



Come home safe

8 point plan to help keep
young drivers safe on the road.

Road Safety Series

March 2018



About the NRMA

Better road and transport infrastructure has been a core focus of the NRMA since 1920 when our founders lobbied for improvements to the condition of Parramatta Road in Sydney. Independent advocacy was the foundation activity of the organisation and remains critical to who we are as we approach our first centenary.

From humble beginnings, the NRMA has grown to represent over 2.6 million Australians principally from NSW and the ACT. The NRMA also provides motoring, mobility and tourism services to our Members and the community.

Today, the NRMA works with policy makers and industry leaders to advocate for increased investment in road infrastructure and transport solutions to make mobility safer, provide affordable and efficient transport options and ensure communities remain connected to business and employment opportunities.

By working together with all levels of government to deliver integrated transport options we can give motorists a real choice about how they get around. The NRMA believes that integrated transport networks, including efficient roads, high-quality public transport and improved facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, are essential to solve the challenge of growing congestion and provide for the future growth of our communities.

Road Safety Series

The NRMA has prepared a series of reports with the aim of identifying the main factors involved in road crashes and initiatives that may help to reduce the risk of loss of life and injuries.

We acknowledge the next major tool to prevent and reduce loss of life will be driven by technology, as was seen with seatbelts and random breath testing. While we move towards an autonomous future, continued investment in road infrastructure, vehicle technology and public education campaigns are needed to improve the safety of motorists on our roads.



Introduction

Every day just over 1,000 young people under the age of 25 years are killed in road crashes around the world.¹

In 2016, 40 young drivers aged 17 to 25 lost their lives on NSW roads.² The loss of 40 young lives with so much to offer is often devastating for both the families of the victims and the community around them.

We all want to keep young drivers safe, whether they are our children, our friends or people we care about. As many drivers would already know, one of the most risky times in a young person's life is also the start of their freedom and independence – getting a driver's licence.

Every young person, their friends and parents would like to ensure they are safe on the road. While young people may exhibit risky behaviour on our roads, time behind the wheel in practical settings, continuous information sharing and reducing distraction all help to keep young drivers safe. Young drivers, their peers and the people around them that care about them deserve access to programs, information and education that encourage good driving behaviour and keep them safe on the roads.

With road trauma being the main source of injuries for young people in NSW, the NRMA wants to help keep young drivers safe by ensuring they drive safer cars, receive a reward when they drive safely and ensure that the licencing system is effective so that young drivers are safe drivers.

The NRMA strongly believes that access to a licence and the ability to travel independently is an enabler for young people. The ability to drive connects young people to social, educational and employment opportunities that are essential for growth.

What the NRMA wants

- 1.** An independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) with the results made publicly available.
- 2.** A trial of connected car devices to allow continuous assessment of driver behaviour, with the potential of rewarding safe young drivers.
- 3.** An education campaign on buying the safest car you can afford, targeting young drivers and their parents.
- 4.** Registration discount to provisional drivers who register a 5 star ANCAP or UCSR rated car.
- 5.** Reward young drivers with a free licence when they maintain a clean probationary driving record, delivering a much-needed saving of \$56 for a one year licence, \$134 for three year licence or \$180 for a five year licence.
- 6.** Dedicated funding for education programs targeted at building the skills and education of young drivers in the years prior to obtaining a learners permit.
- 7.** Publicly release the results of the P Drivers project to inform the development of best-practice driver education programs.
- 8.** Additional funding to support learner driver mentoring programs for indigenous and at-risk communities.

Young drivers at risk

Young drivers are over-represented in crashes on NSW roads

15%

Crashes involving P plate drivers account for 15 per cent of all fatalities on NSW roads

8%

Provisional drivers make up 8 per cent of all driver licence holders

Young drivers are most at risk in the six months after they obtain their probationary licence

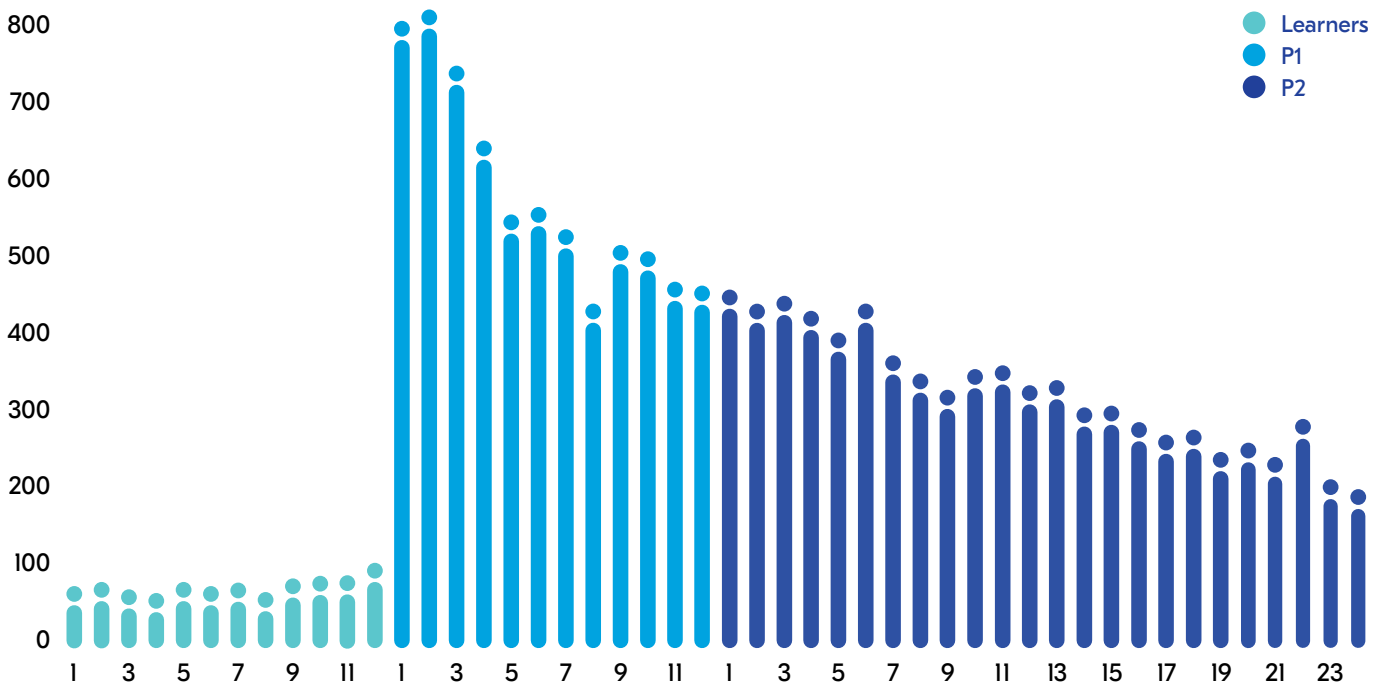


Figure 1. Under 26 driver involvements in casualty crashes by driver class and month of tenure (2011 - 2015).
Source: Centre for Road Safety

Drivers under 26 involved in crashes throughout 2016

100

Fatalities involving a 17-25 year old driver

1,713

Serious injuries involving a 17-25 year old driver

Young drivers are at risk due to:

- Inexperience as a driver
- Poor judgment
- Underestimation of risk
- Deliberate risk-taking behaviours
- Use of older and less safe cars
- Brain development

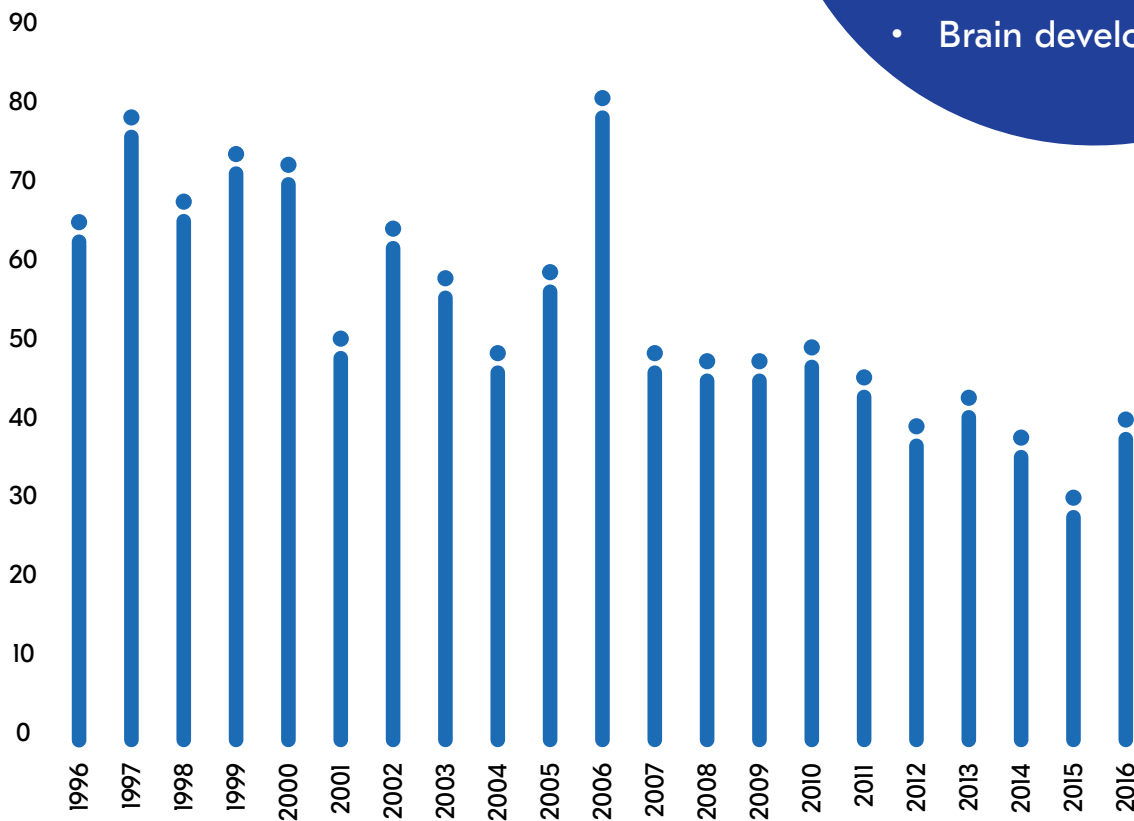





Figure 2. Number of young drivers lives lost (1996 - 2016). Source: Centre for Road Safety

NSW Graduated Licensing System

The NSW Government first introduced the Graduated Licensing System (GLS) in 2000. Since then there have been significant refinements to the scheme. To obtain their full licence, young drivers must complete the following requirements:

Obtaining a learner permit 	Obtaining a P1 licence 	Obtaining a P2 licence 	Obtaining a full licence
Must be 16 years	Must be 17 years	Held P1 licence for 12 months	Held P2 licence for at least 24 months
Pass a driver knowledge test and eyesight test	Held learner licence for at least 12 months, unless 25 years or older		
	Logged at least 120 hours, including at least 20 hours of night driving, unless you're 25 or older		
	Pass hazard perception test		
	Pass driving test and eyesight test		
Conditions / requirements / restrictions	Conditions / requirements / restrictions	Conditions / requirements / restrictions	Conditions / requirements / restrictions
Must be supervised by a fully licensed driver			
Zero BAC	Zero BAC	Zero BAC	0.05 BAC
Max speed limit 90km/h	Max speed limit 90km/h	Max speed limit 100km/h	Posted speed limit
Must not use a mobile phone	Must not use a mobile phone	Must not use a mobile phone	Can use hands-free mobile
Must hold permit for min. of 12 months if under 25 years	Peer passenger restriction between 11pm and 5am		
Must have completed 120 hours, including 20 hours night driving. (20 hour discount for the participation in the Safer Drivers Course, 20 hour discount for 10 hours of professional instruction)	Vehicle power restrictions		
Penalties	Penalties	Penalties	Penalties
Must not accrue four or more demerit points in a three year period	Must not accrue four or more demerit points in a three year period Three month licence suspension for any speeding offence. An additional suspension or refusal period will apply for any excessive speed offence (more than 30km/h over the speed limit)	Must not accrue four or more demerit points in a seven year period Any speeding offence committed receives a minimum of four demerit points. A suspension or refusal period also applies for any excessive speed offence (more than 30km/h over the speed limit).	
		Extra 6 months on P2 if P2 licence is suspended	

All Australian States and Territories have some form of GLS in place with varying conditions and restrictions for young drivers. The NRMA believes that GLS across Australia should be evidence-based and where possible consideration should be given to nationally harmonising these schemes.

Many local and international jurisdictions have evaluated their GLS in order to determine its effectiveness:

- Queensland – an evaluation of their GLS found a 31 per cent reduction in fatal crashes, a combined 13 per cent reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes and a 4 per cent reduction in all reported crashes.³
- Victoria – it was found drivers who had been through the new GLS are 20 per cent less likely to have a serious crash in their first two years on the road. The evaluation also showed that P-Platers in their first year of driving are 19 per cent less likely to be involved in a fatal or serious crash.⁴

Given that it has been almost 20 years since the GLS was introduced in NSW, the NRMA believes that now is the time for an independent evaluation of the State’s GLS.

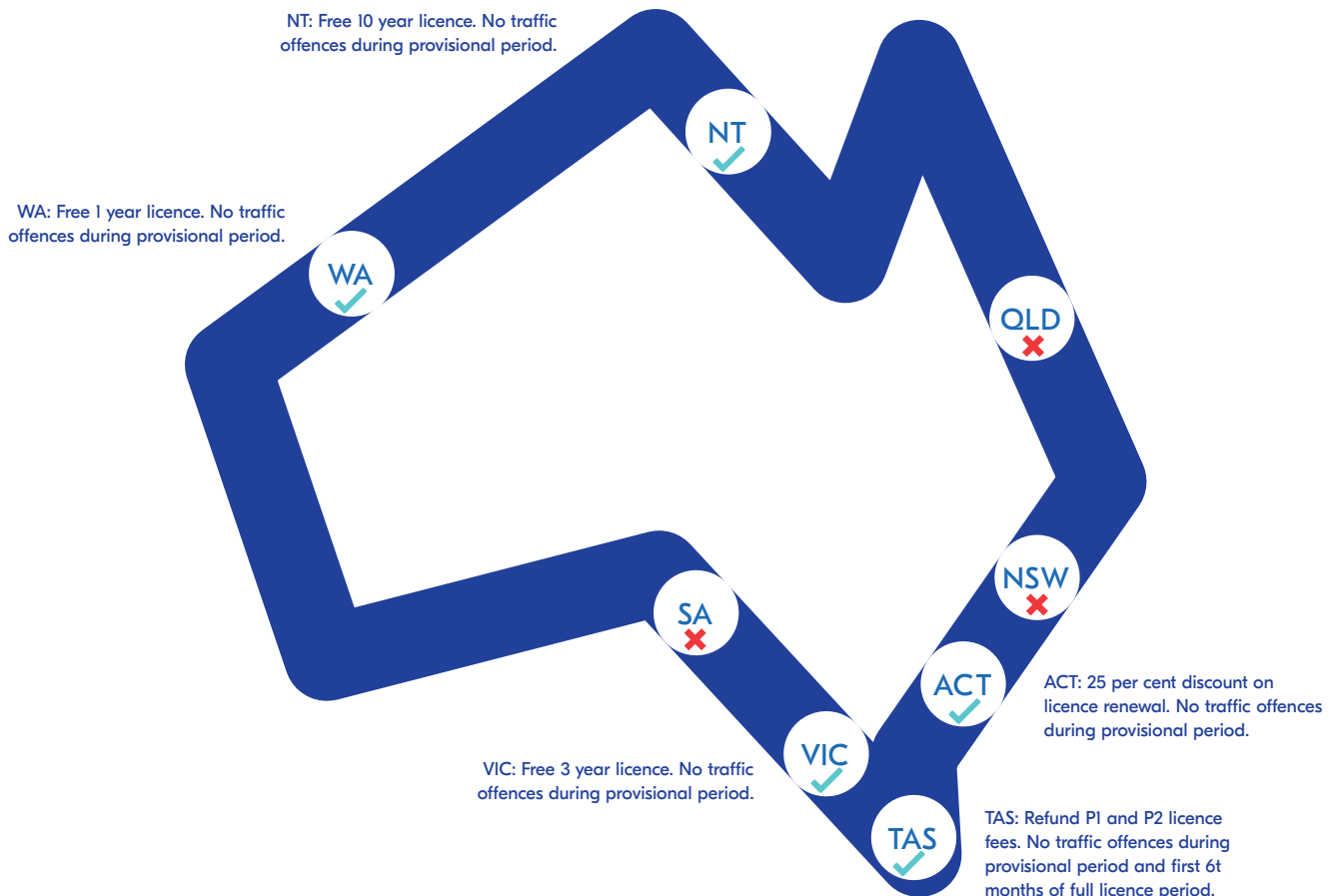
Rewarding good driving

In NSW, unrestricted licence holders who have a five year good driving record are eligible for a 50 per cent discount on their licence renewal fee. The NRMA first proposed this initiative for rewarding good drivers. The NRMA believes that while bad driver behaviour should be punished, drivers should also be rewarded for doing the right thing. This especially extends to young drivers.

Many jurisdictions offer young drivers a reward for having a clean driving record during their provisional period as shown in Table 1. For example in Victoria, under the Free Licence Scheme, young drivers are rewarded with a free three year licence when they complete four years on their P plates with no traffic-related offences.⁵

The NRMA would like to see young drivers in NSW also rewarded for safer driving. Young drivers should receive a free licence when they maintain a clean probationary driving record. The NRMA believes such an initiative would act as an incentive to maintain a clean record, but also allow young people from vulnerable communities or those experiencing financial hardship to stay connected and access employment opportunities that may not have been available without the use of a vehicle.

Figure 3. Young driver reward schemes in Australia



Young drivers in older cars

Research has found that a young drivers' first car is likely to be an inexpensive older model, and unlikely to be the safest car in the family.⁶ This can have devastating consequences. As shown in Figure 4, the injury severity for occupants increases with the age of the car, with injury rates pronounced amongst people aged 17 to 20 years.

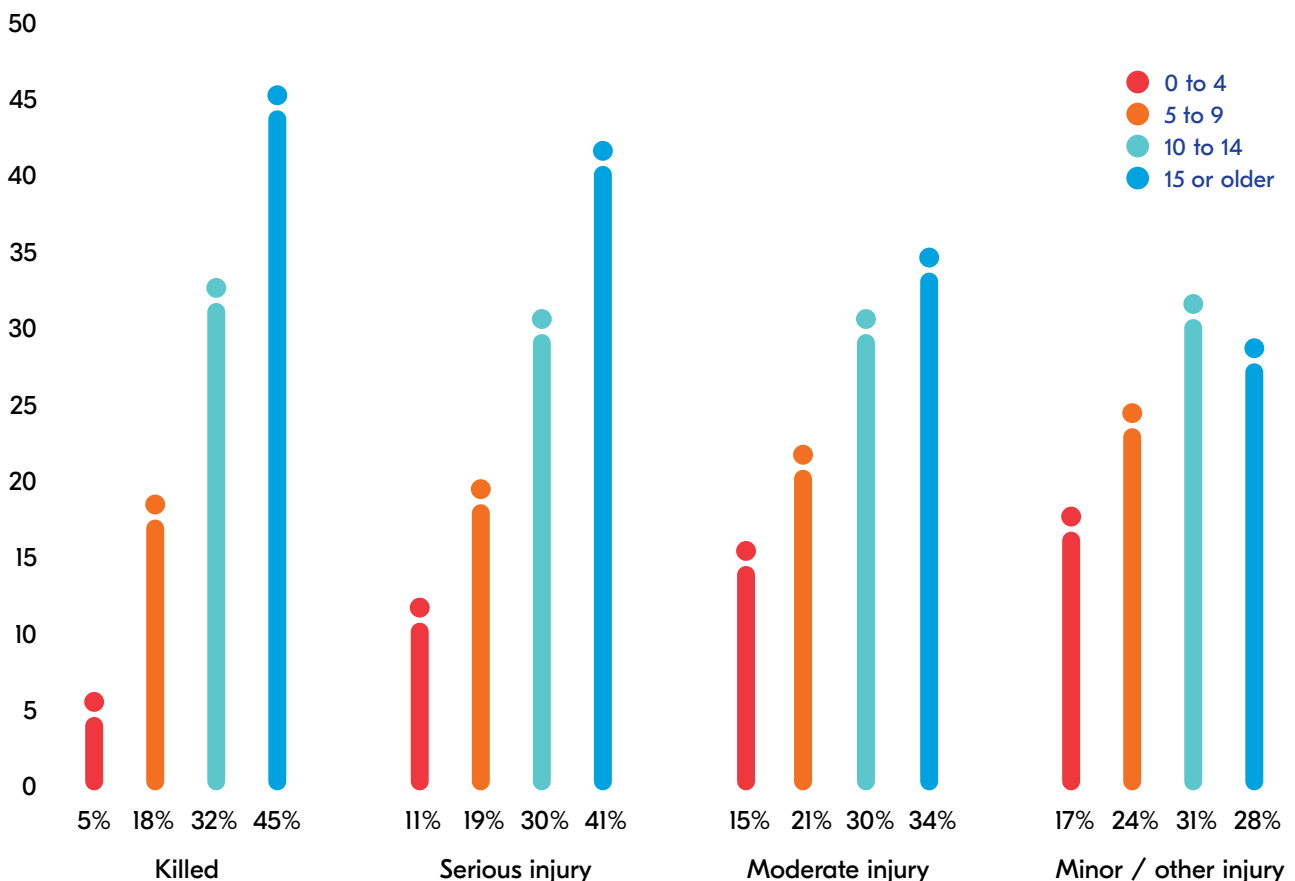
The first car a young driver owns or uses is commonly the least safe. This is often due to the car being a hand-me-down from a well-meaning family member, a birthday present or a share car with their siblings.⁷

Young drivers are our most vulnerable road users, and we need to ensure that young drivers and their parents or guardians have enough information on how to buy the safest car they can afford. Research has shown that young drivers and their parents were also unlikely to have considered safety when purchasing a car.⁷ Features such as price, colour and preferred model are weighted more heavily in the purchase decision. Parents were also unaware or did not consider the safety ratings of vehicles when advising on a purchase for their children.

The greater promotion of the Used Car Safety Ratings (UCSR) would help people identify safer second hand cars. Monash University Accident Research Centre, in partnership with the NSW Centre for Road safety, the NRMA and other members of the Vehicle Safety Research Group, analysed records from more than 7.5 million vehicles involved in road crashes and 1.7 million injured road users in New Zealand and Australia between 1987 and 2015 to produce the ratings. A driver of the worst vehicle rated is 10 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured than a driver in the safest vehicle. This demonstrates the importance of choosing a safe second-hand car.

The NRMA believes that to potentially address the knowledge gap on used car safety ratings, registration discounts for provisional drivers who register a 5 star Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) or UCSR rated car should also be introduced as a means to motivate parents and young drivers to purchase safer vehicles.

Figure 4. Relationship between car age and severity of injury for drivers aged 17-20 from financial years 2011/12 to 2015/16. Source: Transport for NSW





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This demonstrates the importance of choosing a safe second-hand car.

Connected car technology

Connected car devices can help to educate drivers on safe driving behaviour and even to limit unsafe behaviour, such as through blocking mobile phone signals, providing fatigue reminders or preventing excess speed. These technological solutions can provide driver score reports that help to monitor on-road behaviour and encourage safer driving.

The risks addressed through connected car are amongst some of the greatest causes of crashes amongst young drivers, with the potential upside greatest amongst these age groups. The benefits could be derived through the gamification of driver scores, with benefits and rewards associated with high performance, or through the use of the technology to target drivers exhibiting poor behaviour.

The NRMA also believes that the role of connected cars in monitoring the driving of young people during the provisional period should be explored. Cloud based telematics solutions currently exist that can assess driver performance and safety over longer periods of time providing an opportunity to monitor learner and provisional driver behaviour.

The NRMA believes a trial of the use of connected car technology should be undertaken to provide continual driver monitoring over the first six months of a Provisional 1 licence, to determine its effectiveness in improving young driver behaviour. A trial should further examine appropriate rewards for provisional drivers to incentivise the take up and use of connected car.

The NRMA is currently installing connected car technology with its fleet customers, providing diagnostic information to fleet management on driver behaviour including braking, speed and the overall operating capacity of the vehicle. The NRMA believes similar technology would provide valuable insight into the driving behaviour of young people, allowing campaigns and education to be tailored, while at the same time rewarding those drivers that consistently exhibit safe driving behaviour.

Effectiveness of advanced driver training

There are two conflicting schools of thought when it comes to advanced driver training:

- that it can help to improve young drivers understanding of techniques to reduce the risk or severity of a crash, and
- that it can potentially lead to risk-taking behaviour.

The NRMA believes the community would benefit from greater research in this space, specifically examining the rates of serious injuries and fatalities amongst advanced driver training participants as well as overall driving behaviour through the use of technology, such as connected car devices. Driving performance of participants in advanced driver training should be assessed in the range of environmental conditions they are likely to encounter on the road including driving at night, in wet weather and high wind.

The industry is currently waiting the outcomes of the P Drivers project, a world-first research study aimed at improving the safety of young drivers. The crash-based trial of best-practice driver education aims to implement and assess new approaches to driver education. In particular, driver education that seeks to raise awareness about risk factors, improve decision making and provide novice drivers with insight into their own skill limitations through experiential learning.

The P Drivers project jointly funded by a raft of government and private sector organisations also includes an in-car component, which will cover low-risk driving tasks such as maintaining safe following distances.⁸ It is anticipated that the results of the program will be released later this year.

The NRMA believes that the analysis of this research and recent overseas research will be critical in guiding driver education and safety programs aimed at young drivers.

Driver Education

Education and practical experience can assist young people to become capable and confident drivers on the road. Supervised learning and training programs build awareness, knowledge and understanding of basic car control, road rules, and the risks associated with driving.

Greater levels of supervised real world experience during the learner period have been shown to reduce post-licence crash involvement by up to about 35 per cent.⁹

The NRMA is a champion for driver education, recognising the importance of building road safety awareness consistently and repeatedly throughout a young person's life.

The NRMA offers a range of driver education programs from our Live Learn Drive program, Learner Driver Mentor Program and keys2drive.

Greater levels of funding are required to provide education in the years prior to obtaining a driver's licence and supervised practical experience once a learners permit has been obtained to prepare and support young drivers for this all important life task.

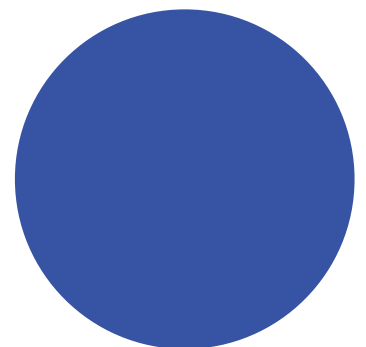
keys2drive

keys2drive is Australia's largest national driver safety program for beginner drivers. The program is jointly funded by the Australian Government and motoring clubs, including the NRMA.

The unique program provides over 20,000 learner drivers with a subsidised one-hour lesson with a professional driving instructor, while their parent or regular supervising driver sits in. The program is designed to break the transfer of poor driving skills from parents and mentors to learners.

NRMA research shows one third of learner drivers attribute bad habits behind the wheel to lessons from their parents. Further research shows that encouraging cooperation between driving schools and parents in teaching learners how to drive may be beneficial in increasing the quality of instruction, and the learner driver experience.¹⁰

This NRMA-supported program helps stop those bad habits in their track by providing the right education for learners and their supervisors.



Learner Driver Mentor Program

Less than half of eligible Aboriginal Australians hold a driver's licence, compared to over 70 per cent of the non-Indigenous population.¹¹ Lower rates of licencing, and therefore an ability to drive, reduces access to jobs, education, social activities as well as health and medical treatment.

Limited access to a licensed driver for supervised driving practice or a registered vehicle, costs, literacy, geographic isolation, lack of documentation, and outstanding fines all lead to lower rates of licencing for many Indigenous Australians.

Unlicensed driving is a substantial contributing factor to the high rate of imprisonment of Indigenous people. Currently Indigenous Australians are imprisoned for driver's licence offences at more than double the rate of the non-Indigenous population, with Aboriginal people representing a disproportionate 28 per cent of the total traffic-related imprisonments.¹²

One in 20 Indigenous people in gaol are serving a sentence for unlicensed driving and other driving related offences. In 2015, 191 Indigenous people were incarcerated in NSW. Unlicensed driving was the sixth highest reason for incarceration and accounted for 4.7 per cent of Indigenous people in custody. Aboriginal people are incarcerated at twice the rate of non-Indigenous Australians for unlicensed driving. Maximum gaol terms for unlicensed or disqualified driving range between 18-24 months.

It is estimated that the cost of incarceration equates to up to \$100,000 per person. The annual cost of Indigenous unlicensed or disqualified drivers to the NSW through the Corrective Services, Police and the courts is \$17-\$19 million.

This estimate does not include the social and economic impact to these communities of road fatalities that may occur as a result of unlicensed driving, estimated at approximately \$7 million for each fatality.

Incarceration has a significant impact on the social and economic participation of individuals. Compared to those with no recent gaol terms, Indigenous Australians incarcerated within the last five years are three times more likely to be unemployed, 20 per cent more likely to experience poor health and more likely to be exposed to physical violence or financial stress.

Boosting rates of licencing amongst the Indigenous community offers a simple and effective justice reinvestment program.

End-to-end programs that progress vulnerable communities from pre-learner licence to provisional licence improve safety, reduce offending and imprisonment and improve quality of life. In the NRMA's experience end-to-end programs cost \$5,000 per completion. While the program remains in its infancy, 83 per cent of participants have used their new licence to access a new job opportunity, while the remaining 17 per cent have used their new license to access education.

By allocating funding to proven driver licencing programs we are able to create a positive cycle amongst a community, by securing licencing for an individual and in-time allowing those individuals to serve as a mentor or supervisor to other learner drivers within their community.

Successful driver licencing programs include culturally responsive staff, inter-agency collaboration, security of funding, strong connections to and respectful communication with the community.

Additional funding should be allocated to support Learner Driver Mentor Programs for Indigenous communities, particularly focused on wrap around support for Indigenous youth and at-risk communities.



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