

INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Name: Ms Noreen Hay MP
Position: Parliamentary Secretary for Health
Date Received: 26/11/2007



Minister for Health

M07/10325

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The Hon Geoff Corrigan MP
Chair
Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Mr Corrigan

I write in response to your letter to the Minister for Health, the Hon Reba Meagher MP, regarding the Inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education Programs. The Minister has requested that I respond on her behalf.

I am pleased to provide the following information regarding terms of reference most relevant to the health portfolio.

- a) ***the current incidence of road crashes involving young drivers in NSW;***
and
- c) ***differences in driving behaviour, crash outcomes and relevant trends in urban and rural areas of NSW;***

The Roads and Traffic Authority's *Traffic Accident Data System* (TADS) is the main source of information on road crashes in NSW. NSW Health has not undertaken specific research on the incidence of road crashes involving young drivers, nor the patterns of crashes in rural and urban NSW. However, it would be possible to extract some information from NSW Health's routinely collected hospitalisation data (the *Admitted Patients Data Collection*) to supplement the information from TADS, such as the types and rates of injuries requiring hospitalisation following motor vehicle crashes.

Reports can be generated separately from each data collection, however, linking the two data collections can bring greater richness to the information available. The NSW Injury Risk Management Research Centre - which receives funding from NSW Health, Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) and the Motor Accidents Authority (MAA) - has conducted such data linkage in the past.

The NSW Health Admitted Patients Data Collection contains coded data about every hospital admission in NSW, including demographic information such as age and locality of residence, and in the case of injured persons, information about the nature of the injuries and the external cause of injury (such as a motor vehicle crash). It should be noted that within the data collected for an individual injured in a motor vehicle crash there would be no details captured about the age

of any other persons involved in the crash. The limitations of the data collection need to be noted in interpreting any data extracted. For example, the completeness and accuracy of the hospitalisation data depends on the level of detail and accuracy of the information recorded by clinicians in the medical record of the injured person. A further limitation is that the location of residence of an injured person is recorded, but not the location where they sustained their injury.

f) other initiatives to improve young driver safety

The NSW Department of Health contributes to young driver safety by providing Non-Government Organisation funding (administered through Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service) to Youthsafe, which is the peak body in NSW for prevention of serious injury in young people 15 to 25 years.

Road safety is a major focus of Youthsafe's work, given the extent to which road trauma contributes to death and serious injury in young people.

Youthsafe primarily works with community based professionals who are involved with young people and through education facilities. Youthsafe's services include:

- Professional advisory and support services, including professional guides, newsletters, email bulletins, comprehensive website(s), telephone advice, resource library access, multi-professional forums, specific purpose workshops, collaboration on pilot projects.
- Information resources, such as fact sheets and postcards.
- Educator resources, including session plans and support resources.
- A 'Presenter Program' involving presenters who have personally experienced serious injury running sessions for young people through secondary schools, 'Links to Learning' and other special needs education programs and community groups. The sessions are developed by educators and support the NSW PDHPE curriculum.
- Advocacy for policies and practices that support injury prevention in young people.
- Action research and community projects.

With regards to road safety, Youthsafe take a multi-strategic approach that recognises the varied youth sub-cultures and complexities involved in trying to address road safety relating to young drivers. Youthsafe values young people and their views and uses positive, supportive youth friendly strategies linking into normal youth activities. Youthsafe also recognises the value of a whole of community approach and seeks to engage parents, the wider community and policy/ decision makers as well as young people. Youthsafe's resources and programs routinely include consultation with the target audiences and are refined through pilot testing or other evaluation activities. Throughout their work, Youthsafe routinely review the latest available evidence.

The Youthsafe programs and resources that specifically target young drivers, their passengers and their parents include the following:

- Post card resources for young people – 1 targeting young drivers, 1 targeting young passengers and a new sticker postcard developed this year specifically aimed at reducing the number of peer passengers carried by young drivers. These are largely distributed through community based professionals and school programs.
- A pop up postcard resource for Aboriginal youth specifically aimed at reducing the number of peer passengers carried by young drivers. This was developed this year in response to identified needs, involved consultation with Aboriginal youth during development, involved an Aboriginal artist in the postcard design and is currently being pilot tested through the TAFE Access program in classes with Aboriginal students.
- A fact sheet for parents of young drivers 'Helping teenagers become safer drivers'. This was updated mid year to ensure new young driver legislation commencing 1 July 07 was correctly referenced. The fact sheet is distributed through NSW secondary schools, RTA offices and community based professionals eg Road Safety Officers. This fact sheet is also available electronically in Arabic and Chinese with culturally appropriate adaptations and these fact sheets also include amendments in respect of 1 July 2007 legislative change.
- A session delivered by Youthsafe presenters called 'Are we there yet?' specifically designed for young people who are new drivers and their passengers, focusing on the complexity of the physical and mental tasks required for low risk driving. This was pilot tested through community groups and schools. Youthsafe presenters are available in Sydney, Central Coast, Blue Mountains and Illawarra.

Youthsafe is also currently investigating the influence of peer passengers on young drivers.

Young people are often travelling by road to work, sport and recreational activities so Youthsafe also integrates elements of road safety into programs addressing injury prevention in these settings. A particular priority for Youthsafe has been safer celebrating for young people when driving home, especially from regular informal social activities, which poses significant road related risks.

Youthsafe has identified five priority areas in safe celebrating:

- Supporting parents and young people to make safer choices, including awareness of young driver and young passenger issues.
- Reducing linkages between alcohol and sport.
- Supporting safe youth entertainment.
- Safe, accessible youth space and facilities.
- Safe and accessible transport.

The Youthsafe programs and resources that address safe celebrating and integrate road safety for young drivers, their passengers and their parents include the following:

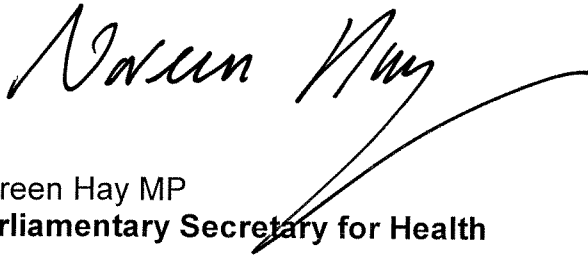
- A fact sheet for parents of young people 'Helping teenagers celebrate safely'. This was released during 2006 and is distributed through NSW secondary schools, RTA offices and community based professionals eg Health Promotion Officers.
- Web based examples of parent/teenager agreements about going out and using the family car.
- A resource kit called 'What's the plan?' for use by Youthsafe presenters or other educators. The kit comprises a DVD with vox pop style interviews with young people and CD Rom with session plans, worksheets and educator resources.

Safe and accessible transport is currently being investigated more thoroughly by Youthsafe.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide the Standing Committee on Road Safety with a response to their Inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education Programs.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please contact Ms Claire Monger, A/Manager, Injury Prevention Policy Branch, on 02 9391 9679 or claire.monger@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Noreen Hay". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Noreen Hay MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Health