



## Walking School Buses (WSB) Safety is Paramount

If the children are not safe  
WSBs will not be sustainable.




### Overview

- Safety issues involved when setting up a WSB.
- Difficulties that face a volunteer workforce.
- Initiatives at North Shore City to deal with these difficulties.
- WSB sustainability.



### WSB Statistics

- 2001
- 28 out of 45 primary schools operate WSBs
- 72 WSB routes
- Over 1200 children
- Around 500 volunteers
- 550 less cars at school gates due to WSBs



### Safety Issues Involved When Setting Up A WSB



### Safety Audit of the Route

- Undertaken by traffic engineer, road safety co-ordinator and a parent from the WSB.
- Copy of the audit is given to the parent co-ordinator.
- Volunteers need to maintain the safety of their route(s).



## Police Education Officer Involvement

- A police education officer walks the route with parents and children.
- Police education officers teach road safety to children in schools.



## Bus Stops

- NSCC installs and maintains bus stops (stencil on footpath).
- Used for a number of purposes:
  - Bus stop
  - Mark out the route
  - Crossing points



## Electronic Mapping of Routes



- Funding Application to Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) - \$1500



## Difficulties That Face A Volunteer Workforce

- **However, once all the work to set up a WSB has been completed and the information has been passed on to the volunteers, ensuring WSBs remain sustainable is another issue.....**



## Why....?

- Little chance for council to communicate with volunteers.
- The WSB volunteer work force is fluid.
- Routes may become inactive for a period of time.
- Volunteers need reminding to maintain the safety of their routes.
- New volunteers do not always receive complete information from the others.
- Changes to routes.



## WSB Safety Initiatives at North Shore City Council



## North Shore WSB Network Meetings (2002)

- Introduce new parents to the wider WSB community.
- They don't have to recreate the wheel.
- Longer term volunteers share experiences.
- Act as a motivator for new and existing volunteers.
- Networking continues after via email.
- Has helped to create a North Shore WSB community.
- Most importantly these meetings help to maintain safety standards.



## (Informal) North Shore WSB Newsletter (2003)

- Staying in touch with volunteers.
- A3 poster size goes to the school.
- Conveying safety messages.
- Information sharing.
- Collecting statistics.
- Communicating with principals of WSB schools.
- Also helps to create a North Shore WSB community.



## Health & Safety Workshop – ARTA (2004)

- Run in conjunction with ARTA.
- The *Health & Safety in Employment Act 1992* also covers volunteers.
- Volunteers also fill out a 'Hazard Identification Register'.



## Annual Road Safety Workshop – PEO (2005)

- "How to" walk with a group of children.
- Council staff - footpath maintenance, call centre, traffic engineer.
- Feedback from volunteers show that there is a real need for this type of workshop.



## Social Events

- Networking.
- Parents talking about their children and sorting out their WSB issues.
- Contribute to WSB sustainability.



### Christmas Morning Tea Chipmunks Playland (2003)

### WSB Family Fun Day (2005)

### 2 New Initiatives (2006)

- Communicating via the newsletter with WSB children.
- Competition – road safety
- Same safety messages as PEOs.

### Texting Competition for Volunteers (2007)

- Communicating interactively with parents.
- Encourage and remind them to maintain their routes.

### Schools that attend most or some of the support activities:

- Parents and children are more aware of WSB safety issues.
- More likely to operate within the WSB safety guidelines.
- WSBs operating more effectively & efficiently.
- They are part of the WSB network.
- Community development.
- Sustainable WSBs.

### Schools that operate in isolation:

- Can operate successfully.
- However, in my experience over time they end up working outside the WSB safety guidelines.
- In some instances safety can be compromised.
- Perception of WSB not safe.
- Less likely to be sustainable.

## WSB Sustainability

Initially the support activities were focused on safety, and safety is still the overriding issue, however they also contribute to the overall sustainability of WSBs.

