

INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Name: The Hon J J Della Bosca MLC
Position: Minister for Education and Training
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**Minister for Education and Training
Minister for Industrial Relations
Minister for the Central Coast
Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance**

Mr Geoff Corrigan MP
Chair
Staysafe Committee
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY PARLIAMENT HOUSE NSW 2000

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DGL 07/1562
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Dear Mr Corrigan

I write in response to your letter of 28 September 2007, regarding the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe) inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education Programs. I note that you have also written to the Director-General of Education and Training on this matter.

Please find attached a submission outlining current education programs and possible future initiatives by the Department of Education and Training to support driver education.

I have also organised for Principals of all secondary schools to be made aware of the inquiry so that student submissions can be encouraged.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of the Department of Education and Training.

Yours sincerely


John Della Bosca MLC
Minister for Education and Training

22 NOV 2007



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

a) The current incidence of road crashes involving young drivers in New South Wales

COMMENT:

Statistical information about road safety is provided to the Department of Education and Training Road Safety Education Program on a regular basis by the Roads and Traffic Authority. Road Safety Education consultants are provided with an update annually.

b) Underlying risks and major factors contributing to such crashes

COMMENT:

As part of the funding agreement between the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Department of Education and Training, the Roads and Traffic Authority provides the Department with advice and expertise on road safety issues.

c) Difference in driving behaviour, crash outcomes and relevant trends in urban and rural areas.

COMMENT:

Nil

d) The availability and appropriateness of current diversionary and educational programs for young offenders involved in serious traffic violations.

COMMENT:

The Department of Education and Training does not offer young offender programs in schools.

e) The efficacy of young driver education programs and the potential for the development and expansion of these programs, subject to proper evaluation.

COMMENT:

An extensive road safety education program for schools is a key initiative of the Government's *Road Safety 2010* strategy. The Roads and Traffic Authority has formal agreements with the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools.

In New South Wales government schools, road safety education is delivered as a curriculum-based program within the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education learning area.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education is mandated for all students from Kindergarten to Year 10. Driver education is specifically addressed in Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10). Students learn about:

- responsible driver and passenger behaviour
- factors influencing road-use behaviour
- major causal factors in road traffic related injuries
- consequences of unsafe road use
- skills and attitudes that support safe road behaviour.

As part of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, students also have opportunities to critically analyse gender stereotypes that may impact on life choices and explore road safety statistics to analyse reasons for gender differences in road-related injury.

The Department of Education and Training has worked in consultation with the Roads and Traffic Authority to develop resources to support teaching and learning about driver safety. The resource *Shifting Gears* was issued to government schools in 2005 as part of a teacher professional development program offered to all government secondary schools. Schools were offered the opportunity to participate in workshops and program writing days to enhance teaching and learning about driver safety. Across NSW, 407 schools and 618 teachers attended *Shifting Gears* workshops and 322 schools and 412 teachers attended *Shifting Gears* writing days.

Students in Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) learn about driver safety as part of *Crossroads: A personal development and health education course* for Stage 6. This course is mandatory for students in all government schools. Students learn about:

- alcohol and driving
- drugs and driving
- responsible behaviour
- reducing risk as a driver and pedestrian
- effects of misuse of drugs
- impact of drug related issues in the community
- actions to address drug issues.

During 2006 and 2007 the Department of Education and Training managed the development of a driver education resource for the Roads and Traffic Authority. This resource was developed to target students in Stage 5 and Stage 6 who were potential drivers, learner drivers or provisional licence holders. This resource has the working title *Limiting Risk and Protecting Lives* and has been developed to support teaching and learning about driver safety and low risk driving. This resource has been forwarded to the Roads and Traffic Authority for final approval. The Roads and Traffic Authority is planning to release this resource to schools in 2008.

Some schools also deliver road safety education as part of student welfare initiatives or across other learning areas. The Roads and Traffic Authority in consultation with the Department of Education and Training has recently developed a resource titled *In the Driver's Seat: a question of authority* to support learning about road safety as part of mandated English courses in Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12). The English Teachers' Association is providing this resource to individual teachers who attend a two hour professional development session facilitated by the English Teachers' Association. The Roads and Traffic Authority has indicated that the Department of Education and Training Road Safety Education Program will support further promotion and issue of this resource in 2008.

The Department of Education and Training Road Safety Education Program provides a consultancy service to schools. There is a road safety education consultant based in each of the Department's ten Regions. These consultants support schools in the following ways:

- Support for teaching and learning. This may be as one day professional development workshops, presentations to executive and staff meeting or one to one support with individual teachers.
- Policy advice.
- Support for parent education initiatives.
- Advice about school management practices to support safer school environments.

Road safety education consultants are currently offering a driver education awareness presentation to secondary school teachers in New South Wales. This presentation provides schools with the latest statistical information about young drivers and clarifies the role schools can play in addressing driver safety. This presentation will also promote future opportunities for teachers to attend professional development about driver education during 2008.

Road safety education consultants also support the Roads and Traffic Authority in distribution of road safety education resources to schools. Recent Roads and Traffic Authority resources distributed to schools to support driver education include:

- Driving and medicines
- Zero alcohol limit for novice drivers
- Drugs and driving
- Mobile phones and driving
- Drinking and driving: The facts
- New driving test!
- Roadside drug testing.

Overall, the focus of driver education in New South Wales schools is on the development of knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours to enable all students to be safe road users. Behind-the-wheel driver training is not a mandated part of driver education in government schools. Individual schools, in consultation with their local community can offer driver training but it must adhere to strict policy guidelines. Barriers to schools providing behind-the-wheel driver training include the cost of purchasing and maintaining a dual controlled vehicle, public liability insurance, child

protection issues and equity of access issues for schools with large student populations. Currently, only four government schools in New South Wales offer behind-the wheel driver training programs.

f) Other initiatives to improve driver safety

COMMENT:

There are a significant number of outside providers offering driver education programs to schools. These include the *Rotary Young Driver Awareness* program, The National Roads and Motorist Association *Youth and Road Trauma Forum* and the New South Wales Fire Brigade's *RescuEd* program. These programs vary greatly in quality and cost and the decision to access these programs is made by individual school communities. It is Department of Education and Training policy not to endorse driver education programs provided by outside providers.

The Department of Education and Training is guided by the Roads and Traffic Authority in advising schools as to what works and doesn't work for safe driving programs for novice drivers. This advice contained in the document *Principles of effective community-based driving programs for novice drivers and passengers* includes:

- What works
 - on-road driving experiences
 - activities that complement or support existing road safety laws, messages and education programs
 - learning experiences that engage and involve participants
 - driver education activities that address the underlying values and attitudes that influence driving behaviour
- What doesn't work:
 - off-road training courses
 - advanced driver or defensive driver training courses
 - one-off activities, performances events or presentations
 - learning experiences that over emotionalise a point
 - the use of fear or shock tactics to influence driving behaviour

g) Any other relevant matters

COMMENT:

The Child Health Promotion Research Centre at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia is currently researching *Principles of Best Practice in Road Safety Education*. This research should provide clear guidelines about best practice and will assist schools to deliver effective road safety education programs.

Western Australia has recently introduced an innovative program called *Keys for Life*. *Keys for Life* is an attitude-based pre-driver program taught as part of the school curriculum.

Participating students are able to sit their Learners Permit theory test at school. Students who successfully complete the program are eligible for a discount on their Learners Permit of approximately \$20.00. Students can accrue 1 point towards the Western Australian Certificate of Education by successfully completing *Keys for Life*. This could be an approach to explore further with the Roads and Traffic Authority as students could get real benefits from their involvement and such a course could be delivered within the context of existing *Crossroads: personal development and health course for stage 6* in government schools.