

The size of the problem

Readers can get some idea of the size of the licensing offences problem from one magistrate who told Indigenous Driver Licensing Unit Manager Frank Wojcinski that he had 113 matters to hear in one community. Eighty of them were licence-related.

One of the goals of the Indigenous Driver Licensing Program is to reduce the number of Indigenous people in prisons for licensing offences. The program is trying to work with courts to make getting a licence a way to make up for the offence, instead of going to prison. Also, they would like to work with people in prison who are close to being released. Getting a licence may keep them out of more licensing trouble in the future.

Some of the licensing team visited Townsville Correctional Centre last NAIDOC week to find out what programs the prison had for people close to being released. Most of the Indigenous inmates were there for licensing reasons and, sadly, some wanted to go to prison because they had large fines and no chance of paying to clear them.



From our mailbox

“On behalf of the Mayor, councillors and the community of Woorabinda we would like to congratulate and commend your department for carrying out an excellent job delivering this service.”

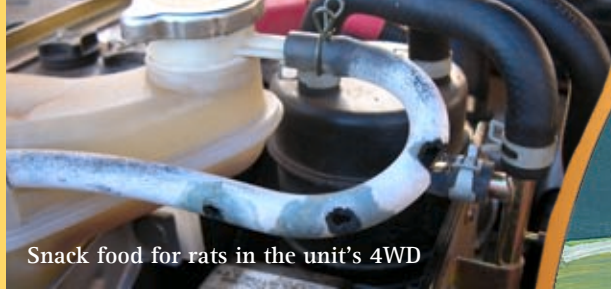
Rachel Fairman, acting CEO Woorabinda

“I would like to congratulate you on the wonderful team of people who came to Innisfail...Evaluation sheets were handed out to participants and all comments were very positive and full of praise ...”

Freda Masina, Mamu Female Family Support Officer



Driving Examiners Sandy Beckett and Alison Evans in action at Cooktown



Snack food for rats in the unit's 4WD

Best laid plans of (big) mice and men

In order to save two days driving from Cairns, the licensing mob decided to base a 4WD in Weipa for fly-in fly-out trips. When they arrived back for the first trip just three weeks after placing the vehicle in storage, they found a number of small problems—problems that had legs, tails and teeth. Rats had made a meal of the plastic hoses, making the vehicle unusable. Better storage facilities have since been found.

Interest from the Northern Territory

The licensing mob's reputation has spread to the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory Department of Infrastructure and Planning is considering setting up a similar program. The issues and licensing barriers in the Northern Territory are similar to those of North Queensland. Mr Stephen Mackrow, Manager of Registration and Licensing Policy visited the unit to see how they operated and in particular, how the vehicles were outfitted. Mr Mackrow was impressed with what he saw. In return, as the Northern Territory already uses digital licences, the unit will have the opportunity to learn from him about their use in remote areas.

Contact us

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We can reduce unlicensed driving by encouraging communities to support driver education.