

OceanaGold Update

7th August 2026



We're very proud of what the JumpStart programme has grown into today.

I take my hat off to the volunteers.

I've had two teenage boys myself, so I know it's a special skill and patience to be able to teach others how to drive!

Michael van Anen
Asset President, OceanaGold Waihi



200
RESTRICTED
LICENCES
ACHIEVED

1,875
SUPERVISED
DRIVES
COMPLETED

**COUNTLESS
POSSIBILITIES!**

More than a Licence

200 locals gain mobility, confidence, and opportunity

Since 2022, the JumpStart Driver Training programme has helped local people build confidence on the road and work towards an achievement that can open doors to work, study, and greater independence.

Supported by community volunteers, local Police, and OceanaGold, the free programme provides supervised on-road driving sessions for Waihi residents and Waihi College students working towards their restricted licence.

Recently, JumpStart volunteers, Police, Waihi College staff and students, as well as OceanaGold employees met at Waihi College for a celebration marking the 200th person to gain their restricted licence through the programme.



The idea for JumpStart grew from conversations between OceanaGold and Waihi College in late 2021 about how best to support local young people. In a semi-rural community like Waihi, access to a driver's licence was recognised as critical to provide participants with employment opportunities, increase safety on our roads, and assist their personal growth and development.



Volunteer driver Navigators; the heart of the programme

These local people generously give their time to help others gain the skills and confidence to drive. After being Police-vetted and given training to be able to teach others how to drive, they work alongside learners, supporting them every step of the way.



Four and a half years ago we had our dream and got it into gear, and now we've just had our 200th person pass their restricted licence, which is really exciting.



With the amount travelled, our navigators are now 6.2 times around the perimeter of Australia in their driving with our students.

Carolyn Graveson
Waihi College Future Pathways Co-ordinator



I think that piece of paper lifts young people's self-esteem tremendously.

Lynette Steele
JumpStart Navigator



Meet our 200th success story

As well as being the 200th JumpStart graduate, Lincoln Alexander had a special reason to get his licence.

My mum's blind so I had to really step up and get my licence and help her out a bit. She couldn't get to her appointments and everything she needs to get to, like church and stuff.

Lincoln Alexander
Waihi College
Student and
JumpStart
Graduate #200

JumpStart has been really great, the people are nice, very helpful.

Participants reflect on their journey

For Waihi College student Ruby Wilhelmi, gaining her driver licence through the JumpStart programme has opened the door to new opportunities and greater independence. Now in Year 13, Ruby gained her restricted licence earlier this year and is already looking ahead to her next chapter. In 2027 she plans to study Marine Biology at Victoria University in Wellington.

JumpStart has given me lots of opportunities I otherwise wouldn't have had.

To the Navigators; it's probably nerve-wracking sometimes, but the patience, and the time and effort you've invested in all of us is inspirational, and we really appreciate everything you've done for our futures."

I would say to go for it because it is an amazing way to learn how to drive and to get better skills while driving.

Saffire Walters
Waihi College and
Current JumpStart Student



Ruby Wilhelmi
Waihi College
JumpStart Graduate



What driving achievement are you the most proud of?

I got my parallel parking first try!



Nikita Anderson
Community JumpStart
Graduate

"

JumpStart was very important for me. My husband found work outside of Waihi, so it was my job to get the kids to Kindy and everything.

David, my JumpStart Navigator was excellent. He gave me tips and advice throughout the driving lessons.

Having my licence allowed me to go back to work after maternity leave, be independent, do things around town, go out of town – just daily life.

If you're thinking about JumpStart, I would say do it because getting a 'Restricted' is freedom, so you can do a lot more things. Just do it, your life is so much easier.

Driving New Opportunities

Julie Stephenson, the Hauraki District Council Community Employment Liaison, is no stranger to the requirements of local employers. She says having a driver's licence can be a real game changer for young people.



Without a doubt, not having a licence is by far the biggest barrier to employment for youth – by a long way.

Whether it has been not getting a licence in the first place or if young people have lost a licence, it is the most common factor in ruling out many opportunities for employment."

Julie Stephenson
Hauraki District Council
Community Employment Liaison



If you're a member of the local community looking to gain your restricted driver's licence, contact Rachel Gillingham at Waihi Police to find out more:

rachel.gillingham@police.govt.nz or drop into the Waihi Police Station Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 3.00 pm

