

**Submission
No. 51**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

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The Chair
Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety)
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Via email staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Chair

Inquiry into Driver Education, Training and Road Safety

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Staysafe Inquiry into Driver Education, Training and Road Safety. The NRMA welcomes the Committee's interest in the whole-of-life driver education and training in supporting improved road safety outcomes. We believe that driver education has a role to play for not only young drivers but also for older drivers.

Young drivers

The current NSW Graduated Licensing System (GLS) has been effective in reducing young driver crashes. The GLS allows young people to get their initial experience under conditions that involve lower risk and introduce them in stages to more complex driving situations, such as using hands-free mobile phones while driving.

NSW experienced significant reductions in young driver fatality rates, following the introduction of the GLS in 2007. Comparing the years 2000 and 2010, the number of drivers aged 25 years or younger involved in fatal crashes decreased by 47 per cent, from 203 to 107. In the same period the number of drivers aged 26 years or older involved in fatal crashes decreased by 31 per cent¹. However, NRMA acknowledges the recent increase in young driver fatalities over the last few years and believes that research should be undertaken to see what evidence based initiatives can be introduced to help reduce the road toll for this demographic.

Since 2013, NSW learner drivers have the option of undergoing a Safer Drivers Course. Over 20,000 learner drivers have undertaken the Course through the NRMA's Safer Driving School. The Course teaches learners how to reduce road risks and includes ways to cope when they have their peers in the car or if they are running late by developing safe driving behaviour. Learners who complete the Course will have their logbook hours reduced by 20 hours. Learners who complete the Course and do 10 hours of professional driving lessons will have their logbook hours reduced to 80.

¹ New South Wales Auditor-General's Report, Performance Audit: Improving road safety: Young Drivers. 2011.

The NRMA acknowledges that the NSW Government is currently undertaking an evaluation of the Course. We recommend that the results of the evaluation be made publicly available and that the Course be refined, if necessary to ensure that learner drivers have a better crash outcome in comparison to learners that did not take the Course.

Advanced driver training refers to training that is of a practical nature and is based on building specific skills and competencies over a short period of time, such as emergency braking. The NRMA does not support advanced driver training for young people. We are not aware of any evidence that driver training reduces the crash outcomes for young people. In fact, evidence suggests that young people that complete a driver training course may have a higher crash risk due to being overconfident.² The research about the effectiveness of driver training for young people has been consistently the same for quite some time.

The NRMA is also waiting eagerly on the results of the P Drivers project which is a crash-based trial of a best-practice novice driver education program involving young P-plate drivers. The intent of the project is to measure the road safety effects of best-practice approaches to the training and development of novice drivers.

Older Drivers

The NRMA believes that driver education programs can be beneficial for older drivers. We offer free education presentations to community groups regarding driving and pedestrian safety. Last year 3,000 older drivers undertook our Years Ahead program which provided drivers with road rule updates, safe driving tips and information about the older driving licensing system.

Our NRMA Safer Driving School also offers refresher lessons for older drivers. This provides older drivers with the opportunity to have someone independently observe their driving skills and provide them with feedback to keep them safe on the road. Refresher lessons are accessible and should be considered and encouraged as an additional resource for older drivers.

Driver Trainers

Driver trainers, both professional and non-professional have an important role to play in teaching people how to drive. Parents need more education on how to teach young people how to drive. The NRMA believes that the keys2drive program needs to be extended beyond June 2017 and offer more relevant resources for parents to improve their skills at teaching young people to drive such as online tutorials.

We believe that there is room for improvement in the professional driver training industry and that accredited driving instructors should teach learners how to be a safe driver and not just how to pass their driving test.

² The effectiveness of driver training/education as a road safety measure. 2016 edition/update. RACV Report.

The NRMA believes that the standard of training can be greatly improved by:

- a stronger focus on quality and compliance from the Roads and Maritime Services;
- acceptance of new registered training providers in the system to deliver higher standards of training;
- supporting a coaching model rather than instruction; and
- the creation of ongoing professional development requirement for accredited driving instructors to maintain their accreditation.

The NRMA thanks the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry. Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact Ms Dimitra Vlahomitros, Senior Policy Advisor on [REDACTED]
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Yours sincerely /

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