

**Submission
No 17**

SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL LEARNER DRIVERS

Organisation: Road Safety Research Collaboration, University of the Sunshine Coast

Date Received: 12 May 2021

12th May 2021

The Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)
Parliament of New South Wales

To whom it may concern,

I am making a submission on behalf of the Road Safety Research Collaboration (RSRC) at the University of the Sunshine Coast, addressing the inquiry into support for rural and regional learner drivers. We are using research conducted by members within the RSRC to address the terms of reference b) options for rural and regional learners to access driver training opportunities and f) any other related matters. The citations of the articles used to inform these recommendations are included at the end of this letter.

Term of reference b: options for rural and regional learners to access driver training opportunities

A recent study by Anderson et al., (2021) identified that police-led, school-based driver education programs may be an effective way of altering the driving intentions of young novice drivers and in turn promoting greater road safety. This could support the NSW Government with rural and regional driver education by incorporating police into their programs.

Term of reference f: any other related matters

Given the possible challenges learner drivers in rural and regional NSW may face in obtaining the 120 hours of supervised driving, it may be beneficial to ensure these drivers engage in optimal learning when they do partake in supervised driving. Consequently, the results from the following studies provide suggestions on how to maximise the supervised driving experience for learner drivers.

Recent research conducted with driving instructors in Queensland pointed to a range of issues regarding learner drivers and learner driver training (Watson-Brown et al., 2021). One issue mentioned was that the hours (i.e. 100 hours in Queensland) required by the GDL program did not always adequately prepare drivers, particularly if the driver had limited exposure to a range of different driving situations. And thus there can be a discrepancy between the driving situations one learns to drive in, and where they end up driving without supervision (once provisionally licensed). Another issue emerged regarding the pressure felt by instructors to help learners to pass the test, whilst safe driving practices (which would benefit them in the long-term) were not regarded as important. And with regard to this last point, the instructors also conveyed their concern that some learner drivers engaged in dangerous and risky driving that posed a risk to other drivers. Instructors also provided some solutions to the aforementioned issues. For instance, they suggested that parents emphasise a wide range of experiences whilst driving, including taking their learner drivers to the places they would be likely to go once provisionally licenced. Instructors also suggested the use of positive feedback to encourage safe driving behaviours.

Another study by Bates et al., (2019) suggested that psychosocial factors affect young driver perceptions of driver education and training. Higher levels of sensation seeking predicted that participants thought it beneficial for novice driver education to focus on vehicle manoeuvring (Level 1), mastery of traffic

situations (Level 2) and goals and contexts for driving (Level 3) but not the highest level of the GDE matrix, goals for life. Higher levels of normlessness predicted participants believing it was more beneficial for new drivers to learn about the goals and contexts for driving. This suggests there is a need for driver educators to consider personalising their programs as much as possible to take into account the psychosocial differences between individuals, which may impact on the way they respond to the education they receive.

Sincerely,
Dr Verity Truelove
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References:

Anderson, L., Bates, L., & Madon, N. (2021). Police-led, school-based driver education: a pre- and post-comparison of young driver self-reported behaviour and intentions including gender differences. *Crime Prevention and Community Safety*, 1-16. doi:10.1057/s41300-021-00110-4

Bates, L., Hawkins, A., Rodwell, D., Anderson, L., Watson, B., Filtness, A. J., & Larue, G. S. (2019). The effect of psychosocial factors on perceptions of driver education using the goals for driver education framework. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 66, 151-161. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trf.2019.09.004

Watson-Brown, N., Mills, L., Senserrick, T., Freeman, J., Davey, J., & Scott-Parker, B. (2021). A complex system of learning to drive: The instructor's perspective. *Safety Science*, 136, 105172. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2021.105172