

**Submission
No 1**

SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL LEARNER DRIVERS

Organisation: Regional Development Australia Riverina

Date Received: 6 April 2021

a) challenges faced by learner drivers in rural and regional areas to get the required training and experience to obtain a licence

TRAINING COURSES AVAILABLE

Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers (HLDBSD):

Workshops are funded 50/50 by Transport NSW and Councils. These workshops are only available if your council participates and has an employed Road safety Officer (RSO) available. RSO's struggle to attract decent presenters. Any presenters who attend and help facilitate the course are voluntary and not paid for their time at the course or for travel time to a remote area.

Keys to Drive:

1 free lesson is available from an accredited instructor (if / when available). Normally only available in major rural cities where Driving Schools exist.

Safer Drivers Course:

Subsidised by Transport NSW and under same availability as major rural cities.

CHALLENGES

In small rural areas, learning hours are restricted to a rural landscape not involving traffic, roundabouts, multi lanes etc or any experience of city conditions.

Local Councils may not have a RSO or any qualified person to promote road safety in Schools or Community Groups.

Existing Driving Schools in major cities cannot find a reasonable business model to operate in regional areas when travel and accommodation expenses are not covered. Most existing training days are operated at a loss and usually philanthropic.

b) options for rural and regional learners to access driver training opportunities

Some LGA's / Councils apply for "Remote Training Access Funding" . This allows them to cover the costs of travel for accredited driving instructors to deliver relevant programs / courses.

NSW Driver Training Association is working on expanding an existing partnership with PCYC's to seek training opportunities in Regional areas.

Some regional schools have looked into a bus transport program where multiple students can be transported to courses/ training in major cities to minimise transport costs. The Schools have to cover these costs.

Support for rural and regional learner drivers in other jurisdictions

c) the use of driver simulators and other technology to assist rural and regional learners.

Many have tried simulators and have not been successful. They incur exorbitant costs including travel and access and have not been effective.

OPTIONS

Subsidies for Accredited Driving Instructors. Rural areas need more qualified instructors but the cost of achieving this is expensive. It may take up to 12 months and there is no financial support available to individuals, only institutions and those institutions may not exist in regional areas.