



Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand

Certifying Centre for Safe Community Programs

On behalf of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion,
Department of Public Health Sciences Division of Social Medicine, Karolinska Institute, Sweden

Safe Community Varsity Lakes



Country: Australia

Number of inhabitants: 8,000

Programme started year: 2006

International Safe Communities Network Membership: 2010

Full application available: www.safecommunities.org.nz/sc/vl

For further information contact:

Name: Katrina Wheatley

Institution: Secretary, Varsity Lakes Community Ltd

Address: Level 1, Delfin House, 235 Varsity Parade, Varsity Lakes

City: Queensland 4227

Country: Australia

Phone (: 61 7 5501 8205 Fax: 61 7 5578 9835

E-mail: info@vlcl.com.au

Info address on www for community as a whole:

<http://www.varsitylakesonline.com.au/Varsity-Lakes-Community-Limited/default.aspx>

The programme covers the following safety promotion activities:

For the age group:

Children 0-14 years:

- 'Kids First Aid' provides preventative and critical response information for carers of children about the 10 most common childhood injuries.
- Injury Free Day puts the spotlight on safety awareness and injury prevention and promotes the importance of injury prevention in the school, workplace, home and community.
- Impact Counselling targets Year 7-10 students at Varsity College with behavioural issues within the learning environment and provides responsible behaviour mentoring and the development of positive citizens.
- The Bike Education Park at Varsity Lakes provides an opportunity for young bike riders to undertake simulated training scenarios to assist them in learning to

negotiate stop and give way signs, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings in safe and friendly surroundings.

Youth 15-24 years:

- A Youth Study involving 11,000 students was undertaken to identify the types of facilities and services required for young people within the community.
- An outcome of the Youth Study was the construction of a skate park which was a partnership project involving Youth Links, Gold Coast City Council and the State Government.
- *Varsity Lakes Online* community website has a specific 'Youth Space' that provides useful information about services specifically for young people.

Adults 25-64 years:

- Varsity Lakes 'Safety Week' program of activities provides the community with access to information and interactive workshops about Emergency Services, Bike Safety, Kids First Aid, Sun Safety, Water Safety, Home and Car Safety, and other injury prevention and community safety issues.



Older Adults 65+ years:

- Information about falls prevention is distributed to residents of Domain Aged Care facility at Varsity Lakes.
- A Seniors Health and Nutrition workshop provides vital information to seniors about issues such as heart disease and diabetes, and also demonstrated and promoted the benefits of regular strength exercise and sports medicine.

For the following environments:

Home:

- *Varsity Lakes Online* community website has a specific section dedicated to Community Safety. It contains a Home Safety Checklist, advice about smoke alarms, poisons, sun safety, water safety and other child safety issues, and helpful links to further information.

Traffic:

- The 'Varsity Central Traffic Study' - a pedestrian traffic study - was undertaken by the Varsity Lakes community to assess the impact of increased commercial traffic on the safety of pedestrians and road users, and develop mitigation strategies.

Occupational:

- The Varsity Lakes 'Safety Week' program of activities provides the community with access to information and interactive workshops about Emergency Services, Bike Safety, Kids First Aid, Sun Safety, Water Safety, Home and Car Safety, and other injury prevention and community safety issues.

School:

- Impact Counselling targets Year 7-10 students at Varsity College with behavioural issues within the learning environment and provides responsible behaviour mentoring and the development of positive citizens.

Sports and Leisure:

- The Bike Education Park at Varsity Lakes provides an opportunity for young bike riders to undertake simulated training scenarios to assist them in learning to

negotiate stop and give way signs, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings in safe and friendly surroundings.

- 'Your Day @ Varsity' is an annual event that promotes a healthy and active lifestyle by providing the opportunity for residents of all ages to 'come and try' sporting activities including a community paddle, surf boating, kayaking, sailing, dragon boating, the 'Just Walk It' program, stroller fitness, boxercise, golf (putting), group fitness, total football, blokarts, bootcamp, touch football, beach volleyball, tai chi and yoga.



Varsity Lakes Water Safety

Violence prevention (intentional injuries):

- Security patrols provide an additional level of safety and security for community members.
- *Varsity Lakes Online* is a community information website that provides access to a diverse range of community information and resources including a specific section of 'Crime Prevention'.

Programmes aiming at "High risk-groups":

- The 'Safety Week' program of activities at Varsity Lakes provides the community with access to and information about Emergency Services, Bike Safety, Kids First Aid, Sun Safety, Water Safety, Home and Car Safety, and other injury prevention and community safety issues.
- Injury Free Day at Varsity Lakes puts the spotlight on safety awareness and injury prevention, including the prevention of immersion injuries, and promotes the importance of injury prevention in the school, workplace, home and community.
- 'Kids First Aid' provides preventative and critical response information for carers of children about the 10 most common childhood injuries including unintentional injury through poisoning.
- The Bike Education Park at Varsity Lakes provides an opportunity for young bike riders to undertake simulated training scenarios to assist them in learning to negotiate stop and give way signs, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings in safe and friendly surroundings. The simulated training scenarios will also encourage parents to interact with their children and teach them to ride bikes safely by abiding by road rules.
- Impact Counselling targets Year 7-10 students at Varsity College with behavioural issues within the learning environment and provides responsible behaviour mentoring and the development of positive citizens.



Varsity Lakes College

Surveillance of injuries:

The development and ongoing management of the Varsity Lakes master planned community includes a commitment to monitoring and responding proactively to injuries within the community at all stages of community building.

The community draws on available indicative data from its partner agencies to inform the development of injury prevention and community safety strategies. These datasets include:

- Incidents reported by residents and recorded on the Salesforce database;
- Queensland Department of Main Roads and Transport data on road traffic incidents;
- Emergency Department data collected by the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit on child injuries and road traffic incidents;



- Workplace injuries recorded on the Safety Dashboard; and
- Queensland Injury Prevention data on falls by seniors.

Child Injuries

Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit data indicates that unintentional injuries (including drownings, falls, poisonings, scalds and slow driveway rollovers) are the leading cause of death in Queensland children up to four years of age. Due the high proportion of children within master planned communities such as Varsity Lakes, data related to child injury has informed many of the proactive strategies developed within these communities. Some of the major injury prevention issues highlighted by Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit data include:

- Drowning remains the single leading cause of death from all causes for Queensland toddlers aged 1-4 years and the leading cause of injury death nationally for children aged under 5 years.
- More than 1000 toddlers present to Queensland emergency departments annually following a medicinal poisoning (3 toddlers per day).
- Children and older people are most at risk of bathroom injury; over 40% of bathroom injuries occur to young children aged less than 5 years.
- In Queensland, burns account for 4% of all injury presentations for children under 5 years of age. More than 50% of these injuries were due to scalds.
- Non-medicinal poisonings account for 62% of poisonings in children less than 5 years. A quarter of poisonings in this age group are due to common household cleaners.

Road Traffic injuries

- In Queensland in 2003, the road fatality rate for 17-20 year olds was two-and-a-half times the fatality rate for the entire Queensland population.
- On average, 13 children die each year as passengers in motor vehicles on Queensland roads.
- There are approx 6,000 Emergency Department presentations and almost 10 deaths each year from bicycle related injury in Queensland. Nearly 75% of all bicycle related Emergency Department presentations were in children aged under 15 years.
- An Australia wide review found 40% of all cyclists killed were unhelmeted and 76% of 15 to 19 year olds killed were unhelmeted.
- Seven children are killed each year, on average, on Queensland roads. Children under the age of 5 years were most likely to be injured in a driveway or car park while children between 5 and 9 years were more likely to be injured on a roadway.
- Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads data indicated that of total fatalities during 2008, 43% were drivers, 23.8% were passengers, 22.0% were motorcyclists, 9.1% were pedestrians and 2.1% were cyclists.

Seniors injury - falls

Recent research commissioned by the Queensland Injury Prevention Council found that while deaths from injury have declined, hospitalisation for many injuries has increased over the last decade, particularly falls-related injuries in older people.

Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit data indicates that for the period 1998 to 2003, 5,640 persons aged 65 years and over presented to an Emergency Department in Queensland as the result of a fall. This comprises almost 60% of all presentations at this age.

While the Varsity Lakes community has a lower than average population aged over 65 years, injury prevention strategies target those who will make up the older population in

the next 20 years. A wide range of recreational options are provided within the community to encourage people in the 45 to 64 age group to keep or adopt an active lifestyle now.

Improving data collection

There is currently a good level of indicative data upon which the Varsity Lakes community draws for the development of relevant injury prevention and community safety strategies. However, it was recognised that there is a lack of data specific to the local community.

In 2007, a pilot project was commenced at the Robina Hospital – located adjacent to the Varsity Lakes master planned community - to collect data about the causes of injuries to adults and children presenting from the local community, and develop strategies for the effective communication of this information back to the community.

The Varsity Lakes master planned community continues to work in collaboration with other master planned communities and the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit to develop the greater capacity for local data collection.

Publications: (Scientific)

- *Building Sustainable Social Capital in New Communities – Report to the Industry Partner*, The University of Queensland and Delfin, 2007

Produced information material, pamphlets:

Some examples of materials produced within the Varsity Lakes community that have a significant injury prevention and community safety focus include:

- Residents' Welcome Kit
- Community Updates featuring topics such as safe driving, first aid for children, safety with heaters, Neighbourhood Watch, bicycle security, children's safety, home safety audit, road safety, storm safety and recognising fire and safety hazards in and around the home.
- *Varsity Lakes Online* community website

International commitments:

The Varsity Lakes master planned community benefits from the active participation of master planned community staff in Safe Community conferences and forums:

- 2008 International Safe Communities Conference, Christchurch
- 2008 Young people, crime and community safety: engagement and early intervention, Melbourne
- 2007 'The Essential Role of Industry in Promoting Safer Communities: Child-resistant packaging and preventing child poisoning' forum facilitated by the Queensland Safe Communities Support Centre, Brisbane
- 2006 'Building Blocks', Queensland Safe Communities Conference, Townsville
- 2005 Inaugural Queensland Safe Communities Conference, Brisbane
- 2004 Creating Child Friendly Cities Symposium, Brisbane

Staff

Number: **One**

Position: **Full-time community coordination position**

Organization: **Varsity Lakes Community Ltd**

Specific intersectoral leadership groups:

Varsity Lakes Community Limited



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