

Major Viewpoints

Provisional Licence Initiatives

Peer passenger restrictions

There was an extensive and constructive discussion around this initiative. The potential of good injury reductions being achieved was noted and many participants felt that if problems could be addressed the idea would be worth considering.

Despite this participants raised a number of issues including:

- A high level of inconvenience which was foreshadowed by some young participants
- Existing car pooling and designated driver arrangements undertaken by groups of young people would be threatened
- Expected difficulties with enforcement associated with identifying those people subject to the provisions and those who were not.
- Concern that there may be increased risk of injury from more cars on the road. While participants accepted the existing research information showing a net benefit in other countries, many felt this would need to be proven in Australia.
- There was a need for exemptions for activities such as ferrying family members, work group arrangements, sports club group arrangements and the like. Many participants felt this would result in a complex system to administer.
- There would be difficulties in rural areas where other transport options did not exist

Some innovative ideas were raised during discussion. One participant suggested applying the restriction on Friday and Saturday nights on the assumption that this correlated with higher crash periods and greater levels of driving in high risk periods.

Another suggested linking the provision to a method of checking progress with driving competency progressively and if people were offence and crash free after 3 months and then 6 months the restriction would be progressively lifted, but remain for those who could not demonstrate a 'clean' record.

Some young participants were concerned because the achievement of the provisional licence was a 'right of passage' amongst peers which would be undermined by a limitation on those rights. This was countered by the view expressed that these days more than ever a driving licence was a privilege to be earned and not a right in a general sense for the population.

Late night driving restrictions

Some participants did not support this initiative. One participant summed up the feeling by identifying the potential benefits of the proposal but expressing major concerns about the practicalities of implementation. Concerns raised included:

- the problem where the family car may be used and then the return journey could not be undertaken because it unexpectedly occurred in the restricted period causing inconvenience for all the family

- the need to deal with minorities and people with unusual circumstances through an exemptions process.
- Concerns about personal safety
- The fact that in many instances the system would need a high level of parental support to pick up children at night and that many parents may not be sufficiently motivated to help at the levels required.
- The difficulty for people working shift hours and the need for them to seek exemptions
- The general lack of public transport to use as an alternative
- A general view that enforcement difficulties would be substantial for police.

There was a stronger view about this initiative being applied to offenders only. Another suggestion was that the approach needed to be integrated with other initiatives rather than presented in a piecemeal fashion in order to be effective.

Some people felt the key issue being targeted related to fatigue related crashes and noted that fatigue applies to all drivers not just provisional drivers. It was noted that crash causal factors were not restricted to one crash type and appeared more related to levels of inexperience in 'reading' the circumstances of traffic and other drivers during these times., with some believing that the 'hoons' amongst young people should be subject to these types of restrictions.

There was also a call for some more positive incentives to assist young people during the first difficult years of driving. No specific suggestions were presented but the concept was raised amidst a concern expressed by one participant that novice drivers may feel subject to punishment rather than support for safe driving.

Split Provisional phase (P1 and P2) incorporating the use of P plates

This idea was generally supported provided there was a community education campaign to explain the role of P plates and to encourage supportive on-road actions by other drivers. In response to direct questions young participants in the audience appeared unfazed by the potential of wearing P plates and understood the need for identification in the case of differential conditions being applied to part of the provisional licence period.

Screen based Hazard Perception test (HPT)

Participants supported the idea as a method to assess progress with safe driving. Comments raised included that the approach should be viable, it was a valuable component of the process and the issue of hazard recognition was a key factor in safe driving. This latter point was emphasised often during the evening by those involved in the driver training industry.

There were questions about where the test might be most effectively employed. People recognised the rationale for the suggestion that it be placed at the end of the P1 period to act as a check of progress prior to moving on the P2. Others felt it should be applied earlier in the licensing process perhaps even as entry tests prior to receiving the learners permit.

Participants were opposed to any automatic progress of drivers from the P1 to P2 phase and supported the idea of a test at this point.

Working with driving instructors after changes to the GLS

There was no discussion of this initiative

Initiatives aimed at driver distraction including an education and media campaign on driver distraction and prohibiting mobile phone use for L and P drivers.

This was raised as the last issue in the evening. Many participants agreed with the problem of distractions and specific distractions such as cigarettes, loud music, other passengers and the like were cited.

On the specific issue of mobile phones participants argued that they were a distinct problem and supported the research information outlining problems with both hands free and hand held devices.

Others, in endorsing the problems, felt they applied to all drivers and were not specific to young drivers. There were no views raised against the concepts presented.

Review of penalties and sanctions for provisional drivers who break the law and incentive and reward options for provisional drivers

There was no discussion of this initiative

Education and Training support for provisional drivers

Participants felt strongly there was a place for some education and training for provisional drivers. Most supported the concept of defensive driving or off-road training programs featuring vehicle control and driving techniques.

During discussion on a number of initiatives, individual participants spoke very supportively about their experiences with defensive driving and advanced driving programs.

Information about the very robust international research on the lack of overall safety benefits in the form of lower crash rates from drivers undertaking these courses compared to those not taking the courses was provided.

Despite this information some participants still felt their own personal experience was very rewarding and could not accept that a similar effect would not apply to others.

Other provisional licence restrictions including restricting the cars that provisional drivers may drive and speed limit restrictions

There was no discussion of these initiatives, although at the end of the evening one young participant strongly supported the vehicle restriction concept. She was urged to include her comments in an individual response to the discussion paper.

Learner Licence Initiatives

A package of measures, including 120 Hours of driving experience with a logbook, Education for learner drivers, supervisors and parents, holding the learner licence for at least 12 months and reducing the licence age to 16 years.

Participants were enthusiastically involved in discussion about this package of initiatives. In fact one participant suggested a similar approach from the floor of the meeting before the package was raised for consideration.

The intent of the package was embraced enthusiastically and all participants understood the intent being designed to increase road experience under conditions which were the safest available and therefore ideal to exploit. Despite these feelings, there were concerns which most participants felt had to be addressed if the concept was to be successful. These included:

- That the total of 120 hours may not be achievable and that there were practical difficulties to be overcome. Concerns were expressed that parents may not be willing to give the time and effort required for a process which translated to 2 ½ hours of driving per week.
- The need to advise, train and encourage parents in the role of supervisors of practice. There was a suggestion that providing a refresher experience for parents with a driving instructor may be one way to limiting the potential for contradictory information being provided to the learner driver. Some participants felt they would be willing to participate in forums with their children if they were arranged (perhaps similar to the Victorian Key's Please program), others felt published information would be useful to them.
- The need to provide information to ensure that young drivers were exposed to a variety of different experiences during the practice. Participants endorsed suggestions that a range of experiences should be outlined, or perhaps even required, but doubted that without encouragement all parents would provide the time and their vehicles for wet weather driving, freeway driving, unsealed road driving, urban traffic, late night, into setting sun driving and other situations which would be met regularly as a provisional sole licensed driver.
- The need to establish mechanisms to prevent or limit the potential of fraudulent preparation of the log book.
- The need to put in place special arrangements to ensure opportunities for access to vehicles and licensed drivers were available for disadvantaged, remote and unsupported indigenous youth

Some innovative approaches were raised during discussion. One participant suggested linking the 120 hours program to different levels of learner licence, issued at completion of specific elements of the program. Under this scheme, for example, gold, silver and bronze learner's permits would be issued.

Another suggested including a specific level of professional instruction as part of the 120 hours. A figure of 10% was cited.

There were no concerns about the minimum period of 12 months for holding the learner permit but some participants were worried about commencing the learner permit process at age 16. They felt individuals were too immature at this age even in the situation of supervised driving which was being proposed.

As a counterpoint, another participant enthused about commencing even younger, at 15, and requiring a two year minimum period for holding the learners permit so that much more time would be available for driving exposure and the novelty value of driving would be replaced by a more commonplace approach over such an extended period.

Review of penalties and sanctions for learner drivers who break the law

There was no discussion of this initiative.

Review current Q-SAFE practical driving assessment

There was no discussion of this initiative

Introduce competency based training and assessment (CBTA) for learner drivers

This initiative was also a popular one for discussion. Many driving instructors were strongly opposed to the idea. One participant felt the approach was open to dishonest assessments and a substantial audit program would be required alongside such a program to ensure standards were not compromised.

There were concerns that the progressive training and testing approach might well cost more, and that current business may be affected.

There was also understanding and support for the competency based approach with participants feeling it would provide a more objective and standardized approach to learning. Information on the application of the system in South Australia was presented and participants noted that to date no road safety benefits had been noted in any assessments and no formal safety based evaluation had been conducted.

As well, participants noted the potential for the approach being implemented alongside the traditional program and that it benefited those people who had difficulty showing their expertise in a single end of program examination.

Pre-Learner Phase Initiatives

Pre Learner Education Package

There was no discussion of this initiative specifically, however during discussions on the nature of education programs suitable for provisional licence drivers a number of participants felt there was a need for some introductory information, probably delivered through schools, before young people were able to drive on roads

First Aid Training

There was no discussion of this initiative



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