

INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Organisation: Roads and Traffic Authority
Name: Mr Les Wielinga
Position: Chief Executive
Date Received: 14/12/2007



RS07/436
7M/4104

Mr Geoff Corrigan MP
Chair
STAYSAFE
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Mr Corrigan

I refer to your letter concerning the current inquiry concerning Young Driver Safety and Education Programs.

The safety of young drivers is considered a high priority area of the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). Licensing, education and marketing programs specifically targeting young people have been developed and implemented in NSW as part of the RTA Youth Program.

In 2006, despite the lowest road toll since World War II, there was an unexpected 30% increase in fatalities involving P1 drivers. At the request of the NSW Government, the RTA established the NSW Government Young Drivers Advisory Panel in November 2006 to examine ways to further improve the safety of young drivers and their passengers.

On 1 July 2007, a number of novice driver safety initiatives came into effect. In short, the initiatives are:

- A peer-passenger restriction for P1 drivers under 25 years of age (only carrying one passenger aged under 21 from 11pm to 5am),
- Licence suspension of at least 3 months for provisional P1 driver and rider licence holders who commit any speeding offence,
- The mandating of the clear display of L and P plates on the exterior of the vehicle,
- The creation of a new offence to ban all mobile phone use (including hands-free) for learner and provisional P1 drivers and riders,
- An increase in the mandatory period of supervised driving for learner drivers from 50 to 120 hours which includes at least 20 hours of night driving,
- An increase of the minimum tenure period for learner drivers under 25 (from six to 12 months) before they can apply for a provisional licence and,
- The validity of the learner's licence will be extended from three to five years.

The new reforms maintain a focus on the development of on-road driving experience through supervision in the learner driver phase in a variety of road environments and traffic conditions. This driving experience is supported through a range of new RTA publications such as *Learner driver log book* (with defined learning goals and content), *A guide to the Driving Test* and the *Road Users' Handbook*.



Learner drivers are now required to undergo a new extensive Driving Test that focuses on hazard perceptions and driver reaction.

The RTA continues to acknowledge the important role of parents in the supervision and support of learner and novice drivers and offers workshops in local government areas across NSW to support teenagers, parents and supervisors through the *Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers* workshop program. These workshops seek to assist supervisors to understand the factors related to crashes involving young people, the requirements of the Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) and to develop strategies for providing supervised on-road driving experience and support in the early years of driving. Local council road safety officers and RTA regional staff deliver this community-based initiative across local government areas of New South Wales.

To complement the licensing process, the RTA has an extensive education program from Pre-school through to Year 10. The School Road Safety Education Program is a partnership of the RTA, Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission NSW, The Association of Independent Schools and Macquarie University.

In NSW, high schools focus on the delivery of driver education rather than driver training or behind-the-wheel driving instruction. Road safety education is a mandatory component of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabus in Years 7-10 (Stage 5). This program focuses on the development of knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours to enable students to make informed decisions as road-users. The school's role is to guide the development of positive road safety attitudes and values. The RTA provides a range of curriculum resources to support teachers to deliver driver education.

In 2007, this program has been expanded through the release of a new curriculum resource entitled *In the Driver's Seat*. This resource supports Higher School Certificate English courses. The RTA has funded the English Teachers Association (ETA) to provide high school teachers with professional development in the use of this resource.

The establishment of the NSW Road Safety Centre will provide a new opportunity for the RTA to further develop and research programs that will provide greater safety for all road users, including young drivers.

A detailed submission addressing all the terms of reference of the Inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education Program is enclosed for the Committee's consideration and discussion.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Dr Soames Job, Acting Director, NSW Centre for Road Safety, on telephone 9218 6896.

Yours sincerely



Les Wielinga
Chief Executive

14.12.07

NSW Roads and Traffic Authority

Submission

to the

**Inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education
Programs**

Conducted by the

**Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on
Road Safety (Staysafe)**

November 2007

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

1.1 NSW Centre for Road Safety- NSW Roads and Traffic Authority

1.2 Terms of reference

2. Incidence of road crashes in New South Wales

2.1 The current incidence of road crashes involving young drivers in NSW

2.2 Underlying risks and major factors contributing to such crashes

2.3 Differences in driving behaviour, crash outcomes and relevant trends in urban and rural areas of NSW

3. Young offender programs

3.1 NSW Sober Driver Program

3.2 Alcohol Interlock Program

3.3 Pilot driver education course for high range speeding offenders

3.4 Lismore Aboriginal Driver Education Pilot Program-On the road

4. Driver education programs

4.1 Definition of driver education

4.2 National novice driver programme trial

4.3 Curriculum-based driver education in New South Wales schools

4.4 Driver education in TAFE NSW

4.5 Education for young people in youth centres and professionals working with young people

4.6 Community-based safe driving programs

5. Other initiatives to improve young driver safety

5.1 Establishment of the NSW Young Drivers Advisory Panel

5.2 New licence restrictions for learner and provisional licence holders

5.3 The Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS)

5.4 Educational resources for learner drivers and their supervisors

5.5 Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers workshops for supervisors of learner drivers

5.6 Road safety campaigns targeting the behaviour of young drivers

5.7 Training programs for driving instructors

5.8 Roadside drug testing

5.9 Future directions

6. References

Introduction

1.1 NSW Centre for Road Safety- NSW Roads and Traffic Authority

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is responsible for the development of a safe, sustainable and efficient transport system.

The NSW Centre for Road Safety formerly, the Road Safety Strategy Branch of the RTA was established on 1 June 2007 and is the peak body responsible for road safety in NSW. The primary objective of the Centre is to promote road safety as a core value and key influence on decision-making across the RTA, our road safety partners and the road-using public. The Centre leads the development and implementation of state-wide road safety strategies, policies and programs and promotes RTA leadership at state and national levels to reduce the trauma and cost of road casualties to the community.

The Centre leads and coordinates the integration of road safety objectives and responsibilities across the RTA, particularly within the infrastructure and traffic management programs. It works closely with the Compliance and Freight Strategy Branch on heavy vehicle safety strategies and Licensing and Registration Branch on licensing policy and programs.

The Centre develops and maintains positive and effective working relationships with other state, federal and local government agencies and community organisations, particularly NSW Police, local government and education sectors in support of the State's road safety strategic plans.

The NSW Centre for Road Safety is committed to being the world's leading institute for road safety research, innovation, policy and strategy, through the development of expert knowledge within the Centre and the creation of highly functional relationships with delivery partners.

The RTA is pleased to present this submission to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety's Inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education Programs. The RTA welcomes this inquiry into a key area of road safety.

Young people are more mobile than any time in the past. More young people also own and/or drive motor vehicles than ever before. Young people continue to be over-represented in road crash statistics. Each injury brings pain, suffering and economic loss. Each death is tragic.

Young driver and passenger safety is a key focus area of the RTA. A range of licensing, marketing, educational and enforcement initiatives have been implemented recently. This inquiry provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress made and to consider future directions.

1.1 Terms of Reference

The Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe) has determined to inquire into and report on the factors involved in young driver road traffic crashes and fatalities, with particular reference to:

- A. the current incidence of road crashes involving young drivers in New South Wales;
- B. underlying risks and major factors contributing to such crashes;
- C. differences in driving behaviour, crash outcomes and relevant trends in urban and rural areas of New South Wales;
- D. the availability and appropriateness of current diversionary and educational programs for young offenders involved in serious traffic violations;
- E. the efficacy of young driver education programs and the potential for development and expansion of these programs, subject to proper evaluation;
- F. other initiatives to improve young driver safety;
- G. any other relevant matters.

This submission addresses each of these issues in turn.

2. Incidence of road crashes in New South Wales

2.1 The current incidence of road crashes involving young drivers in NSW

There were 728,518 New South Wales licence holders aged under 26 years of age as at 30 June 2007. An increase of 28,997 licence holders from the previous year. Licence types held are outlined below (Table 1).

People aged under 26 comprise 16% of all licence holders (driver and motorcycle licence holders) but the crashes in which they are involved account for 31% of all road crash fatalities.

Table 1

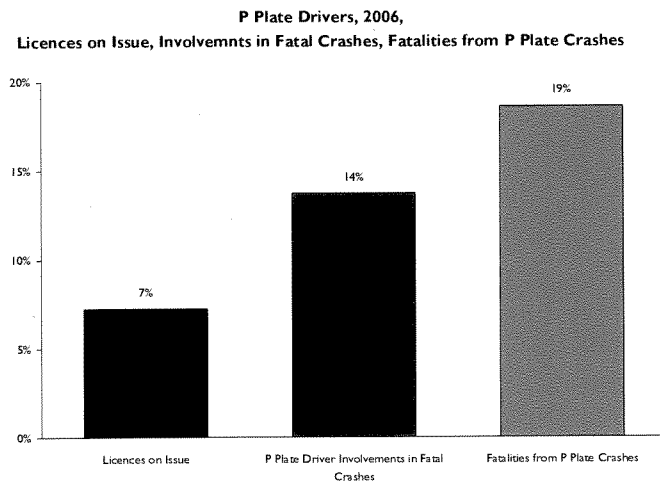
Licence holders aged under 26 years as of 30 June 2007

Licence type	Number	% of total
Learner	182,763	25.1
P1	122,120	16.8
P2	176,139	24.2
Unrestricted	247,496	34.0
Total	728,518	100.0

Swedish research estimated a 33% greater risk of an injury crash during the first year of provisional driving than during the supervised learner period (Gregersen, Nyberg and Berg (2003).

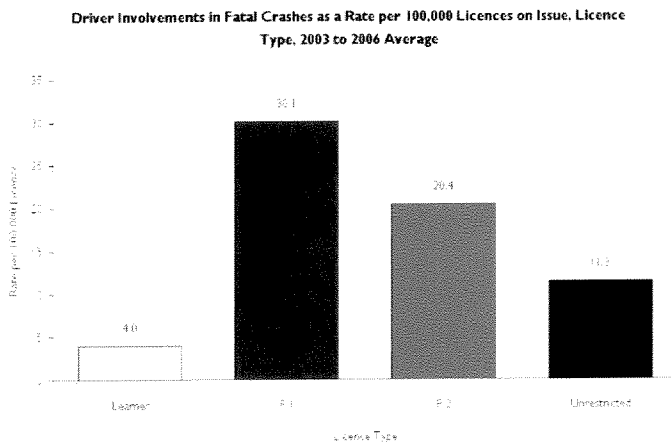
Although P Plate drivers hold only 7% of licences they account for 14% of all drivers involved in fatal crashes and the crashes account for one-fifth of all fatalities (Figure 1).

Figure 1



In terms of fatal crash involvements per 100,000 licences, P1 drivers are involved nearly three times more than all unrestricted drivers. P2 drivers have double the crash involvement of all unrestricted drivers (Figure 2).

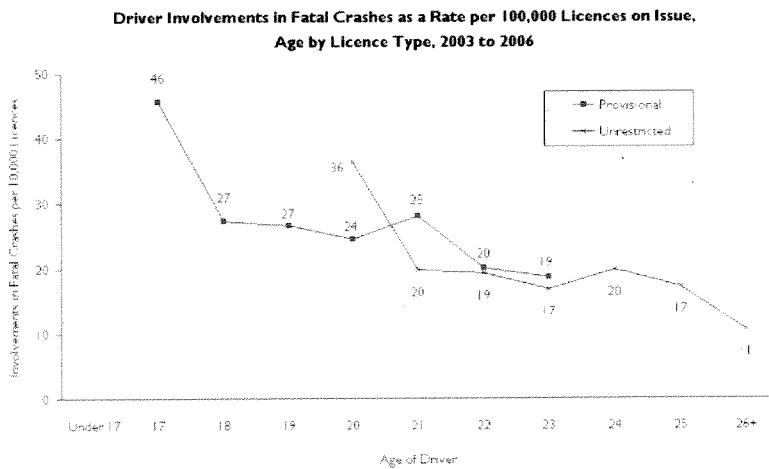
Figure 2



P Plate driver crash rates are higher than those of standard licence holders, and the youngest age group are worse than older age groups for both provisional and unrestricted licences.

A 17-year-old with a P1 licence is about four times more likely to be involved in a crash than a driver aged 26 or older (Figure 3).

Figure 3



2. 2 Underlying risks and major factors contributing to such crashes

Research has shown that the underlying causes of road crashes and fatalities for young people include: risk-taking behaviour, inexperience, overconfidence, carrying of passengers/passenger behaviour (Job, 1999), alcohol, location, poor hazard perception and unauthorised driving. The challenge for road safety is to identify strategies that will impact on these behaviours effectively while still allowing young people to participate in society and to learn from their experiences.

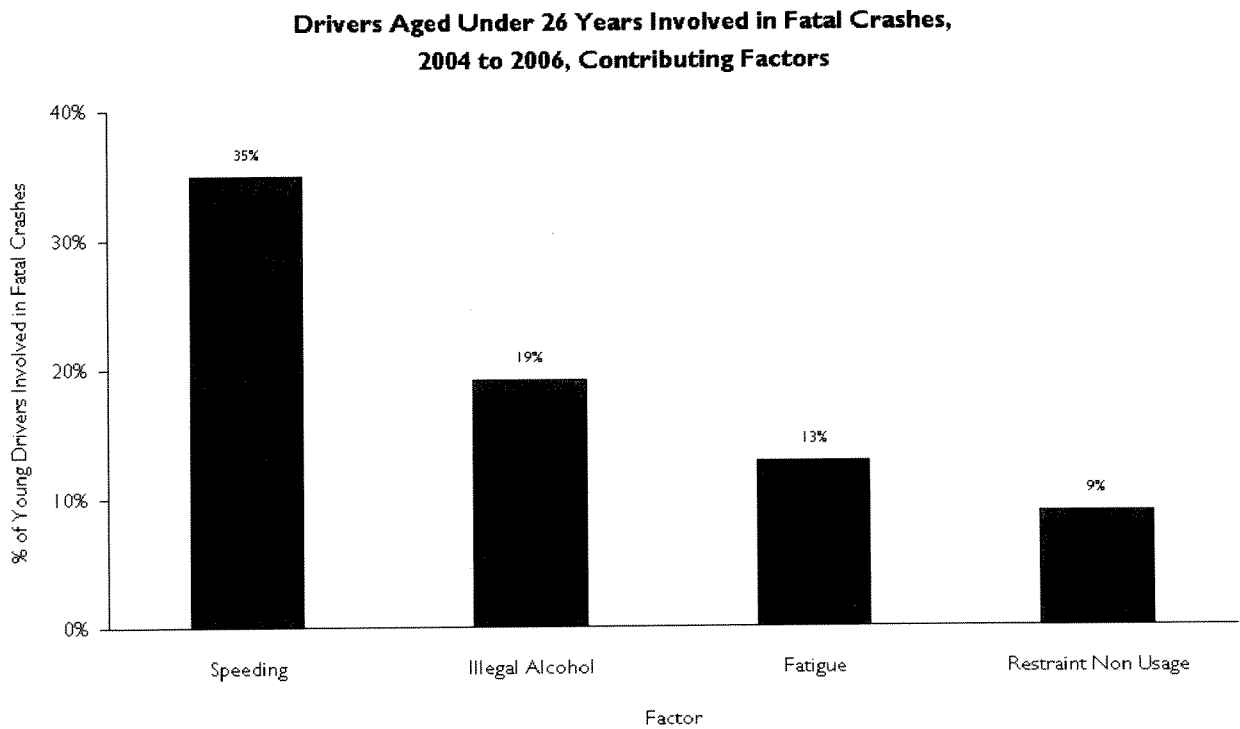
Some risky behaviour is the result of a conscious decision - such as thrill seeking or aggression (Prabhakar, Lee and Job 1996) and some behaviour may operate at the sub-conscious level (such as behaviour that results from feelings of invulnerability), some risky behaviour may be unintentional. Young people may not assess the risk in the same manner as mature adults and therefore may not see the potential consequences.

The parts of the brain responsible for perceiving hazards and limiting relevant behaviour do not fully mature until after the teenage years, meaning young drivers are more likely to experiment and take dangerous risks.

Amongst young people, males are significantly over-represented in road crashes compared to females. Males make up 78% of the drivers aged under 26 involved in fatal crashes (2004 – 2006).

There are four major modifiable behaviours that young people (17-25 years of age) tend to engage in as novice drivers and passengers. These are speeding, the non-use of seatbelts, driving while fatigued and driving after consuming alcohol-above the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limit for their licence class (Figure 4).

Figure 4



These behaviours are strongly influenced by the personal, social, cultural and environmental factors. The relationships and support roles of families and friends are also an important consideration. The key factor behind these risky behaviours is motivation, not driving skill.

The NSW Government’s road safety initiatives including the Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) have sought to address the issue of inexperience through increasing the level of experience of drivers and targeting risk-taking behaviours through the licensing process, school and parent education and road safety campaigns.

As of 1 July 2007, new learner drivers are now required to undertake 120 hours of on-road supervised driving including a minimum of 20 hours night-time driving. Learner drivers seeking to obtain a Provisional Licence (P1) are required to undergo a new extensive Driving Test that focuses on hazard perceptions and driver reaction. The test has been designed for learner drivers with extensive experience. The new Driving Test is currently being progressively implemented in motor registries across New South Wales.

This supervised on-road driving experience provides the novice driver with opportunities to drive in a wide range of weather conditions, traffic situations and driving environments. Overseas research suggests that a reduction in crashes in the first few years of driving can be achieved with over 100 hours of supervised on-road driving experience (Harrison 2003).

Research in the United States found that an extended learning period was followed by crash reductions of up to 16% (McKnight and Peck 2003). The minimum period as a learner driver in New South Wales was extended from six months to one year for new learner licences issued after 1 July 2007. This allows for all new Learner drivers under 25 years of age to spend one year gaining experience while supervised by a fully licensed driver.

New reforms were also introduced by the NSW Government on 1 July 2007 to reduce the exposure to risk-taking of drivers 25 years and under. These reforms include a licence suspension for any speeding offence, a ban on the use of all mobile phones and a peer-passenger restriction of one passenger between the hours of 11pm and 5am. These reforms are outlined in greater detail in Section 5.

2.2.1 Speeding

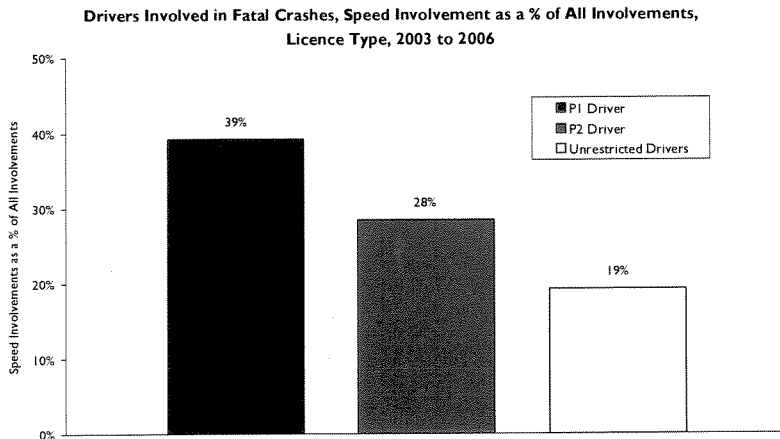
Speeding is the largest single behavioural factor in the cause of death and injury on our roads and contributing to 35 per cent of fatal crashes involving young people aged 17-25 years over the three year period (2004-2006) (Figure 4 See p.8). Note that these figures are based on speeding per vehicle involved. Thus, the overall contribution of speeding to fatal crashes is larger than these figures suggest, because of multiple vehicle crashes, in which one speeding vehicle results in the crash being classified as involving speed.

Observational studies indicate that young people drive faster than older people, a higher proportion of their traffic violations are for speeding, and excessive speed is cited as a factor in a higher proportion of their crashes (Williams and Ferguson 2002).

Research has shown that travelling at 5 km/h over the speed limit increases the risk of an injury crash by double, and the risk doubles again for each additional 5 km/h. Drivers travelling at higher speeds have less time to react to dangerous situations and in the event of a crash are likely to receive more severe injuries (Australian Transport Council 2006).

NSW crash data 2003-2006 identify that P Plate drivers in fatal crashes, particularly P1s, have a much higher involvement of excessive speed (Figure 5). The lower percentages cited here are due to single vehicle factor assignment because of multiple vehicle crashes, overall speed is involved in up to 40% of fatal crashes in New South Wales. Figure 5 (page 10) does not include learner drivers or unauthorised drivers (unlicensed drivers, driving while suspended, disqualified, cancelled or expired).

Figure 5



Provisional drivers are also over-represented in high range speeding infringements – with 7% of licences, P Platers accounted for 34% of all speeding infringements 30 km/h and above, and a staggering 41% of all speeding infringements 45 km/h and above (2003-2006).

As a novice driver, a P1 driver is developing their driving control, hazard perception skills and driving experience. Any increase in speed over the posted speed limit or driving at an inappropriate speed for the road condition places the Provisional (P1) driver and their passengers and other road users at substantially increased crash risk.

A licence suspension of at least 3 months for any Provisional (P1) driver or rider licence holder who commits any speeding offence came into effect on 1 July 2007. This reform seeks to provide immediate deterrent for unsafe behaviour with the intention that the early deterrence will influence their future behaviour.

2.2.2 Drink driving (Illegal alcohol –above the legal blood alcohol limit)

Alcohol plays a large role in young people's celebrations, and so may impact on their behaviour as drivers, pedestrians and passengers. Alcohol is a drug which affects skills, mood and behaviour. Just a few drinks increases Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) and as BAC increases, so does the risk of being involved in a crash:

- 0.05 – double the risk
- 0.08 – 7 times the risk
- 0.15 – 25 times the risk.

An analysis of the three year period (2004-2006) identified that although people aged under 26 comprise of one sixth of licence holders (driver and motorcycle licence holders) they represent 38% of the drink drivers involved in fatal crashes. A significant number of drink driving crashes occur in the country.

Novice drivers with any level of alcohol in their blood are at a much higher risk of crashing. This is why learner and provisional licence holders are restricted to a zero alcohol limit.

Getting back to zero (sobering up), takes time. No amount of coffee, food, physical activity or sleep will speed up the process. The RTA encourages young people to separate their drinking from their driving and to plan ahead and leave the car at home.

2.2.3 Driver fatigue

An analysis of the three year period (2004-2006) identified that although people aged under 26 comprise of one sixth of licence holders (driver and motorcycle licence holders) they represent 23% of all drivers involved in fatigue-related crashes.

Although the majority of fatigued drivers involved in fatal crashes are males, fatigue can affect any driver.

The risk of a fatal fatigue crash is highest between 10pm and 6am when the body's circadian rhythms are programming you to sleep - four times greater than for the rest of the day. Driving while sleep deprived, especially late at night and at dawn increases the risk of having a micro sleep and losing control of your vehicle. Driver fatigue crashes tend to be more severe compared to other road crashes as braking or other preventative measures may be absent.

Henderson (2002) reported that virtually all studies that analysed data by gender and age have found that young people, and males in particular, are more likely to be involved in fall-asleep crashes. A combination of having more risk factors and frequently being on the roads during night-time hours may explain the greater incidence of drowsiness-related crashes in youth. During adolescence, young people are learning, experimenting, taking risks, and testing limits, as well as keeping late hours and often socialising.

2.2.4 Non-use of seatbelts

The risk of injury to young road users is compounded by the fact that seatbelt use is lower in higher crash risk situations such as driving late at night or when drivers may have consumed alcohol. While overall seatbelt wearing rates remain very high in NSW (96.7%) about 20 % of fatally injured occupants were not wearing seatbelts.

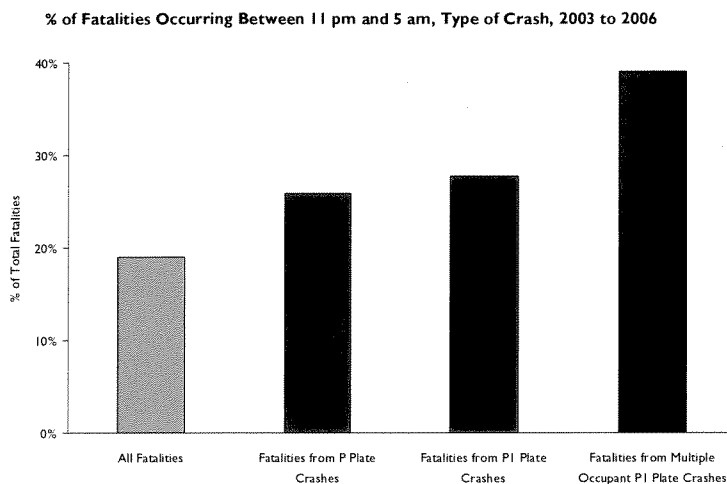
2.2.5 Night driving

Driving at night is associated with increased risk of serious crashes for young drivers. The driving task is more difficult at night, and risky driving, generally associated with recreational activities is more likely to occur at night (Williams and Preusser, 1997).

The high level of crashes involving young people at night could be because of a combination of factors, including a lack of adult supervision, inexperience, poorer visibility, fatigue and increased recreational driving and risk-taking (Senserrick and Whelan 2003).

Compared with other crashes, fatalities from P Plate crashes are more likely to occur during late evening/early morning hours, particularly for P Plate drivers with multiple passengers (Figure 6). The categories below are not mutually exclusive.

Figure 6



A peer-passenger restriction came into effect on 1 July 2007. This reform, of a peer-passenger restriction for Provisional (P1) drivers under 25 years, places a restriction of one passenger (under 21 years of age) between the hours of 11pm to 5am. This reform seeks to increase safety of young novice drivers and their passengers by reducing exposure to high risk situations late at night.

2.2.6 Multiple passengers

Lam, Norton, Woodward, Connor and Ameratunga (2003) reported that after adjusting for other risk factors, the odds of a car crash were 10 times greater among young drivers (under 25 years) when they carried two or more passengers in the same age group. This same research showed that the odds of an injury due to crashing were 15 times greater in equivalent circumstances. The noise and behaviour of passengers may distract drivers from the task of driving. Some passengers may encourage a driver to take risks and encourage involvement in high risk situations.

On 1 July 2007, the NSW Government introduced a peer-passenger restriction between 11pm and 5am for Provisional (P1 drivers). Sensible exemptions are allowed for work purposes, family members and community work.

The peer-passenger restriction for Provisional (P1) drivers seeks to increase safety of new drivers by minimising the effects of carrying several passengers at night. These effects include distraction, and the potential for increased risk-taking to impress passengers. For relevant research refer to Prabhaker, Lee and Job (1996).

2.2.7 Driver distraction

Learner and P1 drivers and provisional riders are developing their vehicle control and hazard perception skills. Mobile phone use can distract the novice drivers and riders from the driving task. Studies have found that using a mobile phone while driving is dangerous as it slows reaction times and interferes with a driver's perception skills and increases the chance of having a crash. A research study funded by the Motor Accidents Authority (MAA) identified that there is 400 per cent increase in the crash risk for novice drivers when using a mobile phone, whether it is hand-held or hands free. Driver simulator research on NSW drivers, by Haque, Hatfield and Job (2002) also showed significantly increased driving speed when using hands-free or hand-held phones.

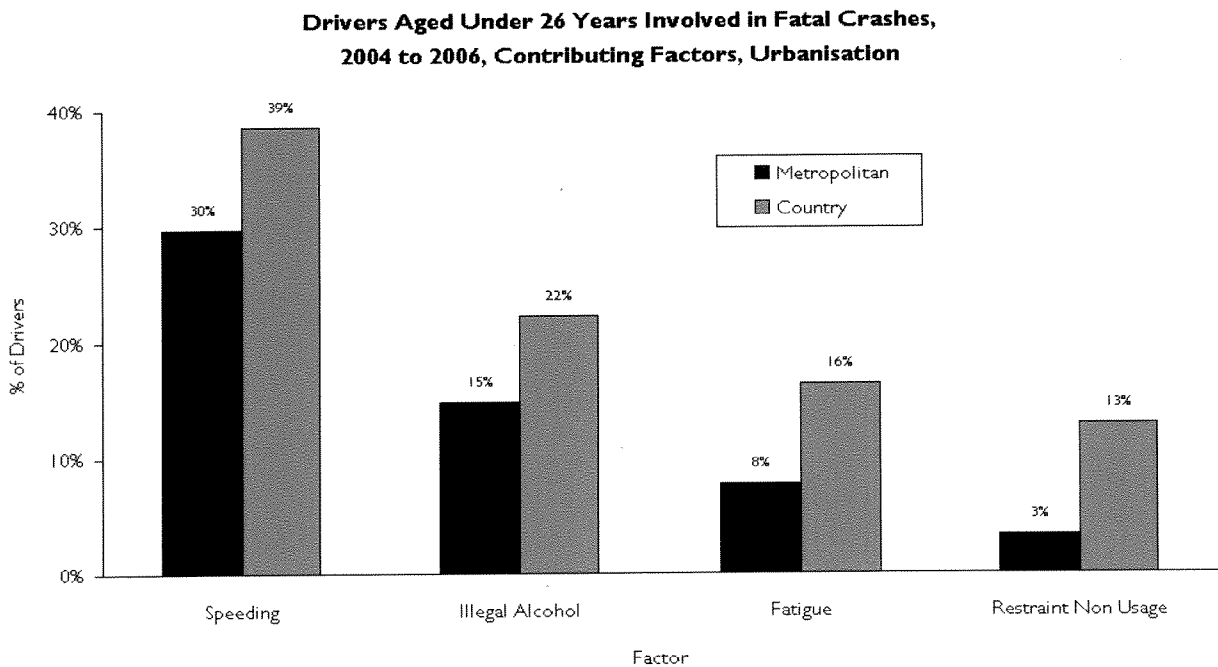
As of 1 July 2007, learner and provisional licence holders and provisional riders must not use any function of a mobile phone when driving or riding. This includes phones in the hands-free mode, or loud speaker operating, or sending SMS text messages. These drivers can only legally use a hands-free phone in a parked vehicle.

2.3 Differences in driving behaviour, crash outcomes and relevant trends in urban and rural areas of NSW

2.3.1 Location

Majority of the fatal crashes involving young people as drivers (aged under 26) occur close to home, usually within the local government area in which they live. An analysis of the major behavioural factors contributing to the fatal crash involvement of drivers under 26 years over the three year period (2004-2006) is outlined on the following page (Figure 7). A young driver living in rural New South Wales is at greater risk of being killed or injured than a young driver living in the Metropolitan areas of Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle.

Figure 7



2.3.2 Trends

NSW crash data of fatalities (2000-2006) and fatal crash data indicate a downward trend. Against this trend in 2006 was the significant increase in the fatal crash involvement of P plate drivers (Figure 8).

Preliminary data for 2007 indicates reduced fatalities of P1 drivers since the announcement of these new licence conditions for P plate drivers in January 2007.

Figure 8

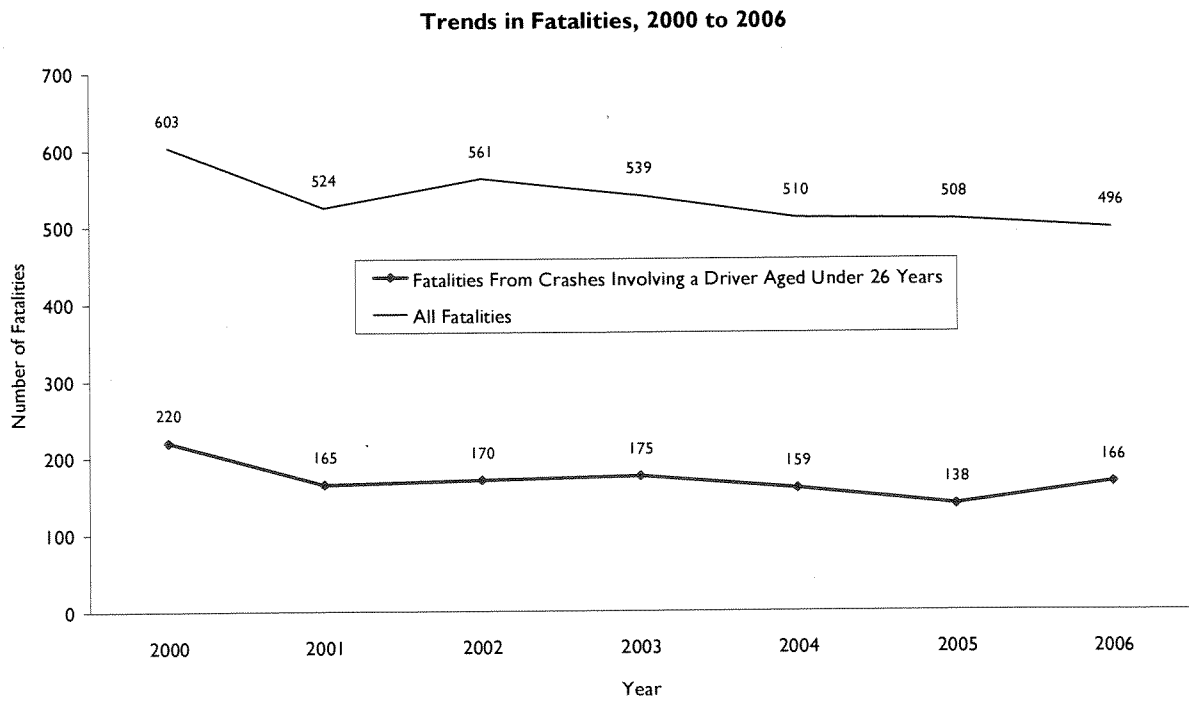
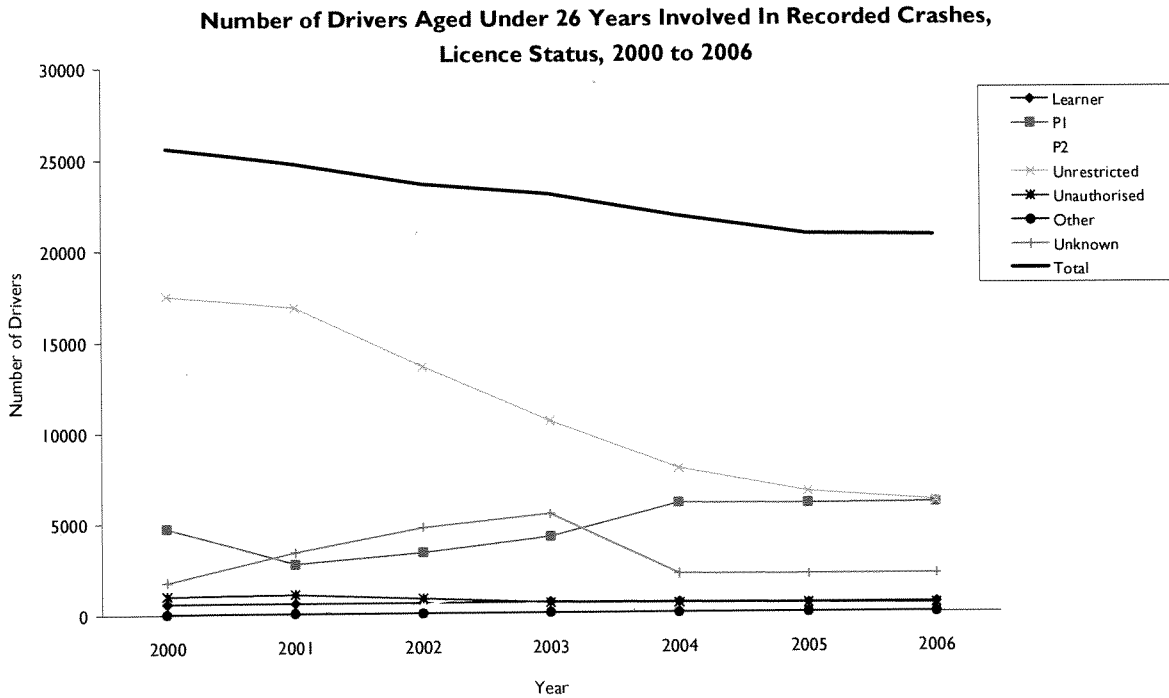


Figure 9



An analysis of recorded crashes over the period (2000-2006) shows a decline in the number of recorded crashes involving unrestricted licence holders under 26 years of age (Figure 9) since the introduction of the Graduated Licensing Scheme. The number of P1 and P2 drivers under 26 years of age involved in recorded crashes has remained relatively stable over the period 2004-2006 despite an increase in the number P1 licences issued over this same period (Figure 9).

However, fatal crash involvement of P drivers peaked in 2006, prompting the NSW Government to review the area of young driver safety and to introduce a range of reforms. These reforms are outlined in Section 5.

3. Young offender programs

3.1 NSW Sober Driver Program

The NSW Sober Driver Program (SDP) is a state-wide, whole of Government, nine-week educational program targeting repeat drink drivers. The SDP commenced in July 2003 and is the outcome of a comprehensive review of existing road safety interventions and international best practice in traffic offender programs. The SDP is fully funded by the RTA and delivered by the Department of Corrective Services through Probation and Parole. The program is delivered through 51 district offices from 63 locations across NSW and at different times throughout the year.

The SDP is not a diversionary program but forms part of the sentence for certain recidivist drink drivers. These offenders are referred to the program either by the court or a Probation and Parole Officer as part of a good behaviour bond. Whilst the program was not designed to specifically target young offenders, a proportion of SDP participants are young offenders.

A separate set of program resources has been specifically designed for participants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

A formal independent evaluation of the SDP conducted in 2006 has found that participants who complete the SDP were half as likely to re-offend within two years compared to offenders who did not complete the SDP. This outcome is clearly superior to results for community-based Traffic Offenders Program (TOPS).

3.2 Alcohol Interlock Program

The Alcohol Interlock Program is a court-ordered penalty for drink drivers that commenced in New South Wales on 8 September 2003. The program allows drivers convicted of certain major alcohol-related offences to suspend part of their licence disqualification period if they install an alcohol interlock device in their car and obtain an interlock driver licence. A car with an alcohol interlock fitted will not start unless a breath test is passed.

To participate in the program, an offender must be issued with an alcohol interlock order by the magistrate. An interlock order means that a driver can have a shorter disqualification period followed by a period of driving with an alcohol interlock fitted to their car if they choose to participate in the Alcohol Interlock Program. Drink drivers who have been given an interlock order but who do not join the program must serve out the full (longer) licence disqualification period.

3.3 Pilot driver education course for high range speeding offenders

The pilot STOP driver education course was developed by the RTA to target young speeding offenders under 25 years of age. Course content was based on findings of study conducted by NSW Injury Risk Management Centre for the RTA.

Two pilot courses were held in June 2007. A total of 28 newly licensed drivers under 25 years of age attended the courses over two consecutive weekends. The majority

of participants attending the pilot had received a traffic infringement notice for speeding and a small number had been disqualified from driving.

Preliminary results from an independent evaluation of the pilot course indicated that the STOP course positively influenced attitudes associated with speeding of many course participants. It appears from the results that the course did have an impact on participants' perception of the costs of speeding and the benefits of complying with speed limits. The results also indicate that course participants are able to recall more effective strategies to deal with driver anger one month after completing the course.

There are no results, however, to suggest that the course was successful in convincing students that by speeding they are more susceptible to being involved in a crash or more likely to be detected speeding by the Police. This is despite a reduction in the number of participants reporting that it is safe to travel over the speed limit.

3.4 Lismore Aboriginal Driver Education Pilot Program - On the road

The RTA funded the Lismore Aboriginal Driver Education Program 2002-2006 on a joint partnership basis between the New South Wales Attorney General's Department (Crime Prevention Division), and the Motor Accidents Authority (MAA). The program is developed and administered by Lismore Adult Community Education and is monitored by the New South Wales Attorney General's Department (Crime Prevention Division) and continues to operate.

The goal of the program is to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal people living in the far North Coast of New South Wales in the criminal justice system. The issue was identified by the Lismore Local Court Aboriginal Client Services Specialist and supported by research conducted by the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council including driver licensing information.

The program focuses on removing the barriers to gaining a licence through:

- Assistance with fine negotiations with the State Debt Recovery Office.
- Assistance with obtaining a birth certificate.
- Improving Aboriginal access to the Roads and Traffic Authority Driver Knowledge Test (DKT), through the installation of a modified computer program in more than 30 community organisations.
- Assistance with literacy and computer skills for Aboriginal people attempting to gain or regain their driving lessons.
- A Driver mentor program.
- Facilitating employment through driving skills and community networking.
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal Justice of the Peace.

In 2005, all agencies contributed to an independent evaluation of the program. The process evaluation shows the program has been successful in accessing North Coast Aboriginal communities across a broad geographical area and has assisted a number of participants to obtain their learner, probationary and light rigid (small bus or truck) licences (Clapham, Khavarpour, Ivers, and Stevenson, 2005).

4. Driver education programs

4.1 Definition of driver education

The RTA makes a clear distinction between driver education and driver training programs, particularly for novice drivers such as learner or provisional drivers. Driver education or safe driving programs for young drivers and passengers are identified as attitude-based programs that seek to influence the decisions that young people make as drivers or passengers. Such programs seek to address the motivational factors that influence driver behaviour. Driver training refers to (behind-the-wheel) driving instruction that focuses on driving skills.

While the NSW Government strongly supports road safety programs, it does not have a direct involvement in the development of driver education facilities or in the delivery of novice driver training programs. Research into advanced and defensive driver training courses have found that such courses can lead to higher crash involvement through over confidence and 'optimism bias' (drivers thinking they are invincible). Defensive courses tend to have less emphasis on emergency recovery and other car control skills and may include discussions of safe driving strategies. Nevertheless, as with advanced driver training, they are generally conducted on a racing circuit or off-street vehicle manoeuvring or skid pan area and are unlikely to address the real issues of driver attitude which is the underlying cause to novice driver involvement in road crashes rather than driver skill. An extensive scientific literature suggests no road safety benefit from these courses (Ker, Roberts, Collier, Beyer, Bunn and Frost 2003). However, this does not mean that there is no value in driver training per se, extensive on-road supervised practice may be helpful

4.2 National Novice Driver Programme Trial

There has been significant research that suggests that advanced driving skills such as skid control and emergency braking techniques can lead to over-confidence in experienced drivers (Harrison 2003).

Research shows that traditional approaches to driver training world-wide have produced no clear evidence of success. Most conventional driver training tends to focus on developing car control skills and dealing with relatively rare events such as driving emergencies. In fact a number of evaluations have found that advanced and defensive driver training courses often lead to an increase in crashes.

In view of the above, the Australian, NSW and Victorian Governments jointly announced in December 2004 plans to develop, fund and trial a post-licence driver education programme, in partnership with the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI), the Insurance Australia Group (IAG) and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV). The aim of the project is to achieve a statistically significant reduction in the number and or severity of crashes experienced by novice through a programme addressing the real underlying causes of crashes such as risk-taking behaviour and lack of hazard perception skills.

The framework of the trial programme was developed by leading Australian and overseas road safety experts, is based on the latest research and aims to achieve behavioural change in novice drivers. In addition, it draws on the experience of a Swedish Insight Programme and the Finnish Stage Two Programme which have shown some evidence of being able to achieve crash/risk reduction. These programmes focus on self-awareness, knowing one's limits and reducing personal risk and place little emphasis on skill and vehicle control. The Australian programme aims to build and improve on these programs by considering the latest research and thinking in adult education in an Australian context.

As a result a scientifically rigorous, large scale, evaluation trial is being undertaken to establish the true safety benefits of such a programme. This large scale trial will involve 28,000 novice drivers in NSW and Victoria over a two and a half year period in a scientific experiment with a budget of \$10 million. This trial is aiming to break new ground in providing a rigid evaluation and yet is based on the world's best research and expertise. Given its large scale, cost and complexity, the trial is an unprecedented Australian initiative and one of the largest initiatives of its kind ever undertaken in the world.

The programme consists of a number of classroom and in-vehicle based modules and will target drivers who have held a Provisional (P1) licence for up to three months. The trial will be conducted in New South Wales and Victoria. To measure statistically significant reductions in crashes, the trial requires a minimum of 7,000 P1 licence holders in each state to undertake the training (delivered over 12 months) and an additional 7,000 P1 licence holders in each state as a comparison group. Following completion of the training programme, both groups would be monitored for up to 15 months to obtain data required for programme evaluation.

This long term project is managed by a Steering Committee of all funding partners including representatives from the RTA. The key project components such as the development and trialling of the curriculum, recruitment of participants, delivery of programme modules and evaluation will be delivered by a number of specialist organisations selected through a tender process.

After extensive research the programme curriculum is being finalised and should be completed and piloted by early 2008. Tender documentation for recruitment of novice drivers and delivery of the program is being finalised. At the same time, negotiations are proceeding with a preferred tenderer to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the program.

Recruitment of trial participants is expected to commence in the second half of 2008, with training of participants concluding in late 2009 and the final evaluation report being finalised in 2011.

4.3 Curriculum-based driver education in New South Wales schools

The RTA invests \$2.8 million annually in the NSW Road Safety Education Program. Road safety is taught as a component of the school curriculum in an ongoing, planned and sequential manner from Kindergarten to Year 10.

Road safety education deals with the behaviours of all road users. Students use roads as passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. Driver education in New South Wales schools is delivered as a component of road safety education. Driver education is part of the NSW Board of Studies Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) 7-10 syllabus which is mandatory curriculum for all government and non-government high schools.

The NSW School Road Safety Education Program has been developed by the RTA through agreements with the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Catholic Education Commission (CEC) and the Association of Independent Schools in NSW. The Program has developed comprehensive road safety education curriculum resources for young people from Early Childhood through to Year 12. The RTA, in cooperation with these education agencies, has produced an extensive range of high quality curriculum-based resources for teachers to address road safety education issues. To ensure equity for all students these resources are provided to all schools free of charge.

Mandatory school-based PDHPE programs in which road safety education is a component focus on the development of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours to enable students to make informed decisions as road users. Road safety education is provided to students by classroom teachers, who understand the learning needs of their students and who provide age-appropriate and ongoing road safety education throughout their schooling. As professional educators, teachers, can deliver learning experiences to meet the learning needs of their students.

Delivery of road safety education by teachers, with full awareness of the learning abilities and needs of their students is superior to presentations by well-intentioned non-teacher presenters.

The RTA NSW Road Safety Education Program is based on research and addresses the student's needs in a well-planned and detailed manner. Materials accommodate a variety of learning styles and include resources appropriate to the student's developmental stage and interests. Road safety teaching and learning by the classroom teacher is also coordinated with other components of a well-planned curriculum, achieving the best possible learning outcomes. The messages delivered to students in the classroom are also delivered to parents and carers through take home notes and brochures – a crucial component of the program.

Road safety education consultants in all education agencies, as well as the Access Macquarie Limited (Macquarie University) Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program are fully funded by the RTA to work with educators, teachers and school communities in providing policy advice, curriculum support and professional development.

In 2007, resources have also been designed to support mandatory curriculum Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and Higher School Certificate English.

The RTA school curriculum resources for secondary schools are:**1. Road Risks - Your Choice, Years 7-8 (Stage 4)**

Road Risks - Your Choice contains a variety of teaching/learning activities highlighting key road safety messages for 12 to 14 year olds. Activities focus on risk behaviours, decision making and personal responsibility when using the road, and include an interactive CD ROM, a video (provided in both VHS and DVD formats) and a range of individual and group activities encouraging higher order thinking. All activities support the outcomes of the *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Syllabus 7-10 in NSW*. The resource was released to secondary school schools in April 2004 through a professional development program for NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) teachers provided by the three major education agencies.

This curriculum resource was based on the RTA research report *Preliminary Research to inform the development of a road safety education resource for students in Years 7 and 8*. The RTA also worked in partnership with the NSW Board of Studies to ensure that the resource design was consistent with elements of the new Personal Development, Health and Physical Education 7-10 syllabus.

2. Shifting Gears, Years 9-10 (Stage 5)

Shifting Gears is a road safety education program for Stage 5 students (Years 9 and 10) in NSW high schools. The program contains a variety of teaching/learning activities highlighting key road safety messages for 15 - 16 year olds. *Shifting Gears* is a collaborative project between RTA and NRMA Motoring and Services, and is based on the NRMA's SHIFT 2nd Gear CD Rom.

Activities focus on the complexity of driving, factors which contribute to crashes, risk behaviours, decision making and personal responsibility when using the road. All activities support the outcomes of the *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Syllabus 7-10 in NSW*. The resource was released to high schools in October 2004 through a professional development program for NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) teachers provided by the three major education agencies.

3. In the driver's seat – the nature of authority Year 11 Preliminary HSC English (Stage 6)

In the driver's seat: the nature of authority is a road safety education curriculum resource for Year 11 (Preliminary HSC) English students in NSW secondary schools.

It contains a variety of teaching/learning activities developed around texts from the RTA marketing campaigns to address the learning outcomes for the Stage 6 Preliminary English Curriculum (Standard, Advanced and English as a Second language) in NSW. All activities support the outcomes of the Stage 6 English Syllabus, NSW.

The resource has been designed for students who are at the age where many of them wish to learn to drive and seeks to assist them to

- familiarise themselves with issues of driving safely;
- consider the nature of authority and freedom in a civil society;
- develop a sense of responsibility towards self-regulation.

The resource was released to high schools in July 2007 through a professional development program for NSW English teachers provided state-wide by the NSW English Teachers' Association.

The RTA is presently developing a new young driver/passenger resource to target students in Stage 5 and Stage 6 to support school-based Student Welfare, Pastoral Care and Personal Development and Health school-based programs. This resource has been developed to support teaching and learning about driver/passenger safety.

This resource has been developed and piloted in high schools in 2007 and is expected to be released for professional development to teachers during 2008.

It is always tempting to assume that young people would be safer drivers if they received supervised driver training through their schools, rather than only educational (and attitudinal change) materials. However, the evidence does not support this assumption. Rigorous evaluations of such school-based driver training have failed to show road safety benefits and in some cases disbenefits were revealed. We may speculate about the causes of these results. First, with access at school, students may start driving sooner, and thus at a less emotionally mature stage of life. Second, conducting lessons in a school context mostly associated with peers (i.e. school friends) rather than from home, may encourage the association between driving and peer demands. Third, once these teen drivers leave school, social demands for responsible driving from teachers may be left behind, where the social demands associated with family last much longer. While some evidence supports the first account, the others remain untested and extremely difficult to submit to rigorous evaluation. Nevertheless, while we do know not the causes, we do know that such programs do yield road safety gains.

4.4 Driver education in TAFE NSW

In 2004, the RTA established a partnership with TAFE NSW Access and General Education Curriculum Centre. This partnership resulted in the development of Shifting up a Gear with TAFE NSW. This is a road safety education resource to support the delivery of driver education through TAFE NSW general education courses.

Activities focus on the complexity of driving, factors which contribute to crashes, risk behaviours, decision making and personal responsibility when using the road. The RTA conducted a driver education professional development workshop for teachers at the TAFE NSW Access and General Education Curriculum Conference.

In 2007, a new TAFE NSW/RTA catalogue of resources has been developed for distribution to TAFE teachers. The catalogue provides TAFE teachers with an overview of the range of RTA resources, brochures and website links that are

available to communicate road safety and safe driving messages to young people attending TAFE NSW programs.

4.5 Education for young people in youth centres and professionals working with young people

Youthsafe is a not-for-profit organisation committed to the prevention of serious injuries to young people aged 15-25. Youthsafe is funded by the RTA and Northern Sydney Central Coast Health, NSW Health.

The RTA funds Youthsafe to research and develop projects to communicate safe driving messages to young people, professionals working with youth and parents. Youthsafe projects are designed to complement RTA programs through an annual agreed action plan.

Youthsafe has developed the following young driver projects:

Young driver fact sheet: A four page booklet for youth professionals identifying young driver research (1999).

Young driver incentives: A research paper based youth focus group discussions (2000).

The Everyday Program: A one hour workshop facilitated by Youthsafe presenters for students in Years 7-10 to explore travel risk in day to day experiences(2002).

Helping Teenagers Become Safer Drivers: A double-sided information sheet for parents and or young people (2003). This resource is also available in Arabic and Chinese. Updated in 2007.

A set of postcards about driver and passenger safety to be used for youth community events. The postcards highlight issues related to driver and passenger safety and encourage young people to discuss and act on these road safety issues (2004). These were updated in 2007.

Developing safe celebrating: Strategies for young people: A booklet providing youth professionals with an overview of research and best practice programs to consider when developing safe celebrating programs for young people (2004).

If you want to know what we think, just ask us: A booklet outlining a guide to consult with young people when developing youth injury prevention programs (2004).

Youthsafe website information for health professionals, parents and young people was developed in 2003 and updated in 2006.

Safer Celebrating: A double-sided information sheet for parents and or young people that addresses strategies for safer celebrating (2006).

What's the plan: A one hour workshop facilitated by Youthsafe presenters for students in Years 9-10 to explore travel and personal safety (2006). This program is supported

by a DVD containing a range of scenarios and lessons. The resource has been specifically designed to be used by youth workers and TAFE teachers.

4.6 Community-based safe driving programs

In 2002, the RTA developed and released guidelines as a reference document for professionals and community members in the development, planning and assessing of safe driving programs for novice driver and passengers. The guidelines entitled *Principles of Effective Community-Based Safe Driving Programs for Novice Drivers and Passengers; 2002* were informed by world-wide research and sought to reinforce principles of best practice. The guidelines were distributed to school principals, local government road safety officers, policy and program development officers of government agencies working in road safety and youth such as the Motor Accidents Authority (MAA), NSW Police, NSW Health and Transport.

These guidelines were developed in response to the emerging number of community groups seeking to provide safe driving programs. The guidelines sought to communicate what works and doesn't in driver education based on review of the current research in the area of driver education.

The RTA in collaboration with the MAA, part-funded two community-based safe driving programs in Lismore and Northern-Western Sydney so that the program evaluations could be undertaken. Both programs provided a series of presentations by outside presenters to high school students at a one day excursion venue. While the evaluation studies highlighted that both programs raised community awareness of the need for young driver safety, neither program could demonstrate any long-term effect on young driver behaviour.

The impact of such programs on attitudes, knowledge and driving behaviour has been established as adjunct strategies to laws and enforcement strategies such impact occurs only if they take into account target group characteristics, appropriate message content and educational technology (The National Committee for Injury Prevention and Control, 1989.) These findings stress the importance of educational approaches being the responsibility of professional educators who are in tune with the target group characteristics, their cognitive development and available educational practices and technology. Even the best intentioned presenters from outside are less likely to be effective as teachers.

5. Other initiatives to improve young driver safety

5.1 Establishment of the NSW Government Young Drivers Advisory Panel

In 2006, the NSW road toll was a record low since World War Two, but defying that trend fatalities involving P plate drivers significantly increased. In response to this tragic increase, the NSW Government convened an expert advisory panel to look at ways we can improve the safety of young drivers and in particular to examine the issue of passenger restrictions. The panel examined a range of research and evidence and received presentations from youth professionals and road safety researchers.

The Young Drivers Advisory Panel included representatives from the Roads and Traffic Authority, NSW Police, Motor Accidents Authority, the NSW Parliament's Staysafe Committee, Commission for Children and Young People, NSW Youth Advisory Council, NRMA and the community.

The Panel's terms of reference were to:

- consider information which will contribute to a reduction in the involvement of novice drivers in road crashes.
- examine a range of issues such as review of passenger restrictions, driver offences and licensing conditions of provisional drivers.
- use an evidenced-based approach and consider the geographic, social and economic factors for young people and the wider community.

The panel was established in November and met four times before providing a report recommending a range of initiatives for the NSW Government to consider. The Panel examined a range of issue such as a review of passenger restrictions, driver offences and licensing conditions of provisional drivers.

On 10 January 2007, the Minister for Roads announced a range of reforms to be introduced by the RTA by 1 July 2007. The new licence restrictions are outlined in Section 5:2.

5.2 New licence restrictions for learner and provisional licence holders

On 1 July 2007, a number of novice driver safety initiatives came into effect. The initiatives are:

- A peer-passenger restriction for P1 drivers under 25 years of age (only carrying one passenger aged under 21 from 11pm to 5am),
- Licence suspension of at least 3 months for provisional P1 driver and rider licence holders who commit any speeding offence,
- The mandating of the clear display of L and P plates on the exterior of the vehicle,
- The creation of a new offence to ban all mobile phone use (including hands-free) for learner and provisional P1 drivers and riders).
- An increase in the mandatory period of supervised driving for learner drivers from 50 to 120 hours which includes at least 20 hours of night driving,
- An increase of the minimum tenure period for learner drivers under 25 (from six to 12 months) before they can apply for a provisional licence and,
- The validity of the learner's licence will be extended from three to five years.

A communication and direct mail campaign to learner and provisional drivers and riders supported the introduction of these changes.

All Learner drivers seeking to obtain a Provisional Licence (P1) are required to undergo a new extensive driving test that focuses on hazard perceptions and driver reaction. The test has been designed to assess that the applicant has had extensive driver experience and has developed competent and safe driving skills for a demanding driving environment. The new driving test is being progressively rolled out in motor registries across NSW.

5.3 The NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS)

The following requirements have been implemented to improve the safety of novice drivers since the introduction of the GLS in July 2000. The GLS places a strong emphasis on competencies and safety. Novice drivers are required to pass through four tests and three licensing stages before obtaining an unrestricted driver licence. A range of restrictions are placed on Learner, Provisional (P1) and Provisional (P2) licence holders.

- A mandatory number of hours of on-road driving experience while a learner driver;
- A minimum period of 12 months on a P1 licence;
- A maximum of 3 demerit points allowed on a P1;
- A mandatory hazard perception test before progressing to P2;
- A minimum period of 24 months on a P2 licence;
- A maximum of 6 demerit points allowed on a P2;
- A mandatory driver qualification test (DQT) before progressing to an unrestricted licence.
- A zero blood alcohol limit for all L, P1 and P2 licence holders (May 2004);
- A ban on L and P drivers carrying passengers in the boot of the car (July 2003) and

- A ban on L and P drivers carrying more passengers than the number of available seatbelts (July 2003).

In November, 2004 NSW Government released the Improving safety for young drivers: An options paper for community comment. A formal consultation period with the community and road safety stakeholders continued until February 2005.

Further licence restrictions were introduced on 11 July 2005.

- A ban prohibiting P1 and P2 licence holders from driving certain high-powered vehicles including eight cylinder, turbo-charged, supercharged and modified vehicles;
- A limit of one passenger for 12 months for any P1 and P2 driver who loses their licence due to disqualification for a serious driving offence. This passenger restriction applies when the licence is re-issued.

5.4 Educational resources for Learner drivers and their supervisors

The NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) focuses on development of on-road driving experience through supervision in the learner driver phase in a variety of road environments and traffic conditions. As of 1 July, 2007 new learner licence holders are required to undertake 120 hours of on-road driving experience, including a minimum of 20 hours of night-time driving. This on-road driving experience is supported by a range of RTA educational publications such as a new Learner Driver Log Book (with defined learning goals and content) and the booklet about the new driving test entitled A guide to the Driving Test.

The Road Users' Handbook now features new sections on road safety issues and low risk driving.

The RTA provides information to students and parents through the website and various publications to assist them to choose a suitable driving instructor. This information recommends students look for instructors who have completed the Beyond Test Routes workshops. The RTA website also provides information on driving instructor pass rates as a guide to learner drivers of instructor performance.

In October 2007, the RTA released a Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers information pack for distribution through RTA Motor Registries. The pack contains information about the key road safety issues and messages of relevance for novice drivers such as roadside drug testing, the zero blood alcohol limit, medicine use and driving and mobile phone use. This information pack seeks to increase young driver awareness of key road safety issues and is distributed with the issue of a learner licence.

5.5 Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers workshops for supervisors of learner drivers

The RTA supports supervisors and parents of learner drivers through the delivery of Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers workshops across local government areas of New South Wales. These two hour workshops conducted by local council road safety officers or RTA staff provide practical advice about the role of the

supervising driver and how to plan on-road driving experiences for a learner driver. This workshop actively encourages parents and family members to provide ongoing supervision and support for young drivers in the early years of driving.

Workshop sessions include information, discussion and activities about new licence conditions for learner and provisional drivers, young driver issues, the importance of supervised on-road driving practice, the principles of low risk driving, developing a partnership between the supervisor and learner, resources and other assistance, as well as, planning and support beyond the learner phase.

89% of the participants attending the workshops are parents of learner drivers.

5.6 Road safety campaigns targeting the behaviour of young drivers

In 2005, the RTA developed a cinema advertising youth campaign entitled Notes to target the issue of speeding. This campaign consisted of a series of "last notes or messages" of young people who had died as a result of speeding while driving. The key message Please slow down was also reinforced in magazines and TAFE publications.

A high-profile television advertising campaign Paranoia Driving reinforced the message to the community about state-wide random breath testing by NSW Police and the consequences of drink driving. The RTA's drink driving campaign, 'The brain', continues a recent trend of scientific-based ads to explain road safety issues and how drinking kills driving skills. High tech graphics are used to show how alcohol affects the brain and the ability to coordinate movement, make sensible judgements and deal with complex problems.

In January 2007, the Daily Telegraph, NRMA in cooperation with the NSW Government released the Young Driver Safety booklet to the New South Wales community. This publication was distributed as an insert in the Sunday Telegraph and provided information to the general public on young driver safety issues including car safety ratings. The RTA distributed bulk copies of the publication to all NSW high schools.

In January 2007, the RTA launched an advertising campaign to support a state-wide Police enforcement program targeting speeding P plate drivers and motor-cycle riders. The campaign consisted of two 15 second television commercials, one showing a Police officer booking a P-plate driver, the other showing the same officer attending a fatal crash. The key message of the advertisements 'Please slow down' was reinforced through state-wide outdoor advertising.

In February, 2007, the RTA sought to engage young people in discussion about road safety and driving issues through participation in the on-line Pimp My Ads poster design competition. Entrants (15-25 years) researched a road safety issue and developed a slogan and image to communicate a road safety action-based message. The winning slogan "Should have crashed at a mates" reinforced the need to plan strategies and to separate drinking and driving.

In June 2007, the RTA launched a further advertising campaign to increase the social unacceptability of speeding. The campaign message No one thinks big of you targets the unacceptability of speeding. The campaign elements include television, cinema, outdoor advertising and press. While the advertisement depicts young P plate drivers, it was designed to create a talking point for the wider community concerning the road safety issue of speeding. The key message of the campaign has been further reinforced through localised promotional road shows in major regional centres with spokesperson, Imogen Bailey.

In July 2007, the NSW Government provided a grant to Rotary Youth Driver Awareness Incorporated (RYDA) to support program delivery to high school students in Western and South-Western Sydney. RYDA coordinate the delivery of a one day excursion for senior high school students to attend sessions related to driver and passenger safety. The RYDA Program provided an opportunity to promote the new Learner and Provisional licence conditions to young drivers.

5.7 Training programs for driving instructors

The RTA has been working closely with the Australian Driver Trainer Association (ADTA) towards enhancing the contribution driving instructors are able to make towards roads safety. For several years now the RTA and ADTA have jointly conducted professional development workshops for driving instructors. The workshops, called 'Beyond Test Routes', are aimed at helping driving instructors to teach hazard perceptions skills to learner drivers. To ensure driving instructors are of the highest standard, the Driving Instructors Act specifies a number of prerequisites for new licence applicants, including training.

In 1990, the RTA standardised the training requirement for new driving instructors with introduction of the Certificate III in Driving Instruction. The standard was raised in 2002 with NSW upgrading the course to Certificate IV level. Since the development in NSW of the Certificate IV course most other states have adopted this higher standard.

As the accreditation of the Certificate IV course expires in December 2007 it was agreed by Austroads that a new national course be developed as a replacement. The project is on schedule and the new national course will be implemented across Australia early in 2008.

The new national course which is linked to the Transport and Logistic training package, raises the standard and provides opportunities for traineeships.

5.8 Roadside drug testing

Safe driving requires clear judgement, concentration and being able to react to what happens on the road. Drugs affect all of these. Roadside drug testing was introduced into New South Wales in 2007. Police now have the powers to carry out roadside drug testing on any rider, driver or supervising licence holder in NSW.

5.9 Future directions

The NSW Road Safety Centre will be fully operational in early January 2008. The key priority for the Centre is to work with all stakeholders to achieve the State Plan target to reduce road fatalities to 0.7 per 100 million VKT by 2016. The Centre will also seek to continue to reduce the road toll in absolute terms. Other key performance targets for the Centre are currently being developed.

The RTA is adopting the safe systems approach under the name of Safe Systems Partnership, to emphasise the responsibility of road users and our partner agencies in addition to a safe systems approach. This approach accepts that human error will occur and needs to be accommodated by the road and surrounds, to minimise both crash likelihood and severity of consequences. The adoption of the safe systems approach has been a key area of success in the best performing international jurisdictions such as Sweden and The Netherlands.

In NSW this approach is being achieved through the provision of warnings of error (such as profile line markings or rumble strips), more road shoulder width to correct errors, and the removal or protection (through wire rope or other barriers) of roadside hazards which are likely to produce serious injury. Wire rope median barriers also accommodate errors such as loss of control into the opposing carriageway, by reducing the likely consequences of such an error to hitting the wire rope and being re-directed back to the correct side of the road.

The upgrading of our highways to dual carriageway also provides significant safety benefits though minimising head on crashes and provides wider road shoulders and better alignment.

The safe systems approach has formed part of the road safety reviews (and subsequent safety works) on the Pacific Highway (North of Hexham) and Princes Highway (South of Yallah) in NSW. These reviews and works have saved many lives. For example, for the Pacific Highway, fatalities reduced from 55 in 2003 (the year the review started) to 25 in 2006. For the Princes Highway, fatalities reduced from 24 in 2004 (the year the review started) to 4 in 2006. An analysis and detailed inspection of the Newell Highway has commenced as part of the review of the Highway.

The Centre is also broadly supportive of the actions outlined within the National Road Safety Strategy, which was developed by the Federal Government in consultation with Australian states and territories. The Strategy aims to reduce Australia's annual road fatality rate by at least 40 per cent over the decade to 2010, from 9.3 road deaths per 100,000 population to no more than 5.6.

6. References

- Australian Transport Council 2006: *National Road Safety Action Plan 2007 and 2008*. Australian Transport Safety Bureau, Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services. Canberra, ACT, Australia.
- Clapham, K., Khavarpour, F., Ivers, R., & Stevenson, M.: *An evaluation of the Lismore driver education program*. The George Institute for International Health and Yorrang Garang: School of Indigenous Health Studies, The University of Sydney. New South Wales, Australia, 2005.
- Gregerson, N, Nyberg A and Berg H, Accident involvement among learner drivers: an analysis of the consequences of supervised practice. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 35 725-730, 2003.
- Haque M.;Hatfield J, and Job.R.F.S.: The effects of mobile phone use on stimulated driving Press release, 2002.
- Harrison, W.; *NRMA report on review of novice driver road safety programs*, NRMA Motoring and Services, Sydney, 2003.
- Henderson, M.: *Road deaths and injuries among children and young people in rural New South Wales*. Report prepared for the Motor Accidents Authority of New South Wales, 2002.
- Hunter, K., Alcock, J., and Elkington, J.: *A guide to developing 'Safe Celebrating' strategies for young people*, 2004
- Job, R.F.S.: The psychology of driving and road safety. *Current Issues in Road Safety Research and Practice*. J. Clark (Ed.). (Pp21-55). EMU Press, Armidale, 1999.
- Ker, K., Roberts, I., Collier., Beyer F., Bunn F and Frost, C.: Post-licence driver education for the prevention of road traffic crashes. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews Issue 3*, 2003.
- Lam L, Norton R, Woodward M, Connor J and Ameratunga S.: Passenger carriage and car crash injury: a comparison between younger and older drivers. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. Vol 35 p 861-867, 2003.
- McKnight, A.J., and Peck, R.C.: Graduated driver licensing and safer driving. *Journal of Safety Research*, 34, 85-89.
- (The) National Committee for Injury Prevention and Control: *Injury Prevention-Meeting the Challenge* (pp131), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989.
- Prabhakar, T., Lee, S.H.V., and R.F.S.: Risk Taking, optimism bias and risk utility in young drivers. L. St.John (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Road Safety Research and Enforcement Conference*. (pp.61-68). Sydney, NSW: Roads & Traffic Authority of NSW, 1996.

Senserrick, T and Whelan, and M.: *Graduated Driver Licensing: Effectiveness of systems and individual components*, Monash University Accident Research Centre, Report#209, 2003.

Williams, A.F.: Teenage drivers – patterns of risk. *Journal of Safety Research*; 34 (1): 5-15, 2003.

Williams, A.F., and Ferguson, S. A.: Rationale for graduated licensing and the risks it should address. *Injury Prevention*; 8 (Suppl II):ii9–ii16, 2002.

Williams A.F., and Preusser D.F.: Night driving restrictions for youthful drivers: a literature review and commentary. *J Public Health Policy*; 18:334–45,1997.