



MEDIA STATEMENT [DATE]

Driving Wajarri Youth Further

It's no secret that a driver's licence is a huge advantage in securing and maintaining paid employment. Whether it's to become a retail employee or to get to a mine site, driving is an important skill which has enormous benefits.

Sinosteel Midwest Corporation (SMC) in conjunction with Wajarri community members identified that some Wajarri Yamatji people struggled with logging 50 logbook hours, due to a lack of access to road worthy cars and support networks. Following discussions with local agencies, the Wajarri Drive Program was developed by SMC's Wajarri Liaison Officer, Marianne Miller.

The Wajarri Drive Program is funded by SMC's annual \$30,000 Wajarri Employment, Training and Education fund. Wajarri people log 50 hours with Keen Brothers Driving School in Geraldton to gain their drivers licence.

Participants Kurt Wright and Courtney Bellotti are pleased at the opportunity.

"I moved up from Perth late last year to be with my family, however by myself it was hard to get motivated to complete my logbook hours. When I heard about the Wajarri Drive Program it seemed a great way to get access to a qualified instructor, keep motivated and get my licence."

Kurt has just obtained his Manual Drivers Licence and is looking to secure full time employment.

Courtney, a 19 year old student from Geraldton also had limited chances to get her log book hours accumulated.

"I'm really grateful to Sinosteel Midwest and Keen Brothers for the opportunity to join the Wajarri Drive Program. I know it will help my get employment when I finish my course at Durack."

Courtney will be sitting her Hazard Perception test on the 11th of December

Other organisations such as Mission Australia, The Salvation Army Employment Plus and Wila Gutharra have also been very supportive by offering funding and services.

The program, which is currently full with 16 participants, is open to Wajarri community members. The program is giving Wajarri people a chance to up skill and secure employment, for some participants without this opportunity there would be limited chances to obtain a drivers licence.

You can register your interest in the program for 2015 with Sinosteel Midwest's Wajarri Liaison Officer Marianne Miller on 0457020152 or email mmiller@smcl.com.au

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