

1300 DRIVER- Trying to Help Drive Australia

Merrilees E., Lester D. & Rauwendaal E.

Introduction

The Australian road freight sector generates \$48.3 billion in revenue per annum and employs over 186,000 staff.

An estimated 3% of heavy transport drivers (truckies) engage in alcohol and other drug use while working. The literature suggests vocational stressors play a significant role in this use.

In 2012 the Alcohol & Drug Information Service (ADIS) set out to promote and provide a telephone-based support service aimed at heavy transport truck drivers- 'truckies'

Project Aims

Establish and promote awareness of 1300 DRIVER, designed to improve truckies' health and wellbeing by providing 24/7 telephone support, to address individual concerns such as stress, anxiety, isolation, diet, poor sleep, substance use.

Increase utilisation of the service.

Improve truckies' self care, coping and self management strategies, and resilience

Method

ADIS received funding under the 2012 Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grants Fund, managed by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, to provide a telephone-based holistic health service targeting truckies.

Build capacity at the ADIS to handle trucking related inquiries.

Establish a presence in the trucking industry using media newspaper, radio.

Establish internet & social media presences, including a range of self assessments.

Establish a presence at major truck stops between Sydney and Albury via an outreach 'roadshow'.

Conduct roadside surveys and interviews with truck drivers at truck stops.



Results

The 1300 DRIVER was established by ADIS and has been in operation for 3 years.

To date, 102 drivers have been engaged in person via interview at truck stops.

➤ 22 drivers have completed surveys.

➤ 5% of surveyed drivers indicated they had heard of the 1300 DRIVER service

➤ 43% of surveyed drivers had concerns about their substance use in the past 4 weeks.

➤ The majority of surveyed drivers (60%) were most likely speak with their GP about their concerns.

➤ 13% of those surveyed were most likely to contact a telephone service about their concerns

➤ Drivers identified improved food choices and better/cleaner/hygienic rest, showering and toilet amenities as being the most important to the quality of their physical and mental health whilst on the road.

➤ Many drivers expressed appreciation that someone was making an effort to get out on the road talk to them.

Outreach staff were able to offer several drivers impromptu smoking cessation advice, relapse prevention counselling and referral information.

Results (cont'd)

Radio and print media have had some immediate impact. Media has included

- Industry magazines
- Sydney based newspapers
- ABC, 2GB and regional radio

1300 DRIVER presence at truck stops appears to be an effective method of maintaining and further building awareness, and providing truckies with an introduction to 1300 DRIVER services.

Conclusions

Truckies are a hard to reach group.

Truckies rely predominately on word of mouth, radio and social media to keep up to date about their industry.

More intensive efforts to promote the 1300 DRIVER service to sustain awareness will be required.

Truckies are willing to engage with outreach workers and this may be an underutilised approach to service provision among this target group.

Contact:

1300 DRIVER (1300 37 48 37)

St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst

Email: 1300DRIVER@stvincents.com.au

Web: <http://1300DRIVER.org.au>

Twitter: @1300DRIVER