

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

Name: Mr Andrew Johnson
Organisation: Advocate for Children and Young People
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Mr Greg Aplin
Chair, Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety)
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Email: staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Aplin,

The Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the Inquiry into Driver Education, Training and Road Safety (the Inquiry) in NSW.

About ACYP

ACYP is an independent statutory appointment overseen by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People. ACYP advocates for and promotes the safety, welfare, well-being and voice of all children and young people aged 0-24 years, with a focus on the needs of those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged.

Under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, our activities include:

- making recommendations to Parliament, government and non-government agencies on legislation, policies, practices and services that affect children and young people;
- promoting children and young people's participation in activities and decision-making about issues that affect their lives;
- conducting research into children's issues and monitoring children's well-being;
- holding inquiries into important issues relating to children and young people;
- providing information to help children and young people; and
- preparing, in consultation with the Minister responsible for youth, a three-year, whole-of-government Strategic Plan for Children and Young People (Plan). The inaugural Plan was launched in July 2016.

Further information about ACYP's work can be found at: www.acyp.nsw.gov.au

Comment

ACYP supports the broad range of initiatives undertaken by the NSW Government to ensure the safety of children and young people on NSW roads, including measures to improve the safety of learner and provisional drivers through the Graduated License System. The Advocate has provided input to, and is supportive of, the NSW Government submission to this Inquiry.

In addition to the comments provided in the NSW Government submission, ACYP has specific comments to make in relation to recent changes to mobile phone road rules under the Graduated License System.

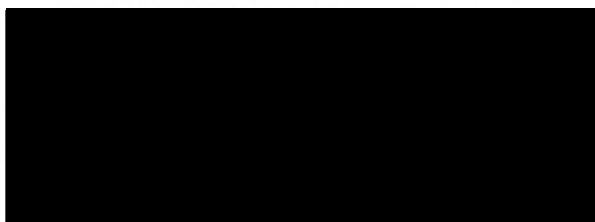
Under the rules, Learner, P1 and P2 license holders are not permitted to use a mobile phone at all while driving. This includes using the audio playing function and as a navigation aid. ACYP is cognisant of the fact that mobile phone use can distract novice drivers and supports the introduction of restrictions on learner and provisional license holders from handling a mobile phone while driving. ACYP is concerned however that the blanket restriction on mobile phone use can have unintended consequences which disproportionately affect young people.

Young people have told ACYP that while they are supportive of restrictions on handling a phone while driving, many young people need to use phone GPS to navigate to work sites, and navigational systems and bluetooth for cars are expensive and out of reach for many young people. Many young people also access music from their mobile phones rather than the radio, and there are issues, especially in regional areas, with GPS and radio not being able to pick up signals. For those who drive long distances, those in regional areas and young people who cannot afford multiple devices, the rules can cause disadvantage.

ACYP recommends that consideration be given to allowing certain activities such as charging, navigation, and listening to music if the mobile phone is in an approved cradle and is not being handled.

I trust this information is of assistance to the Committee. Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Andrew Johnson
Advocate for Children and Young People