

**INQUIRY INTO STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL  
ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW**

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Submission by

# Transport for NSW

in response to

The Standing Committee on Social Issues

Inquiry into strategies to reduce alcohol  
abuse among young people in NSW

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Transport  
for NSW

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## I TERMS OF REFERENCE

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES INQUIRY INTO STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW

On 15 November 2012 the Standing Committee on Social Issues (SCOSI) issued its terms of reference in relation to strategies to reduce alcohol abuse among young people.

The table below details each of the SCOSI Inquiry terms of reference.

Transport for NSW will be responding to Terms of Reference (d) only.

Terms of Reference	Location/Reference in Submission
a) The effect of alcohol advertisements and promotions on young people, including consideration of the need to further restrict advertising and promotion.	n/a
b) The effectiveness of alcohol harm minimisation strategies targeted at young people.	n/a
c) Measures to minimise the impact of alcohol in the workplace.	n/a
d) The effectiveness of measures to reduce drink driving.	Part 2
e) Measures to reduce alcohol related violence, including in and around licensed venues.	n/a
f) Measures to address the impact of alcohol abuse on the health system.	n/a
g) Any other related matter.	n/a

## **2 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURES TO REDUCE DRINK DRIVING**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Although there have been considerable inroads into reducing drink driving in NSW, it remains a significant issue on our roads. In addition to the considerable emotional and human toll of drink driving, it also produces a substantial financial burden to the community.

In 2011, there were 364 fatalities and 26,366 injuries on NSW roads. Of these, 70 fatalities and 1,182 injuries were from crashes involving a driver / motorcycle rider with an illegal blood alcohol level.

Alcohol has a wide variety of effects on the body, and has a known and reliable detrimental effect on the ability to drive. Following from the classic early studies examining the relationship between blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and road crashes, there is now a large body of evidence demonstrating a direct relationship between drivers' BAC and the risk of crashing. Although estimates of the magnitude of the increased risk at any particular BAC level may be influenced by a number of factors (for example age, prior amount of sleep), the findings are consistent: there is an exponential increase in risk once BAC levels start to climb above the current legal levels<sup>1</sup>.

While there have been substantial gains in reducing drink driving, about 97 per cent of drink drivers in fatal crashes are men, with a substantial proportion of them being younger men. One of the Government's largest challenges is addressing this group and educating young men in a way that captures their attention and is relevant. The Government has put in place a variety of evidence-based strategies to continue to address drink driving and reduce its associated trauma. This submission discusses those strategies and the evidence concerning their effectiveness.

For the purpose of this paper, Transport for NSW has deemed young drivers to be under 26 years of age.

### **2.2 Drink driving statistics in NSW**

Currently drink driving is a factor in about 18 per cent of fatal crashes in NSW.

In 2011, there were 70 fatalities and 1,182 injuries from crashes involving a driver / motorcycle rider with an illegal blood alcohol level. In 2011 the estimated cost to the community of road crashes was \$5.37 billion. It is estimated that drink driving crashes alone cost the community around \$550 million during this period.

Last year, based on the 2012 provisional data (as at 1 January 2013) there was an estimated 54 fatalities from crashes involving a driver / rider with an illegal blood alcohol level. However it should be noted that these results are not yet finalised as there is an approximate three month time lag in processing alcohol samples. Injuries figures are not yet available for 2012.

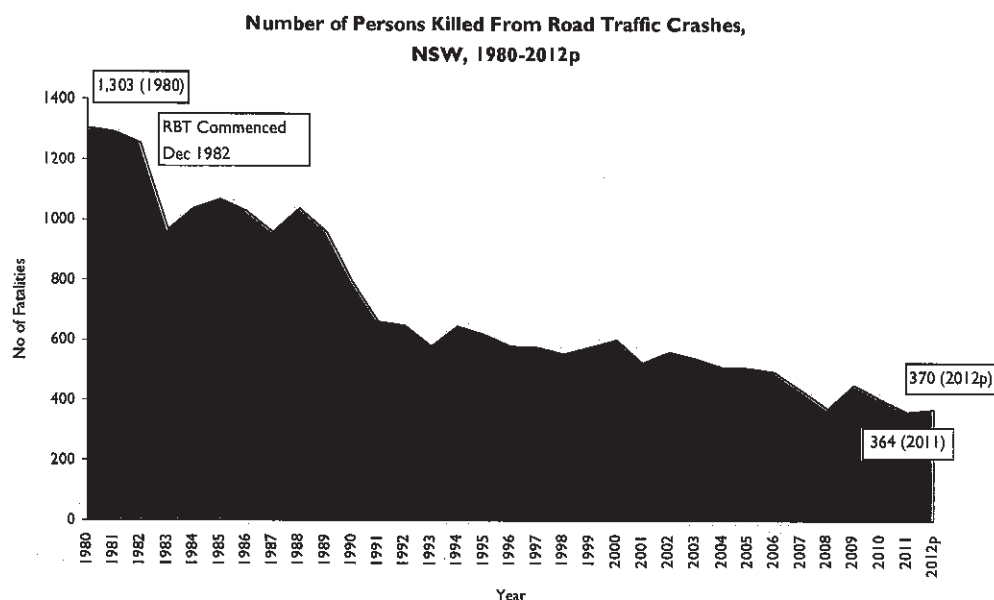
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<sup>1</sup> For example, see Blomberg, R.D., et al (2009). The Long Beach/Fort Lauderdale relative risk study. *Journal of Safety Research*, 40, 285-292.

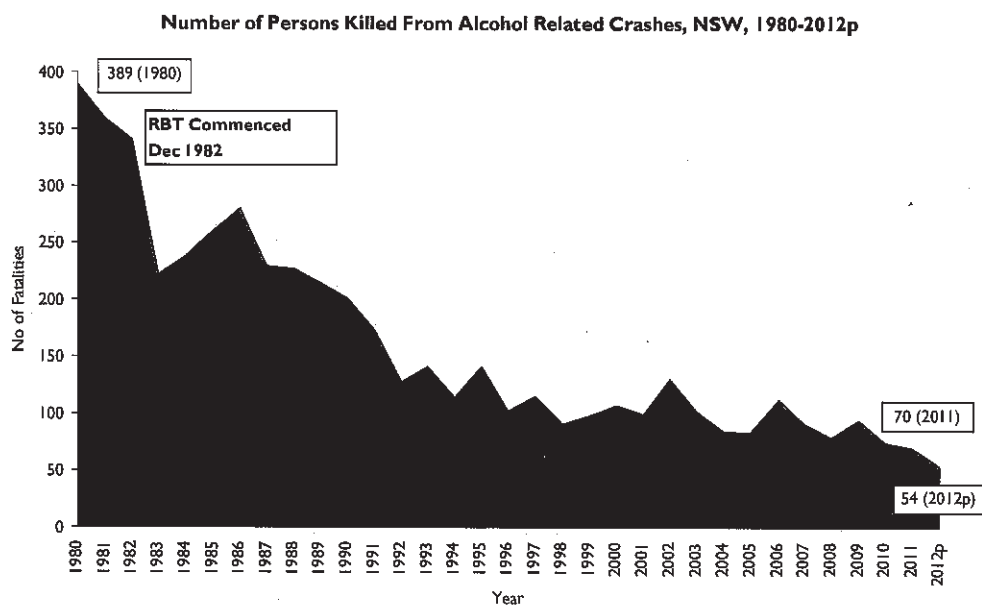
The 2012 data are provisional and subject to change as figures are finalised later this year.

### Trends in Trauma from Alcohol Related Crashes in NSW

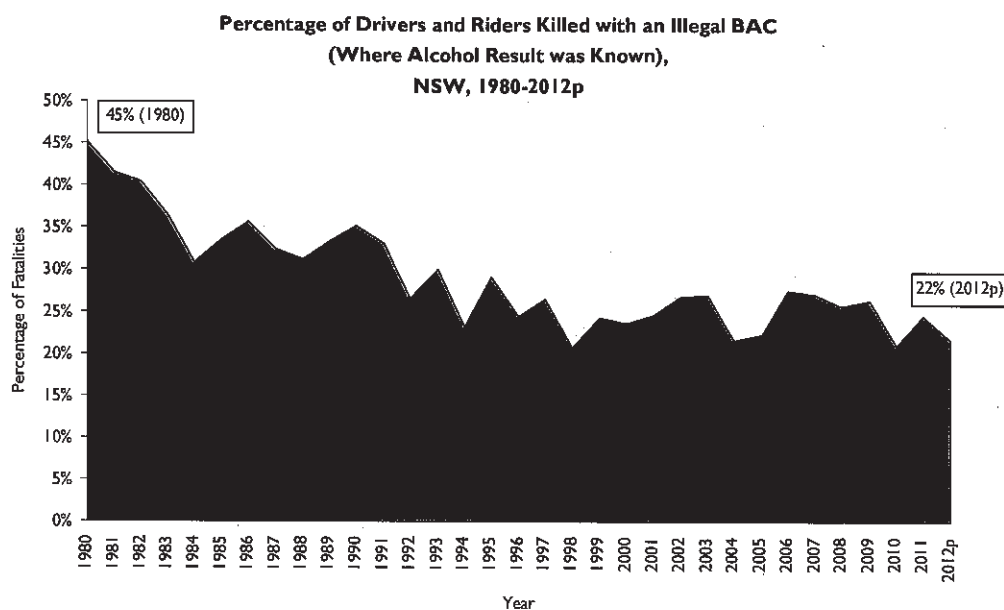
Since the 1980 road toll of 1,303 fatalities, the NSW road toll has significantly reduced. It has been cut by more than 70 per cent to 370 fatalities in 2012 (provisional figure).



Improvements in alcohol related trauma have been greater than the overall road toll reductions. Alcohol related fatalities have improved by around 86 per cent, from 389 fatalities in 1980 down to an estimated figure of 54 fatalities in 2012 (estimated provisional figure). The percentage of fatalities which are alcohol related (where alcohol is known to be involved) has fallen from 53 per cent in 1980 to only 18 per cent in 2012 (estimated provisional figure).

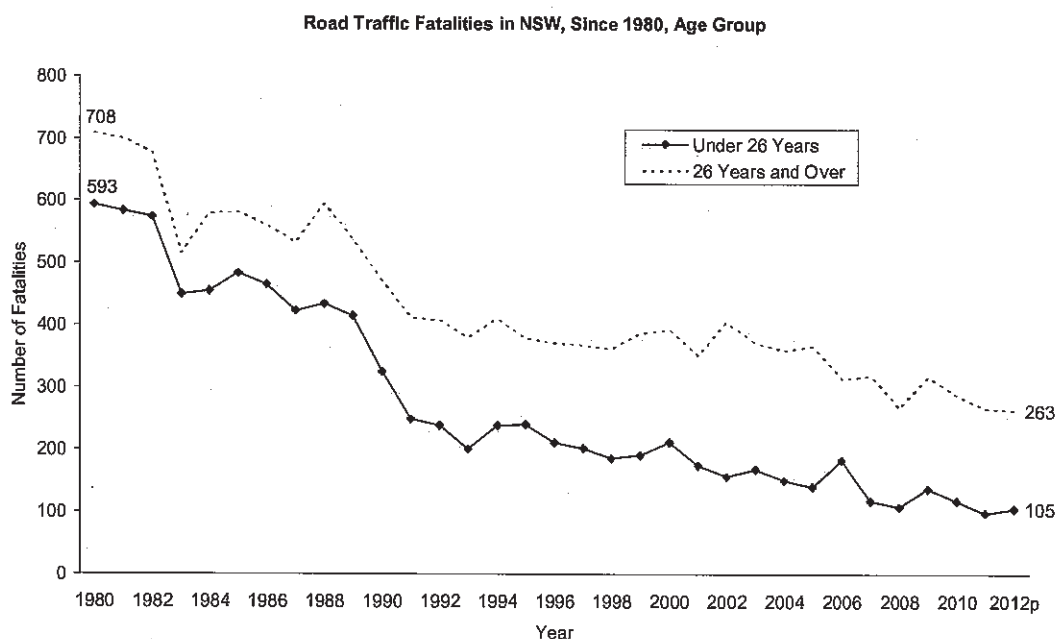


Similarly, the proportion of driver and motorcycle rider fatalities with illegal alcohol limits present has fallen from 45 per cent in 1980 to 22 per cent in 2012 (estimated provisional figure).



### Trends in Young Driver and Motorcycle Rider Trauma

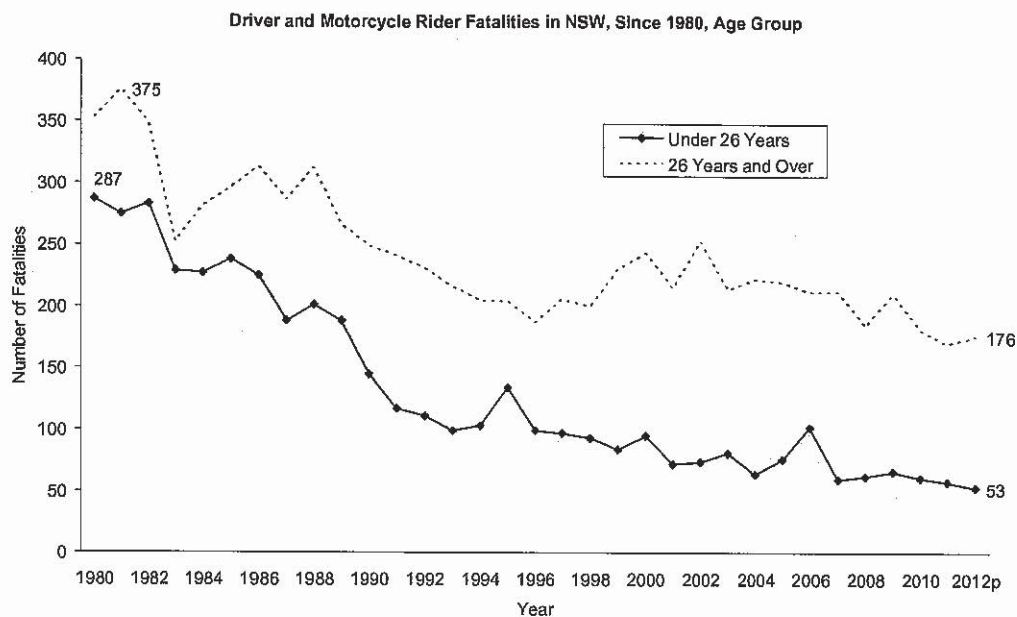
Whilst NSW has experienced significant decreases in its road toll over the past three decades, the reduction in fatalities aged under 26 years and the reduction in those fatalities with alcohol present, have been even greater in magnitude.



\*Note: the age of two of the 2012 fatalities is still unknown

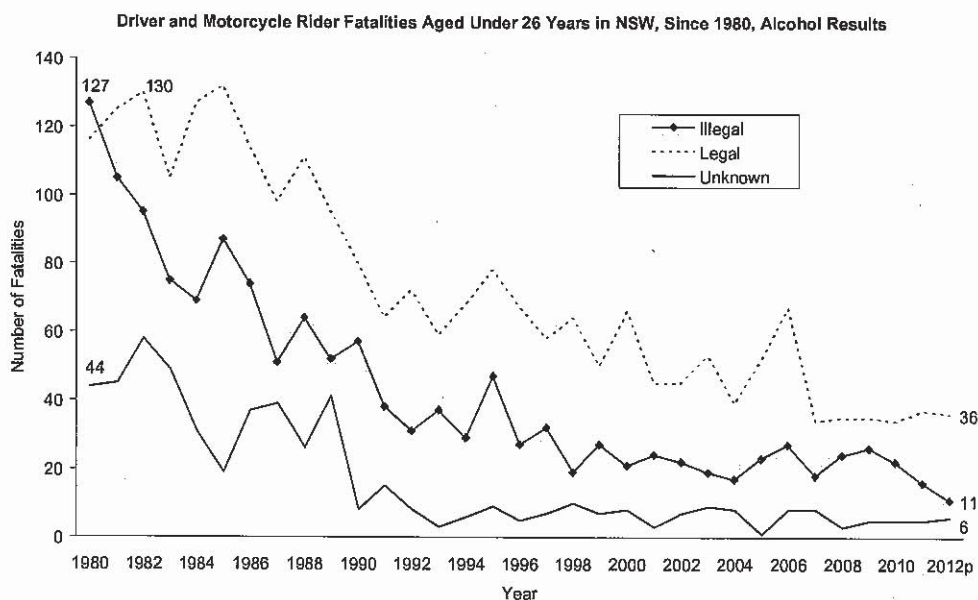
The number of fatalities aged under 26 years has fallen by 82 per cent since 1980, from 593 in 1980 to 105 in 2012p. Over the same period fatalities aged 26 years or more decreased by 63 per cent.

It is noted that there has been a greying of the population since 1980 – the proportion of the NSW population aged under 26 years fell from 45 per cent in 1980 to 35 per cent in 2011. However, this demographic shift in the age distribution would only account for a small portion of the overall road trauma decreases amongst the fatalities aged under 26 years.



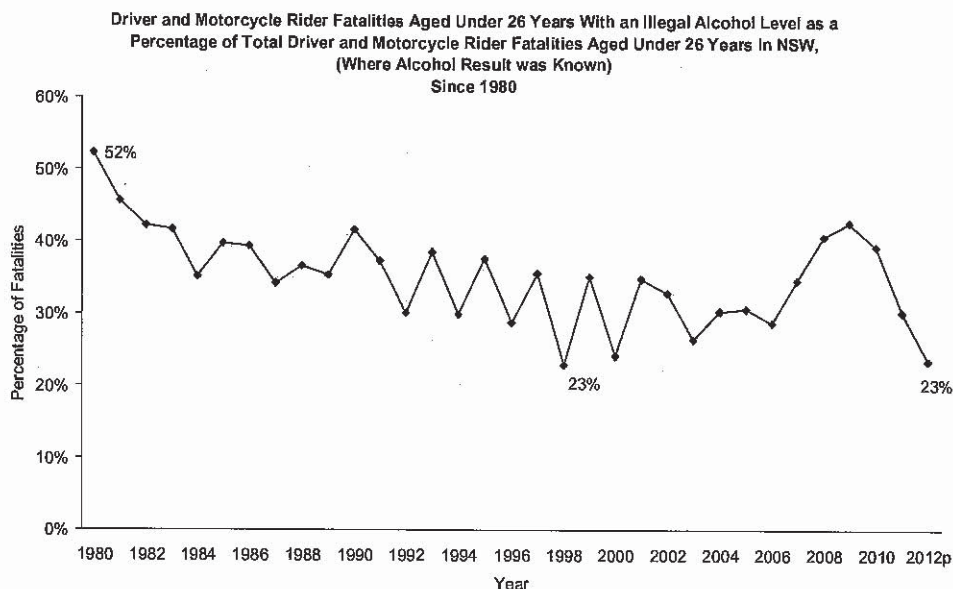
Similarly the number of driver and motorcycle rider fatalities aged under 26 years has fallen by 82 per cent since 1980, from 287 in 1980 to 53 in 2012p. Over the same period driver and rider fatalities aged 26 years or more decreased by 50 per cent.

Young driver and rider fatalities now account for less than one quarter of the driver and rider deaths on NSW roads (23 per cent in 2012), compared with almost half of the NSW road toll in 1983 (48 per cent).



The number of driver and motorcycle rider fatalities aged under 26 years with an illegal alcohol level has fallen by 91 per cent since 1980, from 127 in 1980 to 11 in 2012p. Over the same period driver and rider fatalities aged under 26 years with a legal alcohol level decreased by only 69 per cent.





Over the three decades since 1980 the percentage of young driver and rider deaths with illegal alcohol levels, has fallen from one in two in 1980 (52 per cent) to fewer than one in four in 2012p (23 per cent).

#### **Notes for fatality data 1980 to 2012p**

*Data for 2012 are preliminary and subject to change.*

*Age group categories for the years 1980 to 1984 inclusive are under 25 years and 25 years and over (and are therefore an underestimate compared with data for 1985 onwards).*

*Alcohol categories generally refer to the applicable alcohol levels at the time eg 0.05 for all drivers and riders in 1980 through to 1984, 0.02 for learners and provisional licence holders (part way through 1985), etc – refer to the milestones table p14 for the applicable BAC levels defining legal / illegal alcohol levels.*

*The levels of unknown alcohol were typically higher in the 1980's – hence percentages are based on the total number where alcohol results were known.*

## **2.3 Drink Driving Prevalence**

The crash statistics above relate to incidents where Police had been called and includes those where BAC levels were recorded. However, not every episode of drink driving results in the driver being involved in a crash or the Police breath testing and arresting the driver. Indeed while Police presence is increasing, many drink drive offences may still go undetected<sup>2</sup>.

One way to estimate the prevalence of drink driving overall is to conduct surveys of a representative sample of drivers. Although self reported behaviours rely on accurate recollection and honest responses, reliable estimates of drink driving behaviour can be obtained through sufficient sample sizes and ensuring the anonymity of respondents. In a national survey of drivers in 2011, it was estimated that overall, 4 per cent of active drivers reported that they likely drove when over the blood alcohol limit in the last 12 months<sup>3</sup>.

The Centre for Road Safety has periodically engaged researchers to conduct surveys of NSW drivers to assess attitudes towards drink driving and the frequency in which such behaviour is engaged. A survey conducted in 2003<sup>4</sup> of over 1,000 NSW drivers (aged 17 to 69) who drank alcohol at least once a month indicated that in the previous year 81 per cent had never driven

<sup>2</sup> Trimboli, L., & Smith, N. (2009). Drink-driving and recidivism in NSW. *Contemporary Issues in Crime and Justice*, 135

<sup>3</sup> Australian Government (2011). Community attitudes to road safety – 2011 survey report. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>4</sup> AC Neilson (2003). *2003 Community Survey on Attitudes towards drink-driving*. Report prepared for the RTA.

when they thought they were over the limit, 14 per cent had done so once or twice, 2 per cent had done it once every two or three months or fortnightly or monthly and one per cent reported drink driving weekly. Drink driving frequency was related to age and gender with males aged 17-25 drink driving more often. A more recent survey in 2007<sup>5</sup> with just over 1,500 NSW drivers indicated that 40 per cent of NSW drivers had ever engaged in drink driving in their lifetime. Five per cent of the sample indicated that they had been drink driving in the previous month. Again young males were the group most likely to drink and drive. In another study conducted in 2010, drivers were asked about their drinking and driving behaviour. Overall, 12 per cent of the respondents indicated that they had driven in the previous month when they were possibly over the limit<sup>6</sup>. It should be noted that these data referred to self-reported behaviours. Additionally, minor differences in the sample selection criteria, or wording of questions across surveys makes comparisons across studies difficult. Although the estimates differ across studies, the above data do suggest that there are many occasions of drink driving occurring on NSW roads.

In summary, although there have been fewer crashes and fatalities over the last few decades, it is apparent that drink driving is still an issue on NSW roads. The following section discusses how the Government has approached this issue over the last thirty years and the progress made.

## **2.4 Measures taken to reduce drink driving in NSW**

There is a number of approaches that have been used to address drink driving in NSW and other jurisdictions around the world. Broadly speaking, deterrence is supported through laws, educational and behavioural programs. NSW has traditionally had a strong focus on a combination of deterrence and public education. This combination has shown to be effective in reducing drink driving. More recently however, this approach has been enhanced through additional enforcement as well as the introduction of specific programs. Each of these approaches is discussed below.

In their book examining alcohol and policy related issues, including a review of drink driving prevention and countermeasures, Babor et al (2010)<sup>7</sup> concluded that punishments which include licence suspension or revocation, laws with relatively low BAC limits (such as 0.05) combined with well publicised frequent enforcement, together with highly visible non-selective breath testing, all contribute to reducing alcohol related crashes. Additionally, they concluded that recidivism for drink driving is reduced with counselling or therapy in conjunction with licence suspension and subsequent use of an alcohol interlock (an electronic device that can be installed into a vehicle to monitor the driver's BAC level and prevent the car from starting if required). For young drivers they concluded that BAC limits as close to zero as possible, and graduated licensing are effective interventions. Similarly, in a recent review, Anderson, Chisholm and Fuhr (2009) reported that having designated BAC limits, Random Breath Testing (RBT), specific restrictions for young or inexperienced drivers, mandatory treatment and alcohol interlocks are effective in reducing drink driving<sup>8</sup>. As summarised below, NSW has used these abovementioned strategies. Evaluations of the specific interventions where available, are reported.

### **2.4.1 Drink Driving Laws and Deterrence**

Drink driving is a serious matter and as such is treated as a criminal offence and dealt with by the Courts in NSW. The convicted drink driver will have a criminal record. Penalties vary depending

<sup>5</sup> Taverner Research (2008). *2007 Drink driving survey of NSW drivers*. Report prepared for the RTA.

<sup>6</sup> Taverner Research (2010). *Paranoia 2010: Impact, effectiveness and community response*. Report prepared for the RTA.

<sup>7</sup> Babor, T et al (2010). *Alcohol: No ordinary Commodity – Research and Public Policy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

<sup>8</sup> Anderson, P., Chisholm, D., & Fuhr, D. C. (2009). Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of policies and programmes to reduce harm caused by alcohol. *Lancet*, 373, 2234-2246.

upon the specific offence, but include fines, licence disqualifications and in some circumstances jail terms. Penalties for repeat offences are more severe. The table below outlines the drink driving offences in NSW.

Table 1: Drink Driving Offences in NSW

Prescribed concentration of alcohol (PCA) and other alcohol-related offences			
PCA Offence	Penalties	First Offence	Second or subsequent offence
<b>High range PCA</b> (blood alcohol concentration of 0.15 or above)  <b>OR</b>  <b>Refuse a breath analysis, hinder or obstruct taking of a blood sample, wilfully alter the concentration in the blood</b>	Maximum court-imposed fine  Maximum gaol term  Disqualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum</li> <li>- Maximum</li> <li>- *automatic</li> </ul> Immediate licence suspension	\$3,300  18 months  12 months Unlimited 3 years  Yes	\$5,500  2 years  2 years Unlimited 5 years  Yes
<b>Mid range PCA</b> (blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 to less than 0.15)	Maximum court-imposed fine  Maximum gaol term  Disqualification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum</li> <li>- Maximum</li> <li>- *automatic</li> </ul> Immediate licence suspension	\$2,200  9 months  6 months Unlimited 12 months  Yes	\$3,300  12 months  12 months Unlimited 3 years  Yes
PCA Offence	Penalties	First Offence	Second or subsequent offence
<b>Low range PCA</b> (blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 to less than 0.08)  <b>OR</b>  <b>Novice range PCA</b> (blood alcohol concentration over zero for novice drivers)  <b>OR</b>  <b>Special range PCA</b> (blood alcohol concentration over 0.02 for special category drivers)	Maximum court-imposed fine  Maximum gaol term  Disqualification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum</li> <li>- Maximum</li> <li>- *automatic</li> </ul> Immediate licence suspension	\$1,100  n/a  3 months 6 months 6 months  No	\$2,200  n/a  6 months Unlimited 12 months  No

\* 'automatic' is the disqualification period that applies in the absence of a specific court order.

A legal BAC of 0.08 was introduced in December 1968 in NSW and reduced to 0.05 in December 1980. Additional changes to the laws included reduced limits for learner and provisional licence holders. Research has shown that the detrimental effects of alcohol are increased with younger drivers<sup>9</sup>, supporting the reduced legal BAC levels for learner and

<sup>9</sup> Eg See Peck, R.C. et al (2008). The relationship between blood alcohol concentration (BAC), age, and crash risk.



provisional drivers. For these groups, a BAC of 0.02 was introduced in April 1985 and was further reduced to zero in May 2004.

#### *2.4.1.1 Random Breath Testing (RBT)*

One of the most effective means to address drink driving is through laws governing the practice, and enforcement of those laws. RBT, used to detect anyone driving over the legal limit, was introduced in December 1982 in NSW and mobile RBT enforcement commenced in August 1987. Since the mid 1980's the road toll has continued to improve and this improvement in part has been associated with improved RBT enforcement and public education campaigns. Other road safety measures and strategies have also contributed to the ongoing fatality reductions through to the current outcomes.

A deterrence theory and model was presented by Homel<sup>10</sup> to conceptualise the deterrent process involved in RBT. Deterrence is affected by a person's perception on whether the benefit of a crime outweighs the cost if caught. In terms of drink driving, the potential risk of being caught as well as the severity and swiftness of the punishment would be considered. Further research on the effectiveness of deterrence has suggested that for it to work effectively, the perceived risk of being caught must be high and the punishment must be seen to be severe, swift and certain.

To ensure that RBT is successful, it must be highly visible, unpredictable, hard to evade, have serious consequences and be perceived as a threat to the driving public. Ensuring that RBT continues to meet these criteria helps ensure that it maintains its deterrent effects<sup>11</sup>. In a recent review, The National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund (NDLERF) concluded that maximum effectiveness of RBT occurs when people have direct experience with testing (ie have been tested or personally know someone who was tested) rather than simply seeing testing being done.<sup>12</sup> They suggest that the Police should have direct contact with as many drivers as possible to ensure this occurs.

Following the introduction of the RBT three year trial (1982 to 1985) and evaluation found that the measure was associated with a 27 per cent reduction in fatalities, of which around three-quarters of the decrease was attributed to the introduction of RBT.<sup>13</sup> An analysis conducted on the impact on crashes from the introduction of RBT in various jurisdictions of Australia determined that this strategy was instantaneous, substantial and positive. Further, it was found that RBT contributed to a reduction of between 17–42 percent of fatal crashes in New South Wales of and between three and 18 percent of all serious crashes between 1982 and 1992<sup>14</sup>.

Random breath testing has now been in operation in NSW for 30 years, marking its anniversary in December 2012. It is encouraging to see how attitudes have changed towards drink driving over this period, as it is now perceived as much less socially acceptable than in the past<sup>15</sup>.

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*Journal of Safety Research*, 39 (3), 311–319.

<sup>10</sup> Homel, R. (1988). *Policing and punishing the drinking driver: A study of general and specific deterrence*, NY:Springer-Verlag.

<sup>11</sup> NDLERF (2011) *Evaluating the deterrent effect of random breath testing (RBT) and random drug testing (RDT)—The driver's perspective Research findings*, Monograph Series No. 41

<sup>12</sup> IBID

<sup>13</sup> Arthurson, R., (1985). *Evaluation of random breath testing*, Traffic Authority of New South Wales, Research Note RN 10/85

<sup>14</sup> Henstridge, J., Homel, R., Mackay, P., (1997). *The long term effects of random breath testing in four Australian states: A time series analysis*. Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Development - Federal Office of Road Safety.

<sup>15</sup> For example see Job, RFS. (1983). *Reported attitudes, practices and knowledge in relation to drink-driving: The effects of the introduction of random breath testing in New South Wales*. In *Alcohol, drugs and traffic safety: Proceedings of the ninth International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety*. San Juan and Woolcott Research (2012) Plan B' Drink Drive Research Study, Post Read Findings. Unpublished report submitted to Transport for NSW.

### 2.4.1.2 Enhanced Enforcement Program

The Enhanced Enforcement Program is a partnership between the NSW Police Force and Transport for NSW. Its objective is to reduce road trauma and target road user behaviour known to contribute to road trauma, such as speeding and drink driving. Transport for NSW provides the NSW Police Force with additional funding, currently around \$14M per annum, to enhance the level of visible Police enforcement activity over and above normal operating requirements. The provision of this funding has assisted the Police to conduct approximately 4.52 million RBTs in 2011 and 4.68 million RBTs in 2012.

Nearing the end of 2012, Transport for NSW provided an extra \$1 million for additional high visibility enforcement by NSW Police Highway Patrol. During this period the Police Highway Patrol undertook 'Operation Phoenix' which targeted areas where police figures showed an increase of 14 per cent or more in injury or fatal motor vehicle crashes compared to last year. They also targeted surrounding areas with operations on both state and local roads. The operations all target key road safety issues including, speeding, drink driving, occupant restraints and the use of mobile phones while driving across NSW.

In summary, there is strong evidence that the introduction of laws related to alcohol limits, subsequent refinement of those limits over time, and strong enforcement of those laws has contributed to a reduction in drink driving crashes on NSW roads. The table below illustrates the legislative changes in NSW drink driving laws and the relevant road toll values.

Table 2 – Legislative and Road Toll Milestones in NSW

Date	Legislation	Road Toll	Alcohol Related Fatalities
16 Dec 1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Maximum legal prescribed content of alcohol (PCA) limit of 0.08 grammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood introduced</li></ul>	1,211 in 1968 (highest road toll for NSW to that point)	N/A
15 Dec 1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The PCA limit was changed to 0.05</li></ul>	1,303 in 1980 (second highest road toll for NSW to that point)	389
17 Dec 1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Random Breath Testing (RBT) was introduced on a trial basis between 17 December 1982 and 16 December 1985.</li><li>Introduced compulsory blood testing of drivers and riders of motor vehicles and of pedestrians aged 15 years and over admitted to or treated at a hospital as the result of motor vehicle crash.</li></ul>	1,253 in 1982 falling to 966 in 1983	340 in 1982 falling to 222 in 1983

Date	Legislation	Road Toll	Alcohol Related Fatalities
2 Apr 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PCA for a learner permit holder or a first year provisional drivers' licence holder becomes 0.02</li> <li>It was made an offence for the supervising licensed driver seated alongside a learner to have a blood alcohol content of 0.05 or more.</li> </ul>	1,067 in 1985	260
10 Dec 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBT becomes a permanent feature of NSW Traffic Regulations</li> </ul>	1,067 in 1985	260
Late 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobile RBT operations commence</li> </ul>	1,037 in 1988	227
18 Dec 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confiscation and suspension of drivers' licences by Police for exceed 0.15 BAC.</li> <li>Extension of the existing 0.02 BAC level to disqualified, cancelled and suspended drivers.</li> </ul>	960 in 1989	214
1 Jan 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of 0.02 BAC Limit for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- young drivers under 25 years with less than three years experience</li> <li>- public vehicle drivers</li> <li>- dangerous goods vehicle drivers</li> <li>- radioactive materials vehicle drivers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	663 in 1991 (then the lowest since 1950)	173
2 Jul 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate licence suspension for mid range alcohol offence introduced (0.08)</li> </ul>	556 in 1998 (then the lowest since 1949)	91
3 May 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero BAC Limit for all learner and provisional licence holders</li> </ul>	510 in 2004 (then the lowest since 1947)	84
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recorded the Lowest Road Toll Since 1944</li> </ul>	374	79
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recorded the Lowest Road Toll Since 1926</li> </ul>	364	70
2012 (prov)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Second Lowest Road Toll Since 1926</li> </ul>	370	Est prel 54 (Record Low)

## 2.4.2 Drink Driving Laws and Deterrence

### 2.4.2.1 Programs for first time offenders

The Traffic Offender Intervention Program is a Local Court based program targeting offenders who have pleaded guilty to, or been found guilty of, a traffic offence. Although they may attend for a variety of offences, including drug and alcohol offences as well as speeding or driving unlicensed. However, the majority of the offenders who attend the program are there in relation to a drink driving charge.

The goal of the Traffic Offender Intervention Program is to provide the participants with the information and skills necessary in order to develop positive attitudes towards driving and develop safer driving behaviours.

### 2.4.2.2 Programs for high risk offenders

While the approach of enforcement and large scale public education campaigns works for most drivers, there are still too many who continue to drink and drive. The Government has a number of specific strategies for high risk drink drivers aimed at reducing the burden drink driving places on the community. Despite the tough penalties in place to deter drink driving, around 17 per cent of those convicted of drink driving have had at least one previous drink driving conviction in the last

five years. Two specific programs developed for these high risk drink drive offenders by Transport for NSW include the NSW Sober Driver Program and the Alcohol Interlock Program.

### **(i) Sober Driver Program**

The NSW Sober Driver Program is an educational and rehabilitation program targeting repeat drink drivers. The program is funded by Transport for NSW and delivered by Corrective Services NSW.

It is a nine-week education and relapse prevention program for repeat drink drive offenders across the state who are convicted of two or more offences within five years. Unlike other education programs for drink drivers, participants are required to complete the program as part of their sentence.

The program uses a linear structure where participants build on their knowledge of the relevant concepts and issues throughout the sessions. It reflects key adult education and psychological principles, uses interactive learning techniques including group discussion and teaches offenders strategies to help avoid drink driving.

An evaluation of the Sober Driver Program was published in 2008<sup>16</sup>. The study comprised two main components: an analysis of participants' knowledge, attitudes and skills regarding drink driving prior to and following participation, and a comparison of the recidivism rates of participants and a comparison group for a two year period following program participation.

The results of the pre and post intervention surveys indicated that respondents' knowledge, attitudes and skills regarding drink driving had improved following program participation. Additionally, the analysis of recidivism rates found that program participants were 43% less likely to re-offend over a two year period compared with a group who had received sanctions alone.

A second, longer term follow-up of recidivism rates amongst the offenders in the original study as well as a new cohort of program participants and controls, was subsequently conducted in 2010<sup>17</sup>. This study replicated the effect seen in the original examination of recidivism rates and also demonstrated that the reduced rate in recidivism was maintained over the five year period<sup>18</sup>.

### **(ii) Alcohol Interlock Program**

An alcohol interlock is an electronic device that can be installed into a vehicle to monitor the driver's BAC level and prevent the car from starting if the recorded BAC level is above a preset limit. The parameters of the interlock can be set to specific criteria for any jurisdiction. For example, the machine can require retests at random intervals during a trip to ensure that the driver's BAC remains within the limit, or the interval between service visits for the interlock can be varied. The machine also keeps a record of the BACs with each use and can be downloaded into a secure database for examination. Alcohol interlock programs for drink drivers are becoming increasingly popular and are now in several Australian jurisdictions.

The NSW Alcohol Interlock Program is a sentencing option for magistrates to apply to drink drivers who have been disqualified for certain major alcohol-related offences. In such cases the

<sup>16</sup> Mills, KL, Hodge, W., Johansson, K., & Conigrave, KM (2008). An outcome evaluation of the New South Wales Sober Driver Programme: a remedial programme for recidivist drink drivers. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 27, 65 – 74

<sup>17</sup> ARTD (2010). Analysis Of Recidivism Among Sober Driver Program Participants. Report to Corrective Services NSW.

<sup>18</sup> Mazurski, E., Withaneachi, D., & Kelly, S. (2011). *The NSW Sober Driver Program: Recidivism rates and program parameters*. Presented at the Australasian Road Safety Research, Policing, and Education Conference, Perth



magistrate will issue a disqualification suspension order which enables the participant to have a reduced disqualification period if they join the interlock program for a specified period of time. The participant would then get an interlock licence once they have the interlock installed and have seen a medical practitioner concerning their alcohol use.

The program is a user pays system where the participant pays for the installation, monthly servicing and subsequent removal of the interlock at the end of the specified period. Interlock services are conducted by installers and service providers through commercial companies, approved by Transport for NSW. The cost for an interlock is around \$2,000 per year.

The Government provides a subsidy for those participants who qualify. The subsidy allows for a reduction in the cost of installation, monthly servicing and removal of the interlock at the end of the program.

An evaluation of the Alcohol Interlock Program was conducted in late 2012. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify the positive and negative aspects of the program and the primary barriers and issues in relation to participation in the current program. The evaluation identified that the uptake of the program could be enhanced by greater promotion and program awareness and by modifying the program parameters to make participation a more preferable choice. There were positive comments from some of the participants about being in the program, particularly in relation to it helping them realise when they should not be driving. Alcohol interlock programs have been demonstrated to effectively reduce drink driving for those offenders participating in the program<sup>19,20</sup> and are becoming increasingly popular both within Australia and in overseas jurisdictions. Given the potential for reducing the incidence of drink driving, particularly with greater numbers of participants at any one time, expansion of the NSW program is being investigated.

## 2.4.3 Education and Campaigns

### 2.4.3.1 Campaigns

As indicated above, enforcement of drink driving laws is a major deterrence strategy to address drink driving, and is supported by wide scale public education campaigns.

Mass media campaigns can be effective in modifying attitudes and behaviours and are an excellent means by which to disseminate messages across whole communities.<sup>21</sup>

NSW drink driving media campaigns include multiple components such as television advertisements, radio advertising, outdoor advertising, online and print advertising to ensure high impact awareness of drink drive messages. In more recent campaigns the internet and social media are being increasingly used to reach the target audiences.

NSW has used media campaigns effectively for a number of years to address drink driving. The 'Paranoia' drink driving campaign was launched in 2006 and moved away from traditional road safety advertising to use an emotional and fresh approach which focused on psychological feelings.

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<sup>19</sup> Willis C, Lybrand S, Bellamy N. Alcohol ignition interlock programmes for reducing drink driving recidivism. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2004, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD004168. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004168.pub2.

<sup>20</sup> Elder, R. W. et al (2011). Effectiveness of ignition interlocks for preventing alcohol-impaired driving and alcohol-related crashes. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 40 (3), 362-376.

<sup>21</sup> For example see Elder, R.W. et al (2004). Effectiveness of mass media campaigns for reducing drinking and driving and alcohol-involved crashes. A systematic review. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 27, 57-65.



The campaign tapped into the guilt drink drivers' experience and explored their anxiety, restlessness and fear of getting caught. Research showed that although some drivers felt RBT was predictable, they change their driving style if they have been drinking in an effort to avoid detection. This campaign promoted the fact that every police car is a Mobile RBT.

Post-production and special effects were used to create the lead character's feelings of 'paranoia'. After the lead character leaves the pub and gets behind the wheel knowing that he's had a few drinks, he thinks he sees a policeman wherever he goes. The tagline is 'Mobile RBT. You won't know where. You won't know when' which highlights the unpredictable nature of mobile RBT and the increased risk of being caught.

Evaluation of this campaign indicated that it was memorable and achieved very high levels of recognition with eighty six per cent of NSW drivers having seen or heard any part of the campaign which promotes RBT. The main message of the campaign that 'every police car is an RBT' was clearly understood and highlighted the unpredictable nature of the enforcement.

There was almost universal identification with the feelings and situations portrayed. Over 90 per cent of NSW drivers considered the television advertisement to be believable and easy to understand. They also found it motivating.

Many drivers believed it was likely they would be caught for drink driving which demonstrated the campaign's success in informing drivers about their risk of being caught by police if they drink and drive.

Following on from the successful 'Paranoia' campaign, a new drink driving public education campaign called 'Plan B' was launched in mid 2012. The campaign provides an innovative positive solution to a complex road safety issue by engaging the community in a conversation about making alternative arrangements when they go out drinking. It is about making positive choices to getting home safely after a night out and highlighting that driving is not an option. It presents practical options to avoid drink driving, but takes a humorous and positive approach designed to engage the community. The campaign works in combination with Police enforcement by emphasising that mobile RBT operations can happen anytime, anywhere.

The 'Plan B' campaign targets men but it doesn't tell them what to do... it tells them they have choices. The message is clear... if you're drinking... make alternative arrangements... have a 'Plan B' because drink driving is not an option. Although the Plan B campaign reaches all drivers, it is primarily directed at young males. Male drivers between 17-39 years old make up 64 per cent of drink drivers involved in fatal crashes. Plan B is an integrated statewide marketing campaign. Media channels were chosen based on the preferences of the target audience. There is a heavy emphasis on digital, cinema and free-to-air television. Online users are directed to click through to find a range of Plan B options, including 131 500 and taxi information. These elements are supported with strong advertising on bus and taxi backs and in drinking venues, when people are making the critical decision about whether to drink and drive.

Transport for NSW's sponsorship of the 2012/13 Cricket NSW season primarily focused on promoting the Plan B message and campaign at the Sydney Cricket Ground during the Australian Test Series, One Day International, Big Bash League and the Ryobi Cup. This achieved high visibility on TV broadcast and print media via the Sydney Cricket Ground venue signage. The Plan B message was also promoted through venue signs, beer cups and venue bar staff were wearing Plan B shirts. Additionally there was consumer engagement activity at the venue.

The campaign has now been running for over six months. Early tracking results of the program suggests that there is a high level of awareness amongst the primary target group (about 55%) and that a significant proportion of young males believe that the message is relevant to them.

Continued follow up is planned for the campaign in the future to assess the public's awareness and response to it.

#### *2.4.3.2 Local Government initiatives - youth drink drive projects*

Local Council Road Safety Officers identify local areas that have a high number of drink drive crashes involving young drivers/passengers, or a large number of positive RBT readings, and evaluate transport options available to residents. The target audience such as young tourists/locals, licensed premises, special local racing or sporting events, or 'morning after' drivers is defined. In developing their youth drink drive projects, Road Safety Officers liaise with all relevant local community and business stakeholders as well as local representatives from NSW Government agencies, in particular local police, Gaming and Racing (Liquor Accords), Roads and Maritime Services, health and transport providers.

Road Safety Officers, who are partially funded by Transport for NSW, develop working relationships with local media outlets to advertise their projects. They generally use Transport for NSW approved public education DVD/CDs and relevant community material such as Youthsafe fact sheets. Additionally, Road Safety Officers develop special youth promotional material about upcoming local events and organise alternative transport vouchers to ensure a safe trip home.

Road Safety Officers evaluate their drink drive projects at the local level by comparing relevant 'before and after' data relating to RBT or drink drive/walk crashes.

#### *2.4.3.3 Good Sports Program*

Transport for NSW provides funding to support the Good Sports Program. The Australian Drug Foundation operates the program in NSW to address alcohol consumption and associated alcohol-related injuries, drink driving and violence at community sporting clubs.

The program works by effectively introducing strategies that will change the culture of drinking across a local sporting community and support the responsible service of alcohol.

Clubs in the Program progress through three formal accreditation levels; Level 1 ensures clubs comply with relevant liquor laws; Level 2 helps clubs to implement practices on responsible service of alcohol and safe transport; Level 3 involves clubs developing specific policies defining their Level 1 and 2 initiatives.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Good Sports program in terms of tackling drink driving is currently underway.

#### *2.4.3.4 School Education*

Transport for NSW has also developed education resources for schools in teaching young people about drink driving. Schools can play a key role in assisting young people be safer road users through the delivery of effective attitude-based driver education programs. Driver education or safe driving programs for young drivers and passengers aim to influence the decisions that young people make as road users. Such programs seek to address the motivational factors that influence driver behaviour and are delivered in NSW high schools as part of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education courses.

'Limiting risks, protecting lives - Choices for novice drivers and their passengers' is a road safety educational resource targeting students in Stage 5 and 6 (Years 9-12) which supports road safety education in secondary schools in NSW. The resource consists of seven modules designed to support delivery of key safety messages for this age group. It aims to promote deeper thinking and

better decision making about road safety for students as drivers and passengers. The activities in this resource aim to challenge students' attitudes and values and to encourage them to question their behaviour, increasing the likelihood that they will internalise the key messages and act on them. Activities in this resource focus on the responsibilities of the passenger and the driver.

The activities encourage students to:

- reflect on their own beliefs, behaviours and experiences
- debate and challenge ideas
- interact and exchange ideas amongst peers and others
- construct knowledge through drawing connections
- be self directed learners.

Module 5 of the resource is concerned with exploring the risks associated with alcohol, drugs and driving. Students create strategies to reduce their risks when in the road environment and consider available support networks.

#### (i) Educational material for young drivers

Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services deliver a range of programs to promote safe road use behaviour. A variety of research methods are used to measure the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of road users. This information is then used to develop, implement and evaluate best practice road safety countermeasures including advertising campaigns that promote safe and responsible road use. These campaigns address the key behavioural factors that cause road crashes such as speeding, drink driving, fatigue and the non-use of seatbelts. Additionally, campaigns also support the introduction of new or revised road rules.

Westmead Hospital annually hosts the *bstreetsmart* forum (formerly Australian Road Trauma Forum) at Allphones Arena, Olympic Park to raise awareness of road trauma. On August 21-23, 2012, more than 14,000 high school students from years 10, 11 and 12 from across NSW and the ACT attended the forum. The Forum's primary objective is to reduce the fatality and injury rates of young people and to ensure that the community is aware of injury prevention, trauma care services and related resources available. Alcohol and driving is addressed in this forum, along with many other road safety issues.

Transport for NSW also provides 'Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers' workshops offered free of charge in local government areas across NSW for supervisors of learner drivers in understanding how to plan effective on-road driving practice and how to support learner drivers to be low risk drivers.

## 2.4.4 Conclusion

Over the last thirty years there has been significant progress made in NSW to combat drink driving. The introduction of drink driving laws, the progressive reduction in BAC limits and their strong enforcement as well as the availability of programs, campaigns and education has resulted in a substantial reduction in the road toll resulting from drink driving.

As reviewed above, the NSW Government has used a number of strategies to address drink driving generally, and in particular to address drink driving by young people. Evidence-based approaches are used which have been demonstrated to be effective in reducing the number of drivers who illegally drink drive. Continued research into new and existing approaches and evaluation of current approaches is warranted to ensure that the investment in combating drink driving provides the best outcomes for all NSW road users.

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