

**Submission
No 1**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

Name: Mr Rob Laidlaw

Date Received: 30/11/2016

I am fortunate in that I learned to drive in paddocks and in the early days, I drove on a lot of dirt roads, so I learned car control. I have also been driving for over 50 years now and in my lifetime I have probably driven over 1.5 million kilometres.

In that time, I have witnessed a lot of crashes and near misses on the road and seen the aftermath of many more in the media.

From what I have seen, several things seem to be rather obvious to me:-

1. Under 25s seem to be more competitive and like to drive flat out a lot of the time.
2. The under 25 demographic seems to be over represented in the road toll
3. Crashes involving under 25s often involve long skid marks, indicating a lack of car control that led to a possibly avoidable crash.
4. It is often very difficult to discourage younger drivers from engaging in hooning and street racing.
5. From numerous conversations I have heard within this demographic, it seems that they all have a goal of attaining a full licence, which is seen as a status symbol of considerable importance.

I would like to suggest a simple but possibly inexpensive way of reducing the road toll among this demographic.

Based on the observations mentioned in point number 3, 4 and 5, I would like to suggest an incentive programme to address these points and to harness these traits in a productive way.

I believe that if a further level of competence was to be introduced to recognise and reward drivers with above average car control skills, this could be something that is very attractive to them, particularly if they could progress to a "full licence" upon attaining such a level of competence (as noted in point 5). This could possibly be enhanced with a discount on insurance to such drivers. I'm sure the major insurers would be keen to reduce the carnage on our roads and might contribute significantly to such a scheme. I dare say that many motor sport personalities would probably be prepared to lend their credibility to such a scheme as well.

I simply propose that a specifically designed competency test involving such things as skid control high speed driving skills, etc be developed to evaluate drivers. Those that pass the necessary test could then by-pass the red and green "P" plates and go on to a "full, or black" licence which is seen by many youngsters as a badge of honour. This could be reinforced by allowing such drivers to display a special "P" plate on their cars. The benefits of this would be to announce to other drivers that these drivers will not participate in races etc, because under my proposal, there would also be one major disincentive contained in the scheme to further discourage bad driving – that ANY misdemeanour whatsoever would result in immediate cancellation of the "full" licence combined with the usual financial penalties for the offence they have committed. Ad campaigns aimed at further honouring such drivers could reinforce good driving by encouraging others to participate in the programme, rather than trying to impress by driving in a dangerous manner. Obviously the double demerits scheme operating during critical time is effective, so it follows that a similar scheme could be beneficial in my programme.

If we can curtail the desire for young people to speed and participate in other unlawful activities on the roads, then others that may be inclined to race would have a much smaller audience to play to.

Finally, skills could be further honed on special track days conducted in association with high profile motor sports personalities. This could reinforce their abilities in a safe way while further promoting their status as good drivers.

I have mentioned this idea before, but those that seem to be more engaged in cheque book measures such as bigger fines, etc have dismissed it out of hand, saying it will only promote poor driving, rather than curtail it. This to me is a very blinkered approach to a significantly costly (in terms of life and limb) problem. Even if we only save a few lives to begin with, I believe we may be able to achieve an exponential result in future years.

Surely any scheme designed to increase driving skills and at the same time reduce the desire of younger drivers to indulge in undesirable, or illegal driving practices has to be worthy of further consideration and rather than dismiss the idea, I urge you to consult with people like police accident investigations units, psychologists and other professionals to refine the idea.