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# Safety Circus 2013 Report

## Introduction

Safety Circus was a dynamic applied theatre production for Grade 3 students, presented in their own schools. The key messages were based on **protective behaviours, bike safety** and **bullying strategies**.

An experienced young director wrote the drama with reference to current police protective behaviour policy.

Mackay CQUniversity students studying Bachelor of Theatre at Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music, CQUniversity performed **18 presentations over 6 days** during school term time.

This report will outline the process that was undertaken to enable this project to be presented in the Mackay Police District and present an assessment to its success.

## **Concept**

The District Crime Prevention Coordinator (DCPC) in Mackay is regularly requested by schools and community groups to present a lesson to the Grade 3 students on the topics of recognising the signs of abuse and inappropriate behaviour. While the protective behaviours program provides a teaching and learning framework for empowering young children to report on personal safety concerns, the current model of delivery seems not to bring about effective learning for this particular age group of students.

The Safety Circus applied theatre program aimed to address **three key safety concerns**; **“protective behaviours, bicycle safety and bullying”** using a drama-based mode of delivery that has been shown to be effective in changing behaviours of young people due to the immediacy and intimacy of a live performance and the careful embedding of the key safety messages within the script. This has been seen in the **“Choices”** school leavers program run annually by CQU and police in the Mackay district. Choices was evaluated and the research found that; *“School leavers attending Choices were able to translate knowledge acquired during the presentation into behaviours resulting in safer celebration.”* (Quek, L. et al (2012) *Good choices, great future: An applied theatre prevention program to reduce alcohol-related risky behaviours during Schoolies* Drug and Alcohol Review.

## **Why these three topics were chosen?**

### **Protective Behaviours (PB):**

There are a high numbers of registered sex offenders and persons of interest in Mackay area per head of population as well as a high incidence of domestic and family violence. Police are often asked to present current protective behaviours to Grade 3's in schools. There is simply not enough time for each child to be presented with a small group talk on PBs so a large group presentation would be an ideal medium to cover larger groups of children.

### **Bicycle Safety:**

The PCYC offers practical bike courses in Grade 4 to schools in the district, but many children are already venturing onto the roads with various types of road transport toys; scooters, skate boards along with bikes and many fail to wear safety helmets and other safety equipment. Information gathered from Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit showed that:

1. Between January 1999 and June 2012, **2262** children (aged 0-12yrs) with injuries related to wheeled transport were identified as attending Mater Mackay and Mackay Base Hospitals.
2. This number represents approximately **9%** (2262/25162) of all injuries in this age group for this area.
3. Approximately **64%** (1452/2262) of all wheeled transport injuries in this age group in Mackay were related to bicycles.

Many young families are moving to the area due to the mining sector, and therefore the population is increasing. It is reflected that children are using wheeled toys earlier in life possibly due to a high disposable income and they feel they are living within an area where bicycle safety is not deemed as needed compared to major areas.

Very few statistics are available regarding bike safety issues in Mackay. Most police officers who come across 'no helmet' "no bell" or "no brake" issues on suburban streets will not officially record their interaction and advice to young people. Anecdotally, officers and parents regularly report the dangerous behaviour of young children on the roads and at skate parks, and also report that they use little or no protection to prevent injury from falls.

### **Bullying:**

While many in the community blame social media for much of the problems associated with childhood bullying, research confirms that "**traditional bullying**" continues to present real problems for young people in managing their personal safety.

Bullying issues continue to emerge in this under 10's age group as manifested in the regular phone calls to police in particular CPIU/CPU about victims of bullying.

Research carried out by Prof Marilyn Campbell (QUT) showed that the incidence of various types of bullying was against popular perception. She found that 14.8% children were bullied using a "cyber link" as apposed to 60.1% were still bullied in a "traditional" way. She also found anecdotally that victims said they found "traditional bullying" was harder to deal with than cyber bullying.

The DCPC in Mackay has had many requests to attend all levels of schools to provide education re bullying related topics.

Education resources for older school students are available through ACMA. However, there appears to be a scarcity of effective learning and teaching resources for Grade 3 students, to which this Safety Circus applied theatre project, is focused.

At the Youth and School Violence Symposium in Brisbane in March 2012 speaker after speaker presented their research into violence/bullying issues at schools and many said that early intervention was the key to the prevention of the incidence of more serious issues in high school and beyond. The researchers also stressed that more education should be developed into "**Bystander Behaviour**" actions in a bullying situation. Safety Circus endeavoured to start that educational process.

## Process

**Sergeant Nigel Dalton** has worked in partnership with the Conservatorium (Con) of Music at CQUniversity for seven years through the “Choices” project (pre-schoolies education for grade 12’s) he has also worked with many of the students through Drink Rite nights and other events. Sgt Dalton was confident that past partnerships would be an excellent basis and foundation for a new partnership with CQU in a drama based educational tool.

**Dr Judith Brown** Senior lecturer at the Con has worked on the Choices project for 15 years and is passionate about the partnership between the Con and police and other government departments and with engagement with the community. Dr Brown has overall control of the Con timetable and with her fantastic musical theatre skills she was able to direct the formation of the performance and manage the Con students’ studies.

**Hannah Barn** is a graduate of the Con (2012) and has been part of the Choices project whilst at university. In the November 2012 she was considering applying to study for her honours degree course through CQU. Hannah had been director of Choices in her final year and had also directed and wrote a drama presentation for Pre-school and grade 1’s call “Mighty foods”. The funding for mighty foods had been withdrawn in late 2012. Safety Circus has now formed part of her honours degree studies.

Sgt Dalton then discussed with Dr Brown and Hannah about the possibility of producing a “Choices for grade 3’s. Sgt Dalton suggested the mentioned three topics, Hannah agreed to develop script ideas, Dr Brown agreed that the project could be run during the Con semester 1 at CQU and she would provide the supervision and assistance in the process that Hannah would design. Sgt Dalton was tasked with requesting funding for the project through the **Queensland Police service Community Crime prevention Fund 2012-2013.**

The process to realise this concept then really took shape by organising a working group. Other activities included:

- Consultation with Mackay SCAN DS/Sgt **Karl Brazier**
- 17 drafts of the script and songs
- Prop designs
- Logo designs
- Purchasing and making of props
- Auditions
- Rehearsals

The group approached a retiring primary school teacher, **Mrs Ann Brunke** to help with the project. This “appointment” was to help with the writing of the script and to make sure that the project provided a presentation that was not only appropriate to schools but also appreciated. Her support and expertise was very much valued by the team.

Sgt Dalton has an excellent reputation throughout the school community in Mackay and all schools were willing to have the drama presentation at the school. The initial

plan was to run the drama presentation three times a day for **5 days** but because there are 19 large schools in Mackay the CQU Con staff agreed to run the project over **6 days** (20/05/2013-27/05/2013). This still left one large school out but they were offered the opportunity to walk to another adjoining school which was hosting the drama, unfortunately they were not able to do this. All other smaller schools in the immediate Mackay area were invited to attend schools that were already hosting the event but cost of transport was too high for them to attend.

During the planning of the events it became clear that the messages that were being covered would need to be explained and expressed to the grade 3 student's **parents** as well as the grade 3's themselves. To encourage the attendance to the show and not relying on parents reading school newsletters a **"ticket"** to the Safety Circus was designed for distribution through the students who were to attend. This "ticket" was brought to the show by many students and was used to collect autographs of the characters in the "Safety Circus".

### **Funding**

A funding application was submitted to the Community Crime Prevention Fund 2012 and \$10,000 was allocated to this project. See full budget break down in the attachments.

The funding included money to purchase:

- A Circus Tent (A pop up Marquee)
- Fridge Magnet with Safety Messages for each student
- Stickers
- Pens for parents evaluations
- Batteries for Microphones (Remove Full Stops)
- Circus safety tickets
- Safety Circus pull up banner

### **Design/Resources/Props:**

The group engaged the services of Central Signs and Graphics to finalise the development of the logo, produce stickers, tickets, magnets, safety network placards and the pull-up banner. The development of these resources contributed to the professionalism of the production. Having give-aways of Safety Circus merchandise ensured that the students, parents and teachers would have an item that would serve as a reminder to have further discussion afterwards.

The majority of the props were organised by Milly Hobbs (Techie and Prop). Key props included a Safety Hand, Butterfly Shirt and costumes. These were essential in helping the audience identify with each character and theme.

## Evaluation

The Safety Circus “tour” started on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013. The crew consisting of **nine actors, one techie, and one director** and all the props travelled on a **Mackay PCYC** bus driven by a Volunteer in Policing (either **Jim Paton** or **John Blackwell**). Sgt Dalton was in a support vehicle carrying all the sound equipment. **S/Con Julia Grisan (DCPC)** provided logistical support at each venue. **Mrs Ann Brunke** was the key liaison with teachers at each school as she knew many members of staff at the schools visited.

The first presentation started at 9am and was at St Mary’s Catholic Primary School. Once that presentation was over the crew had a quick de brief and packed up and moved to the next school Northview State School, once finished there the crew moved onto St Francis Catholic school and finished at 3pm in the afternoon. This format was followed for the next five school days until the 27<sup>th</sup> May covering a total of 18 schools. **A total of 1,847 student and 252 parents and teachers watched the production.**

At each school, the Adopt a Cop for that school was organised to attend the presentation by the OIC of that division. At most of the presentations the Adopt a Cop did attend except when operational commitments made it impossible to attend. The idea of having the Adopt a Cop there was to make sure that the messages that were being displayed in the safety circus show were carried on by the Adopt a Cop in their interaction with the school after the presentation had been completed.

Each Teacher and Parent who watched the Safety Circus was supplied with an evaluation form and Safety Circus pen on a clipboard, they were asked to rate how each of the safety messages were portrayed and conveyed to the students. At the end of the tour this information was compiled and the results recorded in graph form.

All areas of the presentation were very highly rated; a total of **240** participants took part in the evaluation. Below is snap shot of the results of the parent/teacher evaluation.

- **All participants** except one recalled hearing the messages about, early warning signs, using non-motorised transport and bystander behaviour.
- **All participants**, except 3 persons, thought that the messages were presented were appropriate level for the children. They agreed that style of the production was a good method to deliver these messages and that the messages were relevant.
- **All participants** stated they would follow up on these messages with their child/class.
- Only 1 participant recorded that they thought it was not worthwhile attending the performance.

The participants in the evaluation were asked to rate how effective the performance was to convey these safety messages to the children.

- **All teachers said it was above average** (the majority saying it was of an excellent standard).
- The majority of parents thought effectiveness of the performance was either excellent of very good and only a handful reporting its effectiveness was poor.

- The participants were asked to rate the **professionalism of the Safety Circus** **all the parents and teachers rated it over average with the majority saying it was excellent.**
- The participants were asked to rate **appropriateness of the music in the show** **again the majority said it was excellent** and only one parent rated it as fair.

Two additional areas were on the evaluation form for further comments and they have all been recorded and are available snapshots of these comments are recorded below:

- *It was an excellent performance especially for the growing children. May be in future you could consider other grades too.*
- *Well done. Congratulations on the positive initiative.*
- *Great Job would be great to have more performances like this.*
- *Very engaging. Visual props and songs were effective to help the children remember the message.*
- *All the children were fully engaged in watching the show.*
- *Thank you for keeping the messages simple and few. 3 messages are enough for this age. Great show, Great community effort. Well done. Messages are extremely relevant for this age group.*
- *It's great to have the my safety messages backed up by someone else and in such a fun way for my children to relate to Thank You.*
- *Catchy music age appropriate. Was very well done. Loved how they engaged with the children and asked questions.*
- *Congratulations on a wonderful performance. All topics well covered, a little longer on bullying and bystander behaviour would be great.*
- *Teachers commented that the entertainment value and clear messages delivery was MUCH better than the Professional Art Council that visit the school. Would love this message delivered to this level every year. Thank you for a great performance.*

Some of the comments from teachers and parents indicated that there was too much volume from the speakers. When the techie was asked about this it was revealed that the head mics were working at various levels causing sound level issues. As a result an application was made with the funding authority to spend the extra spare funds on new head mics, hopefully these will alleviate this issue in the future.

**In short the evaluation from teachers and parents was extremely favourable and would clearly suggest that the project should be continued in the future.**

The Students from the Con were surveyed about their participation and they were all very supportive. There were some logistical issues and scheduling of the safety circus tour during the university term, which have been noted and will be taken into consideration as to when in the university year the project is run again. Another point was raised that the food provided (some by schools) needed to be more varied. Next time a person will be allocated the responsibility for providing sustenance for the crew as there is a lot of energy used setting up, packing up and performing three times a day!

## **Feedback from Cast**

The Con students who took part were asked to write a short section about their involvement in the project. Three of these are recorded below:

### **Elizabeth Buckley (First Year Student) – Bozo the Clown**

Elizabeth is a 17 year old, first year studying a Bachelor of Music Theatre. Dancing is an important part of Elizabeth's life, training since 2000 in the genres of tap, jazz and contemporary performance at Street Jam on the Gold Coast. Elizabeth has involved herself in numerous school productions at St. Hilda's School on the Gold Coast, and due to her alto voice, was unsurprisingly cast as the male roles in the all-girls school. In 2010, she received the principle role of 'Rooster' in the school's production of *Annie* and in 2012 she received the role of 'Gilbert Blythe' in *Anne of Green Gables*. Most recently Elizabeth was in the chorus of CQUniversity's first production of 2013, *Brigadoon*. Musical Theatre is a passion of Elizabeth's and she is excited to be studying at CQUniversity.

I will be playing the role of Bozo the Clown in Safety Circus. I am playing Bozo as a very mean bully particularly towards the character Buddy, by calling him names and insulting the fact that he wears safety gear. I am playing the character in this way so that kids can identify how a bully acts, and also why they act the way they do – to try and be cool.

### **Molly Rossetto (Second Year Student) – Loretta**

Molly is a 19 year old Music Theatre student from Ipswich, Queensland. During high school Molly balanced academic studies and cultural involvement easily, proving worthy for College Captain in her senior year in 2011 as well as Cultural Woman of the Year, among other awards. She was highly involved in each annual musical, holding several lead roles. Molly is an accomplished musician, with skills in flute, piano and voice. So far at CQCM, Molly has been honoured to hold an ensemble role in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Chess & Brigadoon* as well as a minor lead role in *Forty-Second Street*.

Molly played Jessie's Mum "Loretta" who loses her daughter and has to search the circus to find her again! It was a hugely rewarding experience for her, working in such a tight knit group teaching hundreds of kids all about safety and bullying, and the response from the kids made all of the hard work worthwhile.

### **Raymond Rolley(Second Year Student) – Buddy**

Raymond is studying a Bachelor of theatre specializing in drama of course. In Safety Circus I played the character Buddy the clown, Buddy is a young clown that is bullied by the other clowns for following the rules. When we first started rehearsals for Safety Circus I had no idea just how rewarding the entire experience would be. I couldn't believe how great it was hearing all the positive feedback from the students, their parents and their teachers, the kids really seemed to connect with my character and when they approached me they were extremely vocal about all the great lessons they had learnt. I portrayed Buddy as very young and vulnerable so that the kids could

easily relate to me. Even though Buddy wasn't the most confident character he always followed the rules and because of that he eventually succeeded in convincing the others and they all became friends. I really wanted to show the kids that even though you may get bullied you must always lead by example and that as long as you learn to stand up for yourself and your friends then you can always find that confidence that Buddy and victims of bullying are looking for.

### **Conclusion.**

This project was successful from various angles, it provided **excellent liaison with schools and police**, it **provide excellent engagement between the CQU and the local community**, but more importantly young primary school students were made aware of what to do when they had **early warning signs** in their bodies indicating danger, how to **respond to bullies as a bystander** and how to be **safer using non motorised wheeled transport**.

### **The future.**

The **Mackay Regional Council** is currently a recipient of funding from the Active Towns Project (QLD State funding) and part of that is to be used to provide education to users of their bike ways etc.

Sgt Dalton has approached this working group and has suggested that they fund Safety Circus 2014 as part of that education process. They have agreed and have provided funding for CQU and QPS who will work again in partnership to provide Safety Circus in February 2014 to schools in the Mackay Regional Council area.

### **Thanks**

To make a project like this work many people need to be thanked. In doing this there is always a danger of leaving someone out!

Insp Andy Graham  
Supt Hanbridge  
Supt Kachel  
S/Sgt R.Turner  
D S/Sgt Lee  
Les-Lee Reid  
Amanda Moran  
S/Sgt Sanderson  
Sgt Helen Newman  
S/Sgt Nik Newman

## Attachments

### Safety Circus Timetable.

<b>MAY 2013 Safety Circus</b>	<b>Monday 20th</b>	<b>Tuesday 21st</b>	<b>Wednesday 22nd</b>	<b>Thursday 23th</b>	<b>Friday 24th</b>	<b>Weekend</b>	<b>Monday 27th</b>
<b>School:</b> <b>Time:</b> <b>Contact:</b>  <b>Student =</b> <b>Telephone:</b> <b>Notes:</b>	St Mary's 9-9:40am Caroline Roper  52	Eimeo 9:15- 10:15am Mary Orchard  120	Glenella 9-9:40am R Wood  58 (2/3/4)	MCC 8:45- 9:40am Kerry Tysoe  60	Vic Park 9- 9:45am Laurie Shepard 90		St Josephs 9-9:40am Shane Hair  50
<b>School:</b> <b>Time:</b> <b>Contact:</b>  <b>Student =</b> <b>Telephone:</b> <b>Notes:</b>	Northview 11:30- 12:10 Wendy Ross  50	Bucasia 11:30- 12:15 Belinda Ekford  40	Central 11:45-12:30 David  50	Andergrove 12:00- 12:40 Peter Mandrick 75	Mackay North 11:30- 12:15 Steven Bobby		Mackillop 12-12:40 Alison Blakey  45
<b>School:</b> <b>Time:</b> <b>Contact:</b>  <b>Student =</b> <b>Telephone:</b> <b>Notes</b>	St Francis 1:45- 2:30pm Mary Oxenham 60	Slade Point 2:10- 3pm James Watt  50 (2/3/4)	WAS 2:15-3pm Mike Martin  50	Fitzgerald 2:15pm- 3pm Tracy Adam  70	Mackay West 2:15- 3pm Doug  120		Beaconsfield 2:15-3pm Brendan Smith  50

## QPS Approved Safety Circus Pull Up Banner



## **Parent Teacher survey**

Dear parents and teachers,

Thank you for agreeing to complete this short survey on the **Safety Circus**. The **Safety Circus** is presented by Bachelor of Theatre students from CQUniversity, and has been written and directed by Hannah Barn, who is completing this project as part of the requirements for her Bachelor of Theatre Honours degree at CQUniversity (supervisor Dr Judith Brown).

The Queensland Police Service Community Crime Prevention Fund 2012 – 2013 has provided the funding for the **Safety Circus**. As a condition of the funding an evaluation of the **Safety Circus** Applied Theatre project must be completed. This survey forms part of that evaluation.

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and anonymous. The data collected as part of this survey will be used in the evaluation of the project for the Queensland Police Service Community Crime Prevention Fund 2012 – 2013. It will also form part of the Bachelor of Theatre Honours thesis for Hannah Barn (CQUniversity). Other possible uses may include publication in scholarly journals in the field of applied theatre.

This survey has been approved by CQUniversity Australia Human Research Ethics Committee.

*CQU HREC clearance number: H13/05-096*

**In the performance today, did you hear the following 3 safety messages?**

- |  | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Safety Networks and Early Warning Signs   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Safety when using non-motorised transport | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Bullying and Bystander behaviour          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**In the performance today, how do you rate the effectiveness of these messages for the children? Please circle your response.**

1. The safety network

Excellent	Very Good	Average	Fair	Poor
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2. Safety when using non-motorised transport

Excellent	Very Good	Average	Fair	Poor
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3. Bystander behaviour and bullying

Excellent	Very Good	Average	Fair	Poor
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**Relating to the performance today:**

- |  | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do you think the messages presented were at the appropriate level for the children?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Do you think this style of production was a good method to deliver the messages?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Do you think these messages are relevant for children at this age?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. After watching the show today, do you think you will follow-up these messages with your children/class? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Do you think attending the performance was worthwhile?<br>If no why? _____<br>_____                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**How do you rate the professionalism of the show *The Safety Circus*?**

Excellent	Very Good	Average	Fair	Poor
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**How do you rate the appropriateness of the music in the show for conveying the safety messages?**

Excellent	Very Good	Average	Fair	Poor
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**Do you have any further comments that may assist us in developing this show for the future?**

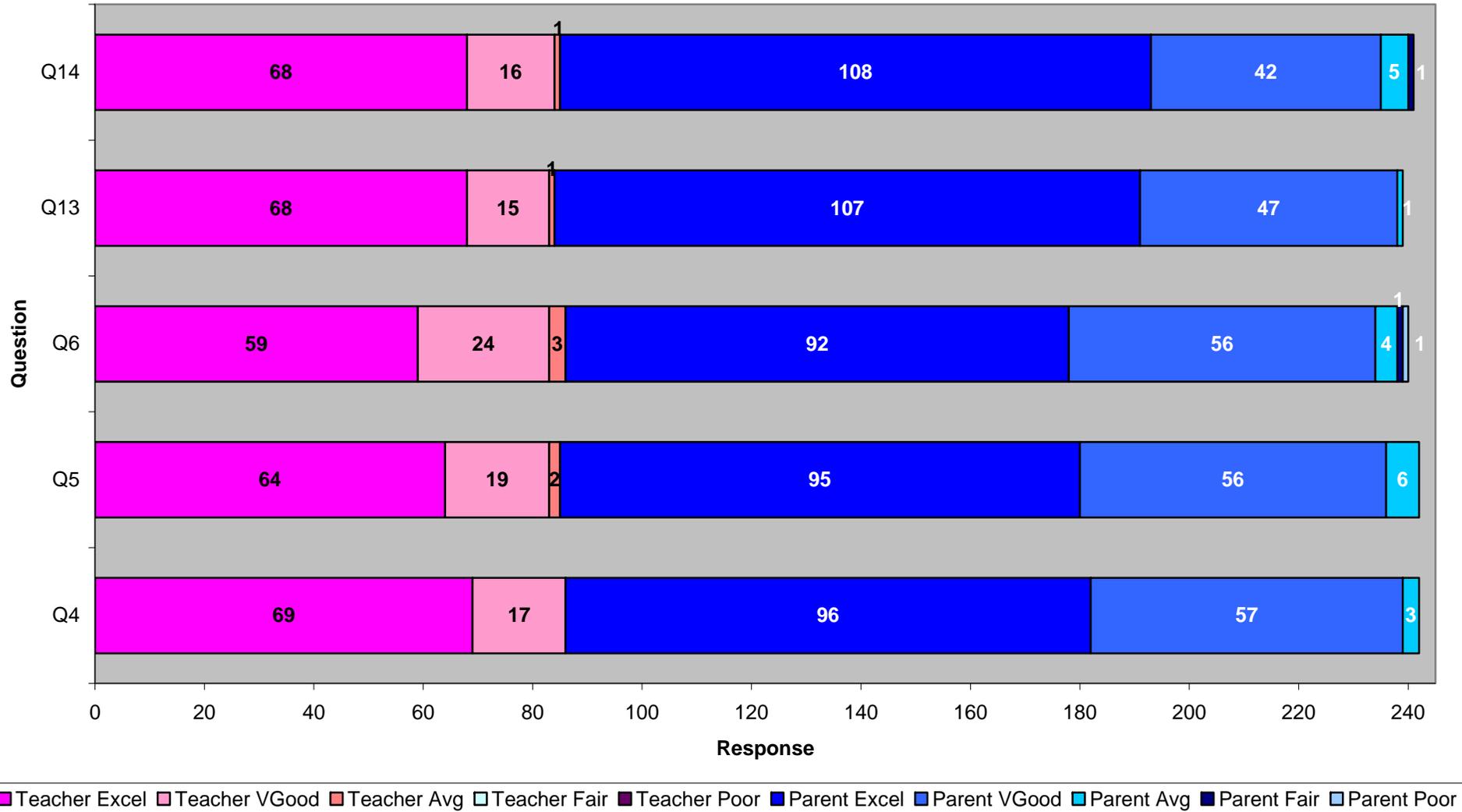
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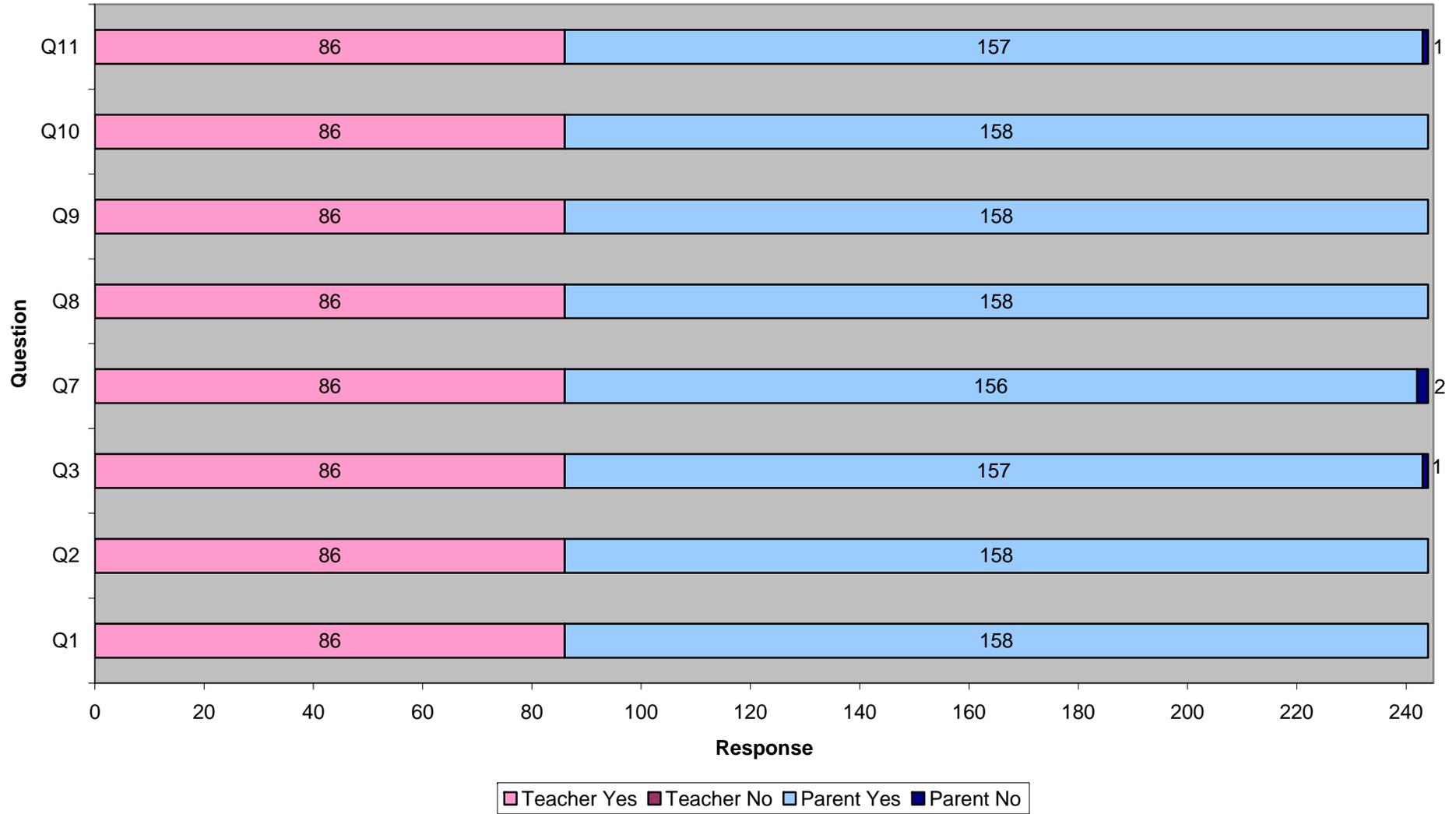
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Thank you for your time in completing this evaluation of *The Safety Circus*.

### Safety Circus



### Safety Circus



## Pen Designs



## Ticket Design



## Sticker Design



## MAGNET DESIGN

It is designed so the middle section comes out and leaves a photo frame.  
The students were encouraged to place a picture of a “trusted adult” into the frame.

# Safety Circus Budget

Date	Description	Supplier	Cost
6/02/2013	Hannah RTN flights	Jetstar	\$150.00
08/03/2013	Tent	Canopy Outdoor	\$1,646.33
21/03/2013	Hannah RTN flights	Jetstar	\$135.00
21/03/2013	Hannah RTN flights	Jetstar	\$169.00
26/03/2013	Safety Circus Pens	Thirteen Design	\$988.00
26/03/2013	Safety Circus Stickers	Thirteen Design	\$998.00
24/03/2013	Scooter and Uni Cycle	Crazy deals (internet)	\$129.82
22/04/2013	Bike	Super cheap	\$129.00
16/04/2013	Magnets	Thirteen Design	\$1,332.00
16/04/2013	Banner	Thirteen Design	\$250.00
30/04/2013	Tickets	Thirteen Design	\$409.00
2/05/2013	Tee shirts	Greg Cooks Traditional Signs	\$420.00
8/05/2013	Helmets and safety Pads	Corry Cycles	\$324.00
15/05/2013	Material	Spot Light	\$129.32
15/05/2013	Material	Spot Light	\$30.94
15/05/2013	Hardware	Bunning's	\$48.34
15/05/2013	Clown/Tutu	DIY Party Supplies	\$17.95
15/05/2013	accessories	DIY Party Supplies	\$19.95
15/05/2013	Fancy dress things	DIY Party Supplies	\$24.95
16/05/2013	Tickets re run	Thirteen Design	\$125.00
29/05/2013	Misc Props	Anne Brunke	\$45.40
29/05/2013	Misc Props	Milly Hobbs	\$64.27
29/05/2013	Misc Props	Lizzy Buckley	\$44.91
29/05/2013	Misc Props and food	Nigel Dalton	\$496.55
20/05/2013	Batteries	Battery Power	\$370.00
14/06/2013	RES CQU Hannah Barn		\$472.50
11/09/2013	Microphones	Yamaha music	942.3
		total cost	\$9,912.53
		Budget \$10000 - amount left	\$87.47

An example of one of the songs used during the Performance

:

Voice

Hannah Barn Traditional

### Helmet Song

The musical score is written for voice and guitar. It consists of two staves. The first staff is the vocal line, and the second staff is the guitar accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The guitar part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

Put your hel-met on, clip your hel-met up, put your safe-ty pads on then you're read y to go out You  
do the hel-met safe-ty and the kates and scoo-ters too. That's what it's all a - bout. Put your

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## The cast of Safety Circus 2013

