

**Submission  
No 15**

## **SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL LEARNER DRIVERS**

**Organisation:** Rotary Club of Young

**Date Received:** 12 May 2021

Partially  
Confidential

Submission  
to  
Parliament of NSW  
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety

Email: [staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au)



from  
Rotary Club of Young Inc

PO Box 258  
YOUNG NSW 2594

14<sup>th</sup> May 2021

The Rotary Club of Young is an incorporated entity registered with NSW Fair Trading as an association which has 40 financial members that meet on a regular basis and publicly fund raise to assist the club in providing financial aid to those most in need through Rotary International's Foundation and the club's own projects.

One such project undertaken was to purchase a multi-screen, in cabin SIMWORX driver training simulator which has been one of the clubs most successful and beneficial projects undertaken in a long time. It is hoped, through this submission, to share the club's enthusiasm for the simulator and the benefits it brings to those that have used it. The project initiator was Past President Frank Lincoln PHF. Frank oversaw, the purchase, the fundraising and its promotion in the community and now co-ordinates and performs the training with the simulator, in the schools. It has been his passion.

The terms of reference for this enquiry into support for rural and regional learner drivers states at d) "the use of driver simulators and other technology to assist rural and regional learners".

It is to this section, d), that the Rotary Club of Young Inc wishes to make a submission in support of such training.

The Rotary Club of Young Inc welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety the benefits of driver simulator training in regards to supporting learner drivers in rural and regional areas. As you will read further on in the submission, The Rotary Club of Young has been very pro-active in trying to raise awareness of the benefits of a driver simulator, especially its use in schools and for young learner drivers. The advocacy is, as another tool, not an alternative to on-road driving experience.

The Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Stayafe) – report 3/56 – September 2017 in Chapter 2 outlines investigation into the use of simulators as a tool for training learner drivers. The committee's Recommendation 9, from that report states:

*The committee recommends that Transport for NSW review and publicly report on the value of simulators to supplement current driver training, testing and assessment with particular reference to the use of simulators to:*

- *Expose learner drivers to unfamiliar driving conditions such as a metropolitan learner to country conditions and vice versa.*
- *Substitute for on-road training for disadvantaged learners where access to a simulator can be arranged*
- *Be employed in hazard perception testing and in aged driver assessment.*

The Rotary Club of Young Inc fully supports this recommendation.

The Rotary Club of Young Inc., in 2015 applied to the NSW Government for funding under its Driver Safety Initiative for a grant to purchase a driving simulator identical to one that was being used in the Neighbourhood Centre at Bellingen NSW – a SIMWORX built driver simulator.

This submission was unsuccessful as was a submission from the Rotary Club of Parkes in 2019 to purchase a simulator through a NSW Community Road Safety Grant. Feedback from the committee on the unsuccessful outcome of the Parkes submission was:

*“The Centre for Road Safety has considered the value of driving simulators; however, research has found that simulator technology has not yet advanced to the point where it can reliably be used for driver training or a substitute for practical on-road driving.*

*One of the most comprehensive reviews of literature into the effectiveness of driving simulators as a training and assessment tool suggests that while simulators provide some advantages, they are outweighed by the lack of evidence of transferability of simulated experiences to on-road driving.*

*Issues include limitations in peripheral vision, speed and depth perception and a general lack of realism. Translating the simulator experience to practical driving is challenging, particularly in developing the higher order hazard perception skills that drivers need to respond safely to different road conditions and situations. Many people also report nausea, similar to seasickness when using a simulator.*

*While driving simulators are potentially useful in learning procedural skills without crash risk, this lack of perceived risk during their learning phase may influence future behavior and attitudes in real road environments.*

Attached (**Attachment 1**) is the response from the Rotary Club of Parkes Inc to the above comments and it is interesting to note that an email response from [REDACTED] of Transport NSW stated:

*“Fantastic, thanks Ken. You presented a very clear argument I cannot ignore.....”*

In 2016, The Rotary Club of Young purchased a SIMWORX SX06DTS, with hand controls for disability drivers from SMWORX, Victoria, with funds raised by its members and a number of community donations.

The SIMWORX Simulator provides a variety of lessons and training exercises grouped under:

1. Vehicle control,
2. Traffic participation,
3. Special circumstances
4. Safety awareness.

Traffic participation helps to develop perceptual skills, detecting hazards and road signs. Country roads present a special set of hazards, with differing road surfaces, blind spots, kangaroos and farm animals and machinery.

The special circumstances training covers such things as icy and wet roads, fog, snow and night driving.

The safety awareness modules cover driving with impaired ability such as under the influence of drugs and alcohol and driving at speed.

All of the above relate strongly to the safe systems approach covering roads, roadsides, other users of the area, travel speeds and special conditions.

The outcomes are increased skills and awareness developed in a completely safe environment.

This simulator is owned by the Rotary Club of Young and housed at the PCYC Sports Stadium in Young. The original intent was for young people to access its use (for a fee) at the stadium but this has not been a success. When young people were quizzed as to why they did not use it, the

excuse used was that hours performed did not count towards obtaining their licence. The other impediment was not enough volunteers to supervise the “vehicle” and maybe the cost of usage.

A letter to the then Transport Minister, Melinda Pavey MP in May 2017, requesting time spent on the simulator be counted towards learner hours was responded much in the same way as that received by the Rotary Club of Parkes in 2019. (quoted above)

The then Minister for Transport, Melinda Pavey MP and the then Member for Cootamundra, Katrina Hodgkinson were both invited and were both present at the launch of the simulator in Young in 2016 and both had a drive.

Since that date, The Rotary Club of Young, under the passion and guidance of Frank Lincoln and retired police officer Graham Holmes, has had much success in taking the simulator into schools, covering many miles, many volunteer hours and exposing many students to safety awareness whilst driving.

In fact, the statistics speak for themselves:

- Total schools visited (public and independent) 34
- Total days involved including repeat visits 252
- Approximate number of students participating 4530
- Total volunteer hours 3530

The school programme was originated in 2016 by the two Principals of the senior secondary schools in Young. They asked for the simulator to be brought to the schools and for all their Year 10 students to be put through the “driving under the influence” and “distractor” (texting) programmes. This initiative was observed by senior police from the then Cootamundra Local Area Command (LAC), who after observing for several hours, wished the programmes to be replicated across the whole LAC. This was completed in 2017.

By word of mouth, schools from beyond the Cootamundra LAC were requesting visits with many now requesting return visits each year – Young, Yass, West Wyalong, Temora, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Batlow, Gundagai, Forbes, Parkes, Cowra, Coolamon, Junee, Pambula, Grenfell, Canowindra, Blaney, Tullamore, Trundle, Tottenham and even on one occasion – Bourke.

It has been greatly appreciated by schools with comments such as:

- *“This is the most innovative and best thing we have done at this school for a long, long time”  
Principal of RedBend College, Forbes.*
- *“My mother texts all the time, next time she pulls her phone out I’m going to take it off her”.  
Male student. Young High School.*
- *I would never drink & drive, however experiencing this, I will never get in a car with anyone who has been drinking.” Female student. Yass High School.*
- *“This should happen in every school in Australia.” Teacher in charge of student welfare. Cowra High School.*
- *“All new drivers should be made to take these two lessons before being allowed on the road.” Police observer, Cootamundra.*

The purpose-built trailer was provided by Southern Phones who thought the project of such great significance and public good, they wanted to provide a convenient and safe form of transportation for its conveyance.

The Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety also reports in Chapter 7 on school education and a curriculum that was developed by the then NSW Board of Studies with road safety education specialists providing the professional development of teachers. It does not include in-vehicle training. In that report the Australian Road Safety Foundation submitted that road safety education should be instilled at the earliest possible opportunity and that the driver education component should start from Years 8, 9 or 10.

Mr Bernard Carlon, Executive Director for Centre for Road Safety gave evidence to the committee *“that education which establishes good habits from the very beginning is important for young people.”*

Blue Datto Foundation Ltd submitted *“that Year 10 warrants a specific focus because this is the time when there is enormous interest in driving and when peer influence can be positive”.*

The students that access the Rotary Club of Young’s simulator are Year 10 students – the age group that are about to obtain their Learner permit or who have recently acquired it. The safety awareness program that they are put through runs for about 15 minutes and takes them on a driving journey “whilst under the influence of alcohol” or “whilst texting”. Students attend the session in pairs – whilst one is driving the other is observing. All students see what happens with both scenarios but not all students experience both scenarios. They all have some form of “accident” during the process and all are absolutely amazed at the difference to their driving ability, when impediments to ability are imposed.

Attached (**Attachment 2**) to this document is more feedback from students from one school visited. It is comments like these that make the time and effort involved in making the simulator available for use in schools, worthwhile.

**The Rotary Club of Young advocates that there is no circumstance where learner drivers can experience such effects in a safe environment, unless with the use of a simulator. If they do practice such bad habits, whilst in control of a motor vehicle then they are risking the life of themselves, any passengers and other road users.**

**A simulator is the only way for learner drivers to experience the effects of driving under the influence of alcohol or whilst using a telephone in a safe situation.**

Further feedback, documented below, is from Ian Baird, owner of and the instructor at Geared4Success Driving School based in Young NSW. He is a facilitator/coach at the safe drivers’ course conducted at the Young PCYC, and a volunteer presenter at the Traffic Offenders Intervention Program (TOIP) run by Young PCYC.

*“My experience with the Young Rotary Initiative the ‘Driver Simulator Program’ has been to experience firsthand how the simulator works and to encourage students to use the driver simulator especially when they are experiencing difficulty in demonstrating necessary driving skills required to pass the driving test.*

*“One student, [REDACTED] could not fully understand how to legally deal with Roundabouts. I had taught [REDACTED] as a student at [REDACTED] and understood his learning difficulties.*

*“The driving simulator gave [REDACTED] the chance to practice correct techniques in complete safety without endangering himself, his passengers or other road users. [REDACTED] went onto successfully attempt the driving test and gain his provisional licence.”*

In 2019, the Rotary Club of Young wrote to The Hon Paul Toole MP, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads through our member for Cootamundra, Steph Cooke MP and also to Transport for NSW.

**Attachment 3** is a copy of the letter received in response to this communique from Minister Toole and a copy of an email response from Transport NSW. An invitation was subsequently issued to [REDACTED] and dates of school visits communicated for 2019 but there was no response to the invitation to see first-hand, the simulator at work.

Similar correspondence was also sent to the Federal Member for Riverina, The Hon Michael McCormack MP in 2019 with an invitation to see the simulator in operation. Mr McCormack was able to visit the simulator in operation at Peak Hill High School and to have a drive.

According to the Staysafe report of 2017, NSW is the only state with specific road safety content as part of the school syllabus. The Rotary Club of Young applauds the NSW Government for its initiative towards keeping young people safe on the roads.

Frank Lincoln poses the question to the committee – is this programme worthwhile? His response comes from hearing many times over from volunteers that assist him:

*“Extremely so!”*

and from police officer observers

*“All new drivers should be made to do both these programmes before being allowed on the road!”*

and a student welfare head teacher:

*“This should happen in every school in Australia!”*

It is with pleasure that the Rotary Club of Young makes this submission and offers its availability to speak to it, should the invitation be issued. It also issues an invitation to any member / s of the committee to come and see first-hand, the simulator in use at one of its many school appointments.

In conclusion the Rotary Club of Young would like to make recommendation to the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, 2021:

### **Recommendation**

1. That there is a very definite value in driving simulators being an adjunct to training young people to drive. It is especially useful in forming early values of safe driving by experiencing, through driving simulation, the effects of alcohol and texting whilst behind a wheel of a motor car. This is a far safer way to learn of the effects, such driving impediments can have on ability, rather than actually doing it in real life once the driver attains the age of 18.
2. That driver simulator experience be included as part of the hours required of experience for learner drivers.

3. That driver simulators be recognized as a useful tool for the elderly and those with a disability to “hone” their skills prior to driver testing.



## Attachment 1:

# Community Road Safety Grants team

by Rotary Club of  
Parkes 19 June 2020

## Introduction

We accept that our application for a grant to assist towards purchasing a driving simulator was unsuccessful. We find it impressive that you have openly and transparently provided the reasoning behind the NSW Community Road Safety Grants (CRSG) team's decision.

We thought, however, that some feedback from us might be of some use for the future.

Throughout this feedback I shall refer to Frank Lincoln and "the simulator".

Frank is a member of the Rotary Club of Young. He was successful some years ago raising funds to purchase a driving simulator from [SIMWORX](#) (the simulator) and has used it since in several country and regional schools throughout NSW to deliver the two modules – distractions and impairment – referred to in our submission.

According to Frank Lincoln "Last calendar year the simulator was in 25 schools with approximately 1500 students experiencing the effects that illicit substances & distraction have on driver ability."

Police, including senior police, have observed the simulator in action over several years and across several schools. Two highway patrol officers (now retired) have worked with Frank Lincoln to deliver simulator training in schools. Their contact details are provided at the end of this document should the reader wish to seek further information.

With a view to acquiring a simulator for local use, the Rotary Club of Parkes and Parkes Neighbourhood Central have trialled the SIMWORX simulator at schools in Parkes, Peak Hill, Forbes, Condobolin, Tottenham, Trundle, and Tullamore. We surveyed participants (students) and teachers involved. While the trials and results of surveys are not peer reviewed research, we think they do provide valuable feedback that supports the conclusions drawn by other Rotarians, teaching staff, and police that were involved at the outset in Young. The trials and survey results have encouraged us to try and acquire a simulator for use in this region. Demand for the SIMWORX simulator based at Young is growing and access is becoming more constrained.

## Commentary on feedback from CRSG team

1. The Centre for Road Safety has considered the value of driving simulators; however research has found that simulator technology has not yet advanced to the point where it can reliably be used for driver training or as a substitute for practical on-road driving experience.

We are not attempting to use a simulator in schools for driver training or as a substitute

for practical on-road driving experience. We are not familiar with the research you refer to, but do not seek to contest it.

## Attachment 2

### Driver Simulator Feedback

- It was quite difficult trying to read and drive but it was a good experience overall.
- I did the drink driving course and it was ok not easy. I think this is a good way to demonstrate what can happen.
- I did the distraction and drunk driving. I went pretty good. I thought it would be a good way to teach other people about the affects of drunk driving and distraction when they drive.
- I went alright and it was good. I didn't mind it.
- I went alright for not having my license but I enjoyed doing this driving simulator and would definitely do it again.
- Real good like you are in real life driving.
- I did the drink driving simulation. Had to be more careful. Would recommend the simulator.
- It was fun, as well as hard.
- It tested your abilities, was fun and showed me what the affects could be with distracted driving.
- This experience was very confronting as it gives you an insight into how easily it is to be distracted when driving and how impaired your vision gets when driving intoxicated. The guys were great, very helpful and full of information. Thank you.
- It was a good experience and was accurate to driving a regular car.
- This experience has taught me and important insight into the effects of alcohol and distractions while driving compared to driving unimpaired.
- Fun, had a great time and learnt a lot.
- Great fellas!
- The driver simulator was a good experience that shows you the consequences that come with drink driving and texting while driving. The idea of comparing was really interesting and my results were surprisingly good. Good experience also for those without their licence.
- The people were very nice. It was a good experience. I hit a person who walked out in front of a bus.
- The people were really nice. It was quite real and was a great experience.
- Drove into oncoming traffic when text messages popped up on screen. It was a great experience and I can't wait to get my L's.
- I thought that it was weird that the mirrors weren't blurry when drunk but otherwise it was good.

- This test teaches us very basic road safety and gives the participants and idea about what its like to drive while under the effect of alcohol and while texting. In this test I did well besides hitting a dog and crossing the centre lane twice.
- It opened my eyes on driving.
- I think the simulator was a good experience and the people were very kind.
- I was reading the mobile phone while driving and I drove off the road many times when focusing on the mobile phone. I though it was a good experience.
- During the driver simulator we tried two different simulations that showed a first-hand experience of being distracted and under the influence. I believe the simulator was very beneficial to learning the effects when driving.
- The simulator was fun and taking away the core message of how dangerous drink driving is was very important.
- The simulation gave insight to the risks of driving while distracted by a phone. I will never drive and use my phone.
- I did the normal and distraction test. I thought it was good as it teaches people not to drink and drive and text while driving.
- Went pretty well. Nice people running it. Pretty good experience all round I say.
- Don't drink drive otherwise you will hit things.
- It was good but I wish I could have done the drink driving one too. The advice the people gave me was very helpful.
- I did the text distraction on the simulation. It was a good experience and I've learnt the dangers of texting and driving.

## Attachment 3:



The Hon Paul Toole MP  
Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

Our Ref: 00895193  
Your Ref: SC3231/FC

Ms Steph Cooke MP  
Member for Cootamundra  
PO Box 350  
YOUNG NSW 2594

Dear Ms Cooke

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of Ms Roz Hill, Director of Youth at Rotary Club of Young Inc, about Rotary's multi-screen driver training simulator initiative.

I appreciate the work Rotary Club of Young Inc is doing to improve road safety in regional NSW.

The NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) maximises development of safe driving skills through staged training and practice over an extended period. The 120 hours of supervised driving is not just about learning to operate a vehicle, but also about gaining experience in a wide range of driving conditions, which improves hazard perception and risk management skills.

Research indicates that learner drivers who increase their supervised on-road experience can reduce their crash risk by 30 per cent in the first two years of solo driving. Since the introduction of the GLS in 2000, the number of young drivers killed on NSW roads has halved.

While there is some research available to suggest driving simulators may help people develop driving skills, it is not yet clear whether this translates into reduced crash risk and safer on-road driving.

Transport for NSW will continue to monitor best practices for novice driver safety, including any evaluations of safety benefits experienced in other jurisdictions, to identify ways to improve driver safety.



Transport for NSW is interested to see how simulators are used in the high school setting as a way of supporting young people and novice drivers. I encourage Ms Hill to contact [REDACTED] Partnerships Manager Education at Transport for NSW, via email [REDACTED] to arrange a time for Transport for NSW to attend a session.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Toole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

THE HON PAUL TOOLE MP

28/10/2019

**From:** TfNSW Customer Service <customerliaison@transport.nsw.gov.au>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 28 August 2019 5:29 PM

**Subject:** Transport for NSW Response - Case 00864236 - Frank Lincoln - [ref:\_00D28HSVA.\_5000K1pZWN5:ref ]

Dear Mr Lincoln,

Thank you for informing us about Rotary's multi-screen driver training simulator initiative.

The NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) is a key government initiative addressing novice driver safety on NSW roads. The GLS is considered to be world's best practice in the licensing of novice drivers, allowing them to gain experience and acquire skills under situations of lower risk and allowing for restrictions to be progressively eased as experience is acquired. Research indicates that learner drivers who increase their supervised on-road experience can reduce their crash risk by 30 per cent, in the first two years of solo driving.

While there is some research available that suggests driving simulators may help people to develop driving skills, it is not yet clear whether that translates into reduced crash propensity and safer on-road driving. Generally simulators are not widely used for driver training in Australia for either road transport workers or regular drivers. This is due to a number of reasons including the high cost of the simulators, a lack of proven scientific evidence demonstrating their effectiveness and a shortage of instructors and facilitators who can use the equipment.

A Queensland study only identified one jurisdiction, the Netherlands, where simulators are being widely used for novice driver training (other than hazard perception training). The study concluded the mainstream introduction of simulators for training in the Netherlands is relatively recent and therefore, the long term impact is not yet known.

Transport for NSW will also continue to monitor best practices for novice driver safety, including any evaluations of safety benefits experienced in other jurisdictions, to identify ways to improve driver safety.

Representatives from Transport for NSW are interested to see how they are used in the high school setting as a way of supporting young people and novice drivers. Please feel free to contact [redacted], Partnerships Manager, Education at [redacted] to arrange a time to attend one of the sessions in your area.

Yours sincerely

Customer Feedback

Transport for NSW

