



**Professional Ownership and  
Driver Wellbeing Program (PODW)**

**National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR)  
Round 4  
Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative (HVSİ)**

26 May 2023

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Forest Contractors Association's (AFCA) Professional Ownership & Driver Wellbeing Program (PODW) program was developed following several crash investigations identifying the need for a program such as PODW that focused on the human factors that contribute to crashes. Prior to PODW, the heavy vehicle rollover and crash awareness program focused predominantly on the physical contributing factors, with only a small section relating to the drivers and the decisions they had made. This was mainly because industry lacked the expertise and credibility in this area.

The PODW program was designed as a follow up to the Rollover program by engaging Alan Pincott, ATSSS- Australian Trucking Safety Services & Solutions and Kirstin Pincott, KJ Training & Consulting. The program was modified to stand alone and with significant industry input the program was refined in order to develop the program as presented during the NHVR funding term of this program.

PODW guided drivers to adopt a proactive, intrinsically motivated view of solutions to driving challenges. This new model introduces a second tiered learning opportunity based on adult learning principles and a much deeper appreciation of the pillars of Safe Systems. It will raise the professionalism of drivers with flow-on benefits for the commercial reputation of their employers.

## INTRODUCTION

### **AFCA**

AFCA is a membership-based Association representing Forestry Contracting Businesses nationally predominately in harvest and haulage operations. AFCA's core objectives are to improve safety, promote best practice operations and ensure that those within the supply chain are adequately skilled and trained to undertake their role. AFCA works across the supply chain with various stakeholders to improve work and conditions, business opportunities, training, and safety.

### **ATSSS**

The prevention of the tragic loss of life and serious injuries from heavy vehicle rollovers and crashes is the aim of the work of ATSSS. Founder Alan Pincott is an expert technician and educator with over 35 years' experience on heavy vehicles and driver behaviour.

- A qualified mechanic with experience as a heavy vehicle driving instructor and tester.
- 15 years as a VicRoads Transport Safety Officer at VicRoads and has been instrumental in developing notable successful heavy vehicle safety programs.

- Is highly regarded in the trucking industry. His reputation is second to none in working with industry to reduce the incidence of heavy vehicle crashes.

## **KJ Training and Consulting**

Kirstin Pincott has a background in mental health, alcohol, and other drugs, working with offenders, and health care social work. She was previously an accredited lead facilitator for the VicRoads Safe Driving Program and is an accredited member of the Australian Association of Social Workers. Kirstin holds a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, a Diploma of Community Services (alcohol and other drug and mental health) as well as a Bachelor of Psychological Science, a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) (Honours) and a Master of Social Work (Graduate Entry). Kirstin has links to the heavy vehicle industry through her family and peers and has a strong understanding of the challenges it faces.

## **THE PROGRAM**

ATSSS and KJ Training and Consulting developed and trialled a pilot program to complement the pre-existing Rollover Program run by ATSSS as a result of the funding received from the NHVR guiding drivers to adopt a proactive, intrinsically motivated view of solutions to driving challenges.

Kirstin and Alan presented this program collaboratively, combining their skillsets to deliver a comprehensive training package involving the external factors such as road conditions and changes in load, and the internal factors such as fatigue and concentration that influence truck rollovers and crashes.



This program also included a second tiered learning opportunity based on adult learning principles and a much deeper appreciation of the pillars of Safe Systems raising the professionalism of drivers while providing additional flow-on benefits for the commercial reputation of their employers.

The Professional Ownership programs focus is to:

- build on key learning outcomes from the Rollover Program
- establish learning objectives based on the pillars of the Safe System: Safer Road Users, Safer Roads, Safer Vehicles and Safer Speeds
- challenge participants to examine personal ownership and responsibility for their own and the community's safety.
- encourage participants to be personally accountable for their actions and shows them how to develop a personal risk reduction plan utilising trip planning method.
- be delivered over a three-hour session.
- assist drivers and management to collaboratively develop personal management tools based on ATSSS templates with extensive after-service support.

**Program Summary:**

This program provided psychoeducation and gave drivers in the trucking industry the tools to drive with low risk.

Note: The program complemented the Rollover Program but was structured as a standalone program so that is also suitable for participants that have not completed the Rollover program.

The objective of the Professional Ownership program was to empower drivers to take control of the factors which place them at higher risk of a crash, recognising that professional drivers are at higher risk of crashes or accidents due to the nature of their work. The program was run in an interactive manner with mixed media presentations aimed to engage drivers, encourage discussion and participation and provide practical advice and solutions for low-risk driving. The program incorporated motivational interviewing techniques to empower drivers to take ownership and responsibility for their safety on the road.

The role of the facilitator was to provide education, help drivers to identify factors that impacted on their risk, and to embed new practices into their work. We explored when drivers are at a higher risk of a crash or incident, hypothesised the reasoning behind these incidents, and provided simple tips and tricks to maintain concentration and attention.

**Session structure:**

The program was interactive using 2 presenters during a 3-hour session.

**Introduction:**

Alan set the scene during each session with a discussion for crash trends within the industry and casual factors by:

- explaining the statistics around the high rate of crashes on Monday mornings or when returning from breaks and hypothesised that lifestyle factors have a major influence on this.
- explaining that drivers in the forest industry are typically at higher risk due to the nature of their loads and the industry they work in, which in turn meant they must be more professional and highly skilled than the average driver.
- explaining that the purpose of the session is to discuss/develop tools that can assist the drivers to identify risk and manage these risks during the driving task.

#### **Alcohol and other drugs:**

- discussing how drugs interact with our central nervous system, and how recreational use influences driving behaviour during the working week.
- discussing alcohol and what factors influence blood alcohol content, including how long it takes for the body to metabolise alcohol.
- providing real world examples highlighting the issues surrounding alcohol use.

#### **Sleep:**

- discussing sleep, the sleep cycle and how good sleep improves concentration.
- exploring sleep hygiene and how technology and alcohol and other drugs impact on sleep.
- introducing techniques to assist drivers to get better sleep – including mindfulness techniques and a discussion around health issues that impact on sleep.

#### **Attention, concentration, and the tricks our mind plays:**

- discussing 'situational awareness' in relation to low risk driving to set the scene for the following topics.
- discussing 'autopilot, change blindness, and the Stroop Effect – a psychological phenomenon which impacts on driving, with interactive components with real world links to driving heavy vehicles.
- providing drivers with an understanding of how our brains process information in easy-to-understand terms, with examples to highlight and illustrate how this occurs in real life.
- discussing optimism bias and how these impact on drivers – especially in relation to high-risk behaviours such as mobile phone use, lack of seat belt wearing, and general inattention or distraction.
- highlighting 'the blame game' – our natural tendency to assign blame at the point of an accident, potentially endangering ourselves in the meantime, and encourage drivers to utilise a professional ownership and responsibility lens

when thinking about work safety. This has direct links to a “Just Culture” approach for Safety Management Systems.

**Trauma and how the body reacts during an accident:**

- discussing ‘fight versus flight’ and how our bodies physically, mentally and emotionally react when an accident occurs.
- discussing the longstanding effects and signs of trauma, including how to recognise this in themselves or colleagues.
- providing avenues for support for people who have experienced trauma.

**Trip planning and summary:**

- discussing how trip planning, and consciously thinking about the impending journey can lower our risk and increase our awareness.
- discussing trip planning as a culmination of the prior content and summarise in a practical manner.

**Evidence based:**

- The program used the same proven principals as the successful Rollover Program that has been delivered to over 2500 participants within the forest and other industries in recent years. Stakeholders involved in this program have typically had significant reductions in rollover crashes. This new model introduced a second tiered learning opportunity based on adult learning principles with a much deeper appreciation of the pillars of safe systems. It raised the professionalism of drivers with flow-on benefits for the commercial reputation of their employers.

The Professional Ownership and Driver Wellbeing program (PODW) provided attendees with fundamental behavioural change tools for those within the forest industry who are at highest risk to cause loss of life or serious injury from heavy vehicle crashes.

The forest industry is vital to Australia’s economy, providing timber and forest products to domestic export markets. High centre-of-gravity loads, combined with challenging roads and conditions, make hauling these products high risk compared to most freight journeys in Australia. Therefore, drivers undertaking this task must have a high level of training, skills, and professionalism and ensure they always maintain maximum levels of concentration. The forest industry has already contributed considerable resources into developing initiatives and programs to keep their operations professional and safe, including running driver training programs which focus on crash and incident prevention.

Australian Trucking Safety Services & Solutions (ATSSS) have been implementing a heavy vehicle crash and rollover awareness program to many forestry contracting businesses for several years.

The rollover program creates a foundation for other industry initiatives and these actions, combined with the Australian Forest Contractors Association Forestry Logistics Safety Training Initiative, have led to a significant reduction in heavy vehicle crashes, in particular high-speed rollovers in the industry. However, both programs have focused on the physical factors that contribute to these crashes and less on behaviour. Industry crash data supports a trend that 'human factor', inattention and complacency have been the underlying cause of many crashes.

AFCA and industry worked with ATSSS and KJ Consulting to determine how best to address these inattention and lifestyle issues with the support of funding available through the Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative to make a significant impact on improving behavioural outcomes related to crashes. The funding of \$140,000 enabled AFCA to work with ATSSS and KJ Training and Consulting to further develop this program and deliver to drivers, management, and staff throughout Australia.

The program rolled out in 2019 however due to Covid the program was delayed with sessions finalised in July 2022. In its duration the program was delivered to over 760 participants, during 30 sessions in key forestry regions nationally and has complimented existing work within industry relating to Chain of Responsibility, Registered Codes of Practice, and industry Safety Management Systems.

At the commencement of the PODW program VicForests enrolled all staff through the program and the crash data subsequently showed that the program contributed to a lower crash rate.

Apart from the challenges faced during COVID and once back on track the program performed exceptionally well. We would have liked to have seen more management from companies and organisations to attend more of the sessions for a show of support and for management's commitment to this issue. PODW is a human factor program designed to get engagement, and engagement is easier to get if there is seen to be support from the whole supply chain. There was a broad industry representation however in some sessions where there were mainly drivers only there were often comments that management and loaders and schedulers etc should be in the room also.

The PODW program performed exceptionally and was well received by industry. Often there were participants who were initially negative on arrival and were unsure what the program was and why they were attending through miscommunication from management, however Alan and Kirstin as trainers were able to allay their concerns to the point of participation.

PODW was well received by all participants, with Alan and Kirstin often asked to return and conduct additional sessions for those who missed out. The participation from attendees was typically very high with helpful conversations, personal stories and tips regularly provided from the participants themselves. This participation allowed us to continually grow, improve and align the program with industry needs. The program was designed for increased audience participation, to assist with identification with the concepts being discussed, and encourage participants to apply concepts to their own driving behaviours. The program utilised mixed media to create increased audience engagement, and to cater to different learning styles and needs.

**Note:** The program naturally complements the Rollover Program but is structured as a standalone program so that is also suitable for participants that have not completed the Rollover program. The objective of the Professional Ownership program was to empower drivers to take control of the factors which place them at higher risk of a crash, recognising that professional drivers are at higher risk of crashes or accidents due to the nature of their work. The program was run in an interactive manner with mixed media presentations aimed to engage drivers, encouraging discussion and participation and provide practical advice and solutions for low-risk driving. The program incorporated motivational interviewing techniques to empower drivers to take ownership and responsibility for their safety on the road.

## MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

To support the program, launch and delivery, AFCA developed and utilised a suite of marketing and promotional items including:

**Resources and Digital Assets:**

- development of a dedicated webpage within the AFCA website.
- promotion via AFCA and industry social media pages and groups.

**Merchandise:**

- utilising supporting take away handouts for the following topics:
  - Coping with stress
  - Insomnia and your thinking
  - Sleep hygiene
  - Progressive muscle relaxation.
- Alco cup measurers including AFCA logo:





**Media Engagement:**

- reaching out to industry publications including Timberbiz, Daily Timber News, Timber & Forestry ENews via media releases to include in articles.

**Advertising:**

- advertising within industry publications including Timberbiz, Daily Timber News, Timber & Forestry ENews.
- Articles and promotion within the AFCA members newsletter readership in monthly The Log newsletter.

## PARTICIPANT PROFILE & ENGAGEMENT

From the facilitators observation the demographic of participants was well represented by the middle-aged, Caucasian male, which is 80% of the current driver fleet. Typically, this demographic are the hardest participants to engage with and the hardest to change. The challenge when presenting PODW was to produce a program that would engage this participant demographic, but also be inclusive of others which we were overall very successful in doing so. This was evidenced through active participation from often initially visibly resistant participants, many of whom in the end provided much of the content for discussion. Further, the cognitive 'experiments' peppered throughout the program, allowed for a lighter, humorous manner by which to explain often dry scientific concepts. These experiments also demonstrated practically how many cognitive processes can impact on each of us, and in turn impact on safer driving behaviour.

The motivational interviewing style of presentation encouraged a non-judgemental approach – instead providing drivers with background understanding not only about how behaviours can impact on driver safety, but also why these (often autonomic) processes occur.

Should the program had been too bland, it would've been very difficult to get the buy-in and participation from some of the audience.

Our trainers found that younger and ambitious males and females from the industry were most engaged particularly with Kirstin's from KJ Training & Consulting presentation and content however she was able to engage all participants.

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The PODW feedback forms completed by participants were testament to the program as almost all feedback from participants showed the attendees found the PODW program extremely valuable and would certainly make an impact and change to the number of crashes within our industry.

The verbal feedback to our trainers was even better with statements made from participants such as, "that was good", "it was not what I expected" and "it feels like you are listening to us" often received by Alan and Kirstin.

Whilst some attendees were happy to provide their personal details most were either reluctant to provide this and/or the forms were illegible (see example below). The forms were also lacking the questions required to collect additional data. We have now taken this feedback on board and created a QR code which will link through to an online form for ease for the participants and ensure the feedback along with participant details are captured. The online form will include more questions for data collection and will also assist us in broadening our AFCA database.

The new form captured the following information:

- Name Company
- Role
- Email address
- Phone number
- Age
- Gender
- How long in the industry
- Privacy statement / approval

Sessions were conducted over 6 states in various locations as detailed below:

State/Location	Location of Sessions Delivered	Number of Attendees	Session Dates
<b>South Australia</b>			
Mt Gambier	Mount Gambier	12	10/03/2019
	Mount Gambier	29	10/04/2019
	Mount Gambier	22	10/04/2019
Hamilton	Hamilton	17	23/6/2022
Adelaide Hills	Hahndorf	37	23/9/2019
	Mount Gambier	30	24/6/2022
<b>Queensland</b>			

Caloundra	Beerburrum - Glasshouse	41	2/11/2020
	Beerburrum - Glasshouse	38	2/11/2020
Gympie	Gladstone	19	2/10/2020
	Gladstone	25	2/10/2020
Maryborough	Maryborough		14/3/2021
Cardwell	Cairns	29	14/2/2020
<b>NSW</b>			
Tumut	Tumbarumba	14	12/05/2019
Bathurst	Oberon	23	12/06/2019
	Oberon	12	12/06/2019
Coffs Harbour	Barham	38	26/5/2022
<b>Western Australia</b>			
Albany	Donnybrook	90	25/7/2022
Manjimup	Manjimup	84	27/7/2022
Bunbury	Albany	28	29/7/2022
<b>Tasmania</b>			
Burnie	Burnie	8	23/3/2021
	Burnie	22	23/3/2021
Launceston	Launceston	12	22/3/2021
	Launceston	26	22/3/2021
Hobart	Hobart	26	25/3/2021
<b>Victoria</b>			
Geelong			
Gippsland	Orbost	27	26/9/2019
Colac	Rosedale	28	23/2/2022
	Maryvale	10	24/2/2022
Portland	Portland	13	10/05/2019

#### Aggregated data collection from completed participant feedback forms:

QUESTION	% YES	MAYBE	% NO	% NO ANSWER
Was the program content relevant and useful to your role in the timber industry?	98.59%		1.41%	0%
What aspect of the session was most useful?	65.25%		21.12%	13.63%
Was there information that was not relevant or useful?	69.01%		21.12%	9.87%
How likely are you to change your practices, policies or procedures based on the workshop?				

• Understanding heavy vehicle crashes	51.64%	29.57%	11.37%	7.42%
• Alcohol & other drugs	30.98%	19.24%	26.76%	23.02%
• Attention & concentration	38.96%	32.86%	17.84%	10.34%
• Trip planning	32.86%	36.61%	12.67%	17.86%
• Sleep & sleep hygiene	37.08%	37.55%	17.37%	8%

## INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

Industry feedback has been overwhelming and our trainer Alan Pincott of ATSSS- Australian Trucking Safety Services & Solutions who has been involved in training within our industry for a few years, and with several years in the public service stated that he has never seen better feedback from so many participants from so many sessions.

With the right project content, trainers, and promotion of the PODW program by not only AFCA but also organisations with high level influence, we feel that the PODW program will be introduced as "best practice" across the whole transport industry, as well as non-transport industries.

Several PODW sessions were combined with the ATSSS Rollover program upon request and the response to this was overwhelming and subsequently produced a complete training package for driver training in heavy vehicle rollover, crash awareness and its contributing factors both physically and mentally.

## CONCLUSION

AFCA along with Alan Pincott, ATSSS - Australian Trucking Safety Services & Solutions and Kirstin Pincott, KJ Training & Consulting have now reviewed and improved this program model to develop the Freight Task Management Program scheduled to be launched in May 2023. The new program will continue to be presented by Alan Pincott, ATSSS - Australian Trucking Safety Services & Solutions and Kirstin Pincott, KJ Training & Consulting and we are currently finalising marketing material as well as a marketing plan in readiness for this launch.

Should you have any queries regarding any of the above please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Terese Adams.

Regards,



**Carlie Porteous**  
General Manager | Australian Forest Contractors Association