

The U-Turn Program in Tasmania

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Panel on *Young People and Vehicle Theft*
Melbourne International Vehicle Crime Conference,
13-14 June 2006

U-Turn Aims

The aims of the program are to:

- reduce the rate of motor vehicle theft by young people;
- prevent recidivism and chronic career offending by young people;
- address anti-social behaviour;
- address life issues of participants and link participants to a comprehensive network of support; and
- assist young people to maximise their potential so that they can offer a positive contribution to society.

U-Turn Tasmania

- The formal workshop program is conducted over a 10 week period. It includes:
 - orientation;
 - a weekly program consisting of modules in: communication; motor vehicle mechanics, panel beating and spray painting; life skills; literacy and numeracy; and road safety and driver education;
 - recreational activities;
 - vocational support;
 - case management;
 - mentor relationship;
 - exit strategy plan and options;
 - graduation ceremony.

U-Turn Workshop - Moonah



The U-Turn Workshop

U-Turn Recreational Activities



One of the U-Turn go-karts in action at Orielton.

U-Turn Tasmania - additional components

- Restorative justice
- Supported housing



The U-Turn house in Warrane

Evaluation Framework

Two of the key objectives of the U-Turn Program:

- To *bring about a shift in the lives of the recidivist young offenders* and other program participants;
- To *prevent recidivists re-offending.*

Shift in the lives of participants

- Extensive evidence that, for *the majority* of participants, the program succeeded in bringing about positive changes in:
 - anti-social behaviour
 - life and personal skills
 - practical vocational training and experience in the automotive industry
 - workplace skills
 - self-esteem and confidence
 - social skills and self-awareness
 - interview and job skills
 - awareness of others and the broader community

Participant Interviews

- Changes that had occurred by the end of the course (self-reported):
 - Reduced drug and alcohol use
 - Increased motivation and better attitudes toward life
 - Getting their life back on track
 - Driving safely
 - Better relationships with family and friends
 - Not hanging around the streets as much
 - Not wanting to steal cars and commit other types of anti-social behaviour

Participant interviews (cont.)

“Oh yeah it has changed me mind a bit, but it’s mostly ‘cause I’m here and not up there mucking ‘round with mates and getting into trouble.”

“It’s (the program) kept me out of heaps of trouble ‘cause I have to come here every day. It’s given me something to do ‘cause before I come here I wasn’t doing nothing ‘cause I don’t go to school now.”

Significant Other Interviews

- As one parent put it:

'He is sleeping properly again, he gets out of bed and he smiles all the time, he has something to look forward to, we are all a lot happier and we get on well'.

- Another said:

'I think we talk more about the future now. He turned around before he got in too far and he can see that now. He has respect for people now and he can see that what he does affects other people, he didn't care before'.

Program Staff Interviews

- *'Outcomes vary a great deal from personal growth and less aggression to a job.'*
- *'We cannot always see outcomes, mostly it involves attitudinal shifts and that's not always tangible.'*
- *'If we're going to say we've got ten guys here and we're going to sort the whole ten out it's being unrealistic. It's really impossible, but I think to get two or three guys out of that group of ten and to have them guys turn some stuff around -- that's the success that we need.'*

Program Staff (cont.)

- *‘Some of the kids have had no respect shown to them and they show little for others to begin with but we say that respect is where we start and that’s a rule, after a bit they all try real hard and they get it.*
- *‘Talking the talk I suppose. So that breaks down a lot of barriers ‘cause they think “Gee I just had a normal conversation with this guy and he didn’t try to stand over the top of me. He hasn’t tried to get anything out of me. He’s actually just talked to me.” So little things like that, which we probably take every day for granted where these guys are always looking at someone -- “Why is he talking to me? What is he trying to get out of me? When is he going to rip me off?’*

Program Staff (cont.)

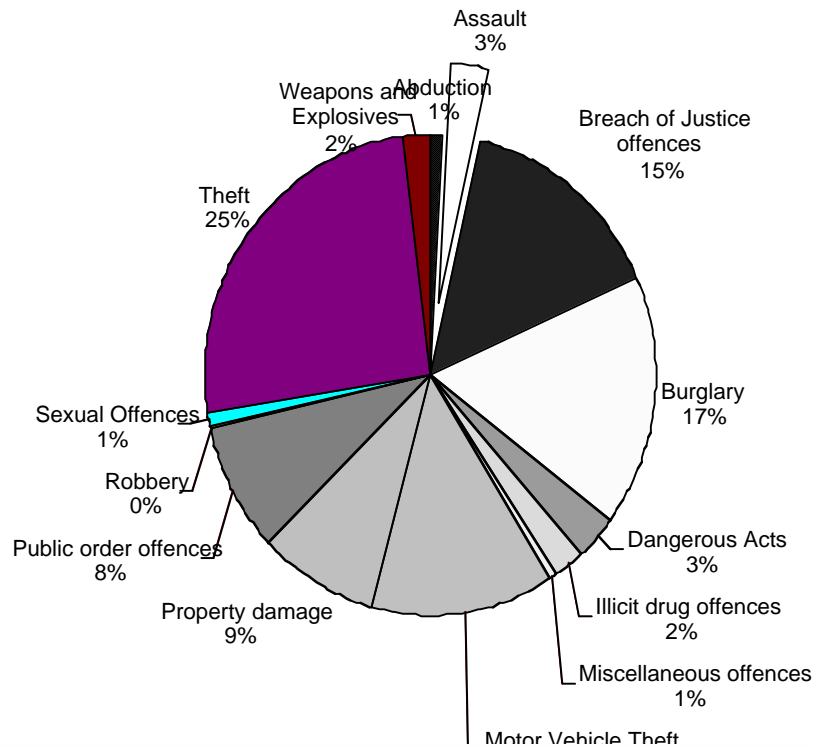
- *'Yeah a lot of them have low self-esteem. I think probably 80% of the guys who come in and although we don't turn all of them around, but the few that we do turn around are a success.'*
- *'They've got a lot more respect for themselves because we -- we always like even if they do a little bit better we say "Well look what you've done. Look what you've achieved. You've achieved this." You can always see from when a guy first starts to the end of the course he's totally different and with our influence and what they've learned here as well.'*

Program Staff (cont.)

'They want to learn how to fix cars. They want to work in a workshop. They want to be mechanics. I suppose like a lot of people which worked here say "What do you do?"... these guys to have a qualification as a motor mechanic it's the Holy Grail. It's what they wanna do -- their karma you know. You know they want to become professional mechanics. That's what their chosen profession is supposed to be. So once we give them a step closer to that that's when they start getting a lot of respect for us as well.'

Prevent recidivism

Total Offence Type for U-turn Program Graduates



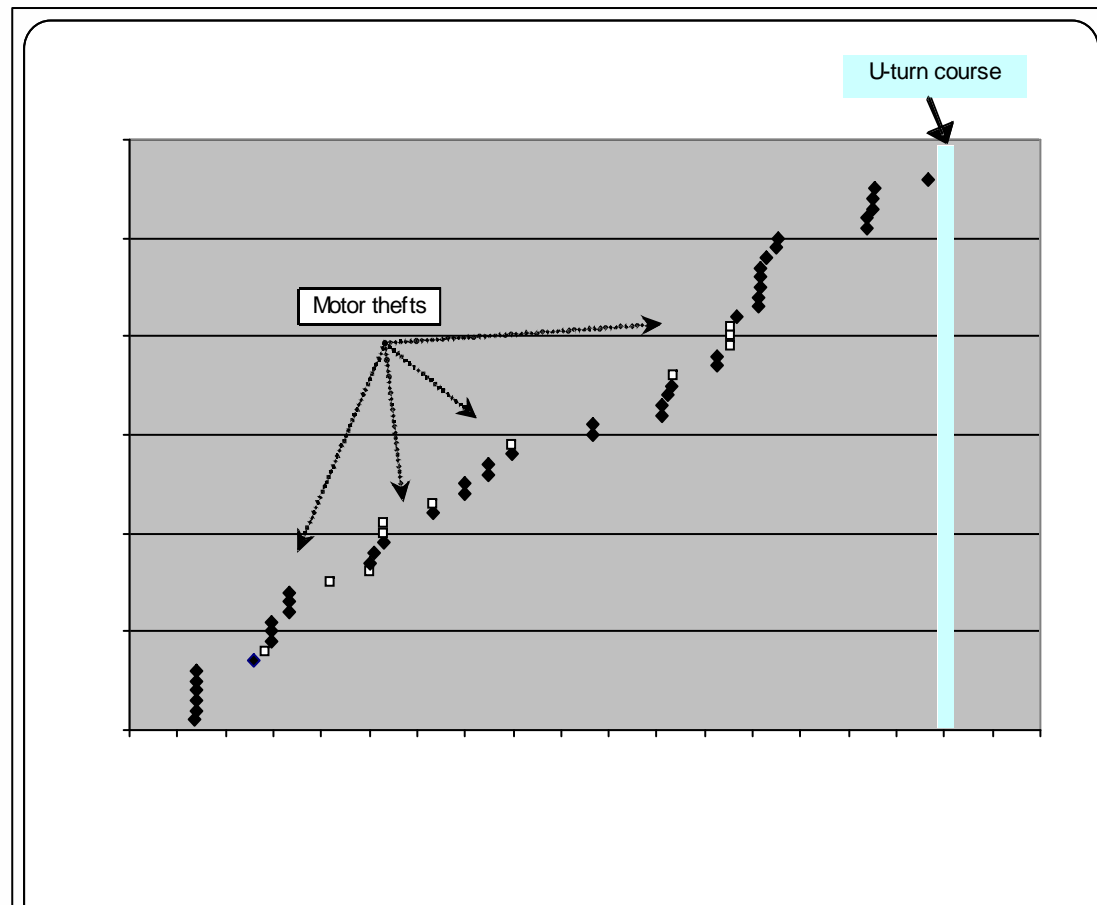
Prevent recidivism (cont.)

Offence History - U-turn Participants with prior convictions for motor vehicle theft on commencing the Program												
Client ID	Pre Program				During Program				Post Program			
	Car Theft	Serious Offence	Minor Offence	Sub totals	Car Theft	Serious Offence	Minor Offence	Sub totals	Car Theft	Serious Offence	Minor Offence	Sub totals
206	4	17	1	22	0	0	0	0	12	37	5	54
208	1	27	12	40	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
211	2	12	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
212	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
213	1	1	0	2	0	8	0	8	0	0	0	0
216	3	16	6	25	0	0	0	0	4	11	8	23
219	5	21	1	27	0	0	0	0	1	14	0	15
221	2	9	1	12	0	0	0	0	2	3	13	18
227	5	9	4	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
230	13	44	20	77	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
234	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
239	1	7	10	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
240	12	16	30	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
245	1	8	0	9	0	0	0	0	1	7	1	9
247	4	6	3	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
250	1	10	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
253	1	8	2	11	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
255	4	12	1	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
263	9	22	5	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
270	1	6	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
271	6	11	1	18	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	5
276	8	19	15	42	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4
279	1	3	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
282	2	7	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	89	291	117	497	0	8	2	10	21	78	34	133

Prevent recidivism (cont.)

Client ID	Pre Program				During Program				Post Program			
	Car Theft	Serious Offence	Minor Offence	Sub totals	Car Theft	Serious Offence	Minor Offence	Sub totals	Car Theft	Serious Offence	Minor Offence	Sub totals
201	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
203	0	8	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
204	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
205	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
209	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
214	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
218	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
222	0	5	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
229	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	7	16	3	26
231	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
232	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
235	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
238	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
241	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
242	0	5	9	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
243	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
246	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
248	0	5	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
252	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
256	0	22	8	30	0	0	0	0	0	5	8	13
257	0	15	4	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
260	0	28	1	29	1	4	0	5	10	51	2	63
261	0	4	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
264	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
268	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
273	0	3	6	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
275	0	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
277	0	7	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	0	132	54	186	1	4	0	5	17	81	38	136

Prevent recidivism (cont.)



Results of one participant who had committed auto theft and completed the course

Magistrate's Views

- When asked to identify the most significant achievements of the program, one magistrate stated:

'...at the Youth Justice presentation ... I was most impressed with the program participant who spoke. I think the progress he seems to have made was significant. In court situations we rarely get feedback on how a young person goes on the course; merely that he is either considering it or participating in it'

Magistrate's Views (cont.)

- The magistrate was asked if involvement on the program is something that is taken into consideration in sentencing and/or recommended by the court. The response was:

'...Both, I think, depending on the circumstances. Involvement shows the offender is prepared to attempt to address some problems in his/her life and if they are already in it by the time of sentencing it adds strength to the proposition they are prepared to change their attitude. Sometimes promises to be involved are just that and don't develop any further. The court would I think in most cases direct participation if the offender is assessed as being someone who would benefit from the program'.

Magistrate's Views (cont.)

- This magistrate recommended that participation in the program should be voluntary as *'from experience unwilling participation is not always positive'*.
- The final comment: *'it ought expand to take more participants!'*

Concluding thoughts....

- The number of jobs or apprenticeships is not an accurate benchmark of success, neither is completion of certificates. Many of the achievements are much more subtle than this and are not quantifiable.
- Literacy and numeracy is problematic
- Post-course support is crucial

U-Turn Tasmania - Evaluation Final Report

- Available on the TILES website under *Publications*:

www.utas.edu.au/tiles