



# Media Release

Tuesday, 2 November 2020

## **Cockburn Youth XLR8 Motocross program helps kids stay in school and cut illegal riding to zero**

A unique City of Cockburn motocross pilot program that has reduced illegal and unsafe motorbike use in our suburbs, has also helped its young participants increase their school attendance and cut their illegal motorbike riding to zero.

The successful reward-based Cockburn Youth XLR8 Motocross program for vulnerable and at risk youth was launched at the Coastal Motorcycle Club (CMC) track in Henderson on Monday, 2 November.

During two semesters in 2019 and 2020, 13 young people aged 14-18 from the Cockburn area learned safe motorbike riding and maintenance techniques, as a reward for attending school regularly and staying out of trouble.

The program is the result of a successful partnership between the City's Cockburn Youth Services, WA Police and CMC, with teenage participants referred from the Department of Communities and Youth Justice.

The program utilises confiscated motorbikes donated to the program by WA Police, with participants committing to individual goals including increased school attendance and not offending in return for weekly coaching sessions at CMC.

The participants joined qualified mechanics to maintain the confiscated bikes making them safe to ride, learning safe riding techniques and basic first aid, before receiving motorbike lessons in a controlled environment at the fit-for-purpose Henderson motocross track.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the highly successful program was a credit to the motivated partnership, especially the City's youth outreach workers, WA Police youth officers and volunteers from the CMC.

"It has encouraged the participants to interact with the community on a positive, rewarding basis," Mayor Howlett said.



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“In 2016/17, City of Cockburn rangers received 161 reports of illegal or unsafe motorbike riding on the City’s reserves, ovals, roads and bushland.

“These reports have continued to decrease in the three years since to 120 for 2019/20 and we continue to look for ways to educate the community to create more understanding around this illegal, dangerous activity.

“This problem is common in many local government areas, especially those in expanding or outer metropolitan suburbs, and it prompted our Youth Services team to devise this preventative community education program as an innovative solution.

“Its aim is to prevent an increase in illegal riding activity, or at least try to stop the problem from worsening, and reduce the likelihood of serious injury to a rider, pedestrian and other road users in our community due to this illegal activity.”

Course participant Peter (name changed for privacy reasons) said earning his place in the program was an important goal for him to achieve.

“It (the program) also helps me at school. Before I was up and down at school, but now I put my mind on school so I can go to the motorbike program,” the 15-year-old said.

“When I’m at school now, I pull my head in and do my work because if I don’t, I can’t go to the program and it puts everyone else down who’s in the program if I don’t do the right thing.

“It’s a lot of fun, and I’ve made some good friendships, some of them new ones. We’ve been able to get to know each other and work together as a team.

“I love it because it’s out in the fresh air and it refreshes my mind.”

City of Cockburn Youth Outreach Worker Ben Tanoa said the program had multiple benefits for its participants and the community.

“The young people have been able to interact with positive role models during the program, which has helped divert boredom and strengthen supports while being able to have a lot of fun along the way,” Mr Tanoa said.



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“It also equips these young people with some safety, first aid and practical motorbike riding and maintenance skills, while actually becoming a positive part of the community by participating in a grassroots program with other community members.

“They’ve had the opportunity to work with police officers and passionate motorbike enthusiasts, plus learn from the mechanical team at City’s depot about how to look after a motorbike.

“They’ve had to strive to earn a place in this program, which has helped them work out their priorities, putting their education and future direction under the spotlight.”

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