



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

The Little Blue Dinosaur expands its “Holiday Time: Slow Down, Kids Around” program to Newcastle and Lake Macquarie

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Child pedestrian and roadside safety advocates Michelle and David McLaughlin and their foundation, the Little Blue Dinosaur (LBD), are expanding the reach of their ‘Holiday Time’ signage program following a successful first year and support from local government.

The LBD is a foundation dedicated to the prevention of roadside child pedestrian accidents through community education and awareness, dedicated to the memory of Michelle and David’s son, Tom. Tom was the victim of roadside accident while on holidays with his family in January 2014.

The “Holiday Time: Slow Down, Kids Around” campaign was developed in partnership with Gosford City Council, aiming to raise critical awareness of the importance of road safety for children in unfamiliar environments, particularly in holiday regions where infrastructure can be lacking.

“Children are in a highly excitable state on holidays and with the population spike in these areas during holiday periods, particularly over summer, the risk of accidents is increased. It is an unusually dangerous time for children on roads,” said Tom’s parents Michelle and David McLaughlin.

“We are so pleased that Lake Macquarie and Newcastle city council’s are joining the LBDF this year to make coastal holidays safer for our children,” said Mrs McLaughlin.

In both Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, signs will be erected to target key tourist areas where the school holiday periods result in increased pedestrian foot traffic as well as an amplified number of vehicles in the area.

Nobbys Beach, Newcastle Beach, King Edward Park, Bar Beach, Dixon Park, John Parade and Mereweather Baths in Newcastle as well as Speers Point Park and Warners Bay In Lake Macquarie have been recognised by the councils and LBD as the sites of greatest impact. Speers Point Park, for example, experiences foot traffic numbers of up to 20,000 people a day during the busy summer holiday season.

State Member for Lake Macquarie, Greg Piper, welcomed the ‘Holiday Time’ signage initiative.

LITTLE BLUE DINOSAUR

The Tom McLaughlin Memorial
Road Safety Foundation



“This is a simple but effective way to remind people they need to be more vigilant on local roads during holiday periods when children are out and about in much bigger numbers,” Mr Piper said.

“It is easy for children to become caught up in the holiday spirit and forget to take care around roads – and sadly it only takes a moment’s inattention for a tragedy to occur.”

Mayor of Lake Macquarie, Jodie Harrison, said she was very proud that the “Holiday Time: Slow Down Kids Around” program was expanding into Lake Macquarie City.

“Children are our most vulnerable road users because of their unpredictability which can expose them to risk when around traffic,” Cr Harrison said.

“We need to take every opportunity to help our children learn about road safety by talking to them about what we are doing to keep safe around traffic.”

Lord Mayor of Newcastle City, Nuatali Nelmes, is pleased to see the signage installed throughout Newcastle in time for the school holidays.

“The holidays are an exciting time for families, but it is also a great opportunity to be vigilant and go over road safety with our kids, especially if we are spending the holidays in new environments”, Cr Nelmes said.

“I want to stress to the community, parents and carers that we must hold our children’s hands when on or near roadways until the age of ten, and closely supervise children until at least 12 because they can’t always identify safe places to cross the road and act inconsistently in the traffic environment,” Mr McLaughlin added.

The foundation has recently included a Victorian Council to pilot its campaign interstate, with the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation hoping to extend the ‘Holiday Time-Slow Down Kids Around’ campaign nationally.

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