

Drowsy Drivers are Dangerous Drivers

Phase 2 of the innovative East Coast pilot project designed to bring home the dangers of driving while tired or "nodding off at the wheel" was launched at Bicheno today by Heather Butler, MHA.

The project has been supported and promoted by the Glamorgan Spring Bay Community Road Safety Partnership (CRSP) committee. The committee recognised the need to raise awareness of driver fatigue – especially among tourists and heavy vehicle drivers – and also provide an incentive to encourage drivers to take a break from driving.

"Driver fatigue, inattention, drowsiness or falling asleep at the wheel, contributes to more than 35% of all road crashes in Tasmania.

"Fatigue-related crashes tend to be more severe than others because of drivers' delayed reaction times and failure to take evasive action to avoid the crash", Ms Butler said.

Ms Butler said an independent evaluation of the CRSP program earlier this year, by the Australian Road Research Board, had confirmed the crucial role of CRSP in applying grassroots solutions to local road safety issues.

"The evaluation of the 'Drowsy Drivers are Dangerous Drivers' pilot revealed that over 2000 visitors have taken the opportunity to take a break and enjoy a coffee.

"Over a third of those drivers were local drivers (mainly truck drivers) and the remainder were interstate or overseas tourists.

"I congratulate the Glamorgan Spring Bay CRSP Team for developing the initiative and the Break O'Day CRSP committee for promoting the project in their municipality."

Ms Butler also acknowledged the project's major sponsors – Gunns Ltd and Thrifty Car Rental – and thanked local businesses and cafes for their continued support.

"Seven venues will be involved in the next stage of the project, from Buckland to St Helens", Ms Butler said.

A Drowsy Drivers are Dangerous Drivers fatigue information flyer outlines information for drivers about the risks of fatigue, useful strategies to manage fatigue,

and free coffee vouchers for drivers to redeem at participating local cafes, to encourage drivers to take a break from driving.

The flyers have been redesigned for the second phase of the project, and additional signage and promotional materials have been prepared.

Ms Butler said the State Labor Government had committed a further \$795,000 over the next three years to consolidate and sustain impetus with the established CRSP partnerships, and to explore opportunities to expand the program to new community partnerships across Tasmania.