



The Next Generation

The biggest issue facing motoring enthusiasts today comes down to kids. The next generation are nowhere near as interested as what we were. Driving is no longer seen as a mandatory skill, and technology now keeps them connected without the need to drive somewhere. Declining rates of driver licensing in this age group provide clear evidence of the shift underway, or as someone recently said 'the love affair with the car is over'. Indeed many now see car ownership as adding to the problems of congestion and pollution as well as being a financial drain. It's no longer a good thing.

So where does that leave the future of motorised sports? Peak bodies in other countries have already recognised the disinterest of the younger generation and are seeking to address it. We have a lot to offer as a form of recreational entertainment. One key advantage is in the positive nature of skills growth and goal setting. People need something worthwhile to occupy their time and something to look forward to. It's been recognised that our hobby is one of the best drug-diversion programs around - and at no cost to the Government!

The first step for those of us already involved is to open young eyes. The US program 'Take a Kid to a Car Show' has been operating since 2002, recognising the crucial nature of the next generation for survival of the hobby. Created by the Automotive Restoration Market Association, it has developed over the years, incorporating material that gets kids involved. One popular item is a colouring book, which provides a lasting link between kids and the cars they see at a car show. A website has now been created, containing the colouring book and other material to assist the cause. You can access it at : <http://www.takeakidtoacarshow.com/>

Participation needs to be active. Kids are far more likely to develop an interest if they are involved, not just watching from a distance. For many, sitting behind the wheel or going for a ride is all that it takes to light the spark. Is that how it started for you? It signals to kids that they are welcome to share in your interest, and it tells parents and local officials that this is a family oriented hobby. We are already seeing the impact on the hobby through not involving kids. Some car clubs have failed to attract new young members and are folding up. The average age of many of these groups should set the alarm bells ringing.

Life is full of choices for kids. By sharing your motorised sports interest, you may help them make positive ones.



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