osmosis’ as they discuss initiatives from work with family and friends.

**Safe Roads and Roadsides**

The SW Alliance aims to identify and address hazards by recognising and acting on regional road safety black spots and hazards, providing valuable collective input to many infrastructure programs in the region.

- Intersection upgrades, including at key intersections such as Coalfields Highway-Gastaldo Road and Gastaldo Road-Mornington Road.
- Installation of street lighting, for example, at Coalfields Highway-Galstado Road and Australind Bypass-Raymond Road intersections.
- Improved road surfaces and road line marking at various locations.
- Improved direction and speed signage in multiple locations across the region.
**Safe Road Use**
The SW Alliance aims to educate partner workforces and the wider travelling public about how they play a role in making everyone safer on the road.

- Roadside billboards situated on key routes display road safety messages, updated every two months in alignment with an annual calendar of regionally relevant road safety topics.

- Major education and awareness campaigns are conducted at peak travel times such as Easter, Christmas and New Year’s holiday periods.

- Introducing bus services and encouraging car pooling has reduced traffic volumes on major roads. At its height, the Worsley Alumina expansion project, for example, was transporting 2000 people a day to and from site. As well as combating fatigue for shift workers, the service, which is still used by 200 people a day, also makes them feel the company values their wellbeing.

**Safe Speeds**
The SW Alliance continually reviews speed limits and works to ensure speed limits are adhered to.

- Alliance members work with local police to provide data on peak workforce travel times and routes so targeted enforcement can ensure best use of police resources and keep the wider travelling public safe on the roads.

- Working in collaboration with Main Roads WA, speed limits on several routes in the region have been reviewed and reduced as appropriate at the request of SW Alliance members.

- Introducing heavy haulage curfews on key travel routes, such as the Coalfields Highway, to reduce risk associated with light and heavy vehicle mix and the impact on the travelling public and local communities, for example, at school start and finish times.
**Safe Vehicles**

Alliance members aim to follow WA’s Road Safety Fleet Policy Guidelines and implement the highest ANCAP safety rating in organisation procurement processes and purchasing policies.

- Establishing fleet safety procedures.
- Introducing state-of-the-art vehicle designs.
- Installing global positioning systems (GPS) and in vehicle monitoring systems (IVMS).

**Key Achievements**

- Road and intersection upgrades and street lighting improvements
- Improved signage, line marking and sight lines
- Working towards implementing programs in own organisations in alignment with WA’s *Towards Zero* Road Safety Strategy
- Key road safety messages adopted in member workplaces, and reinforced at toolbox and safety meetings
- Speed limits on routes reviewed and reduced
- Introduced heavy haulage speed limits and promoted defined routes
- Established fleet safety procedures
- Strategically aligned road policing and enforcement
- Installed global positioning systems (GPS) and In Vehicle Monitoring Systems (IVMS)
- Reduced instances of fatigued driving
- Reduced vehicle traffic through bus services and car pooling
- Developed a calendar of road safety topics and supporting resource library
- Developed ‘At-risk Driving’ reporting system
- Road safety billboards
- Developed major road safety education and awareness campaigns at peak travel times
Changing Culture

Perhaps the most significant outcome from the South West Industry Road Safety Alliance has been a clear change in road user culture in the region.

While difficult to quantify, particularly in the general community, an increase in reporting and discussions at safety meetings within SW Alliance member companies – and importantly expectations of the way colleagues and peers behave on shared roads – indicate road safety messages have resulted in risky behaviours, such as speeding and drink and drug impaired driving, no longer being considered acceptable.

Road safety stakeholders working together for mutual benefit has been a key factor in promoting such attitude change. SW Alliance member staff are on the lookout for potential hazards and raise safety issues as they are identified.

Such ‘intelligence’ has helped local police deploy resources more effectively, in turn reinforcing perceptions that police will ‘be in the right place at the right time’ to target inappropriate behaviour, whether it’s speeding home at 2am after a work shift or driving early in the morning still impaired from the night before.

An example of Industry Road Safety Alliance members working closely with police

A local mining company made a request for the police to set up a random breath test point on the only access road into the mine site. The main aim was to create awareness among workers that police were working in partnerships with the SW Alliance to make roads in the region safer for the community.

Initially, employees and contractors complained about their time being wasted and being delayed in arriving for work. Over time, however, any negative sentiment became directed towards colleagues who recorded any alcohol in their system, even if they were below the legal limit, with that driver regarded as compromising the safety of everybody using that road.

SW Alliance campaigns are also linked to South West Police District campaigns, which focus enforcement on speed, fatigue, alcohol and restraints.
Facing Challenges

While the South West Industry Road Safety Alliance has been successful for several years, longevity also brings the challenge of keeping an alliance and its members energised and the program evolving.

While SW Alliance membership has remained constant, individual employees representing those organisations has changed in the majority of cases, with new people bringing new ideas and renewed enthusiasm for its goals.

Another significant challenge is competing priorities. All alliance member representatives have ‘day jobs’, so there can be significant pressure from within individual workplaces to focus on core organisation objectives, particularly when funding or time come under pressure. While alliance members remain committed to its goals, such pressures are often resolved when the representative has a passion for road safety, rather than attending because it is expected of them.

With most industry members of the SW Alliance operating in the mining sector, knowledge of workplace risk was higher than in the general community. An initial challenge was extending that mindset when workers drove home.

Staying relevant is an ongoing challenge for alliances, particularly a need to continue to produce real outcomes so industry, the community and member organisations continue to see value in the initiative. The SW Alliance has held strategic workshops that have identified priority areas for action – where it can get the ‘most bang for buck’ in road safety – and recognised that the collective strength and knowledge of the four alliances within the state also present an opportunity to influence road safety.

Visual Impact

Developing education materials both for the community and workplaces are a key way the South West Industry Road Safety Alliance influences road user behaviour and changes attitudes.

Make the Right Choice is the theme of a series of Alliance-created television commercials, for example, that run across the South West during the summer holiday and tourist season. Importantly, the commercials have a local flavour, which makes them significantly more meaningful and effective.

The commercials target a range of behaviours including excessive speed, drink driving, not wearing a seat belt, fatigue and distracted driving. The campaign raises awareness within the community and reinforces the consequences to people’s lives if they make the wrong decision when driving.

Fatigue and distraction are the central themes of high quality animation videos the SW Alliance has produced that are aimed at use in member workplaces.

An example of visual impact

The locally produced, 2-3 minute videos use whiteboard animations to promote safety messages and are intended to be used at toolbox meetings and at key local events.

To view the videos, visit: www.rsc.wa.gov.au/topics/workplaces#irsaanimations
The Next Priority

One specific area the South West Industry Road Safety Alliance has identified as a priority is heavy transport.

With rail struggling to keep pace with freight demand, there is a substantial risk to employees and the community relating to heavy transport on South West roads, particularly from the mix of heavy and light transport and the propensity for risky overtaking.

Rather than taking direct action, the South West Industry Road Safety Alliance intends to work with local operators to discuss and then help them implement a model to address heavy transport road safety concerns.

The SW Alliance has also identified single vehicle run off road crashes, which account for the most number of fatalities in the South West, as a priority area. Simple measures, such as audible edge lining, increased width of shoulders and wire rope barriers, can and are being put in place in collaboration with Main Roads WA. The South West Industry Road Safety Alliance believes more should be done to contribute towards Safer Roads and Roadsides, particularly given the proximity of large trees to the side of the road across the region.

This is one area where the SW Alliance hopes to get agreement from other WA regional road safety alliances, leveraging their ‘group buying power’ to influence the state government to increase resources allocated to a road safety issue that they believe needs priority action across the state.