

# Driving counsel

## Businesses are improving their bottom lines through RACQ driver education programs.

STORY **BELINDA PETERS**

**I**ncreasingly organisations are recognising the importance of keeping their employees safe on the road, whether they're driving in a professional capacity or just getting to and from work.

Redland City Council is one such organisation. The council has embraced driver training by implementing a tailored program with RACQ Driver Education that addresses the needs of its wide-ranging workforce.

With around 1000 employees and a diverse fleet of 350 vehicles that includes buses, excavators, backhoes, passenger vehicles, utes, light commercial trucks and vans, implementing a program that addresses the needs of all employees was very important, according to supply services manager Andy Blacklock.

"In our world, our professional drivers really are our external workforce," Mr Blacklock said.

"By implementing RACQ's Driver Education Program we're trying to raise the standard of driving through education and awareness.

"Over time, we've become more aware of safety requirements, operating and driving changes, be they legislative, special needs or workplace health and safety changes – all those factors are pointing us towards a more heightened awareness of driver training."

The council has implemented a combination of practical instruction and online training with RACQ's Driver Education Program and e-learning driver training package, with the aim of getting their 1000 staff through both programs within two years.

Staff will then redo their training every year, alternating between the online and practical course.

Mr Blacklock said that feedback from the 140 staff who had already undertaken the practical driver education program was very positive, with many reporting a heightened awareness of the road rules and the bad habits they've subconsciously worked themselves into.

"The participants say they now have a much better awareness about themselves and others when they're on the road," Mr Blacklock said.

A pilot trial of the e-learning program was similarly well received, as participants said they felt comfortable with the easy-to-use program. The council said it was impressed with RACQ's willingness to adapt the program to suit its needs.

Mr Blacklock said that the council was hoping that the training would have a positive impact on the number of infringements and accidents involving staff and saw a reduction in vehicle maintenance, fuel consumption and an improvement in the image of council drivers as other potential bonuses.



Jim McEwan

RACQ driver coach Sheryl Millard with Redland City Council staff members Andy Blacklock and Gerard Noon.

RACQ's executive manager driver education, Scott Lewin, said that the Club's driver education and e-learning programs were an ideal way for organisations to meet their corporate occupational health and safety requirements, as well as making a real difference to the broader community by helping to improve road safety.

"With a tailored practical and e-learning approach, RACQ Driver Education strives to help businesses give their staff the opportunity to update driving skills and knowledge," Mr Lewin said.

"Like Redland City Council have done, adopting this proactive approach may mean significantly reduced costs for businesses associated with personal injuries, vehicle repairs and operating and maintenance, as safer drivers are more economical drivers."

### LEARN TO TOW THE LINE

RACQ Driver Education is launching its towing course in September. Whether you regularly tow a trailer or are planning to embark on a caravan holiday, this course will help improve your skills by giving you the knowledge and practical training you need to be a safe tower.

For more information, visit [racq.com/drivered](http://racq.com/drivered), email [drivered@racq.com.au](mailto:drivered@racq.com.au) or call 3361 2382 or 1800 680 039.