Developing a Safer Drivers Course for Young Learner Drivers
Ma, A. Rees, P. McLean, J. Hillard, E. & Bruton, G.

Alice Ma
Manager Road Safety Policy
NSW Centre for Road Safety
Transport for NSW

Background

• In April 2012, the NSW Government established a Board of Independent Road Safety Experts to develop a Safer Drivers Course (the Course) for young learner drivers.

• The Board’s Terms of Reference were to:
  – make recommendations on curriculum framework and delivery options for the Course
  – investigate options to assist learner drivers in lower socio-economic, remote and Aboriginal communities to meet the learner supervised driving hour requirements
  – make recommendations regarding the impact of the Course on the existing ‘3-for-1’ policy
The Board

- The board included representatives from:
  - NSW Centre for Road Safety
  - Roads and Maritime Services
  - NSW Police Force
  - Road safety researchers
  - Education specialists

- The Board was assisted by an Advisory Panel of community and industry members with an interest in driver training and a Secretariat from Transport for NSW (TfNSW).

Crash Risk

- In NSW young drivers (aged 17-25 years) are more likely to be involved in crashes resulting in death or injury than other drivers.

- Young drivers are most likely to be involved in a crash in the first few months of driving on a provisional P1 licence.
Key Crash Factors

- NSW crash data for fatal crashes involving a young driver shows that from 2007 – 2011:
  - Speeding (43% of fatal crashes)
  - Illegal alcohol (22% of fatal crashes)
  - Fatigue (12% of fatal crashes)

- Key reasons for young driver crashes relate to:
  - Driver inexperience
  - Poor decision making
  - Poor hazard perception
  - Inflated belief in their own ability

NSW Graduated Licensing System Young Drivers

Road Safety Education
- Mandatory Road Safety education as part of the school curriculum (Years K – 10)
- Optional Road Safety Education in schools as part of student welfare/pastoral care programs (Years 11 – 12)
- Community/Commercial based programs (e.g. Streetsmart Forum; RRSK program)
- RMS materials (handbooks, brochures and online)

Learner Licence
- Minimum 16 years of age
- Pass Driver Knowledge Test
- 120 hours supervised driving
- ‘3 for 1’ Scheme (use of professional lessons)
- GLS Workshops for supervising drivers
- Proposed Safer Drivers Course

P1 Licence
- Minimum 17 years of age
- Minimum tenure of 12 months on Learner licence
- Pass on-road driving test

Provisional (P1) Driver Licence
Research Evidence

Evidence considered by the Board:

- Extended on-road supervised driving experience for learner drivers is very important for them to be safe drivers
- Course structure should address higher order skills such as hazard perception and risk taking
- Course design should complement on-road practice and target cognitive and behavioural elements
- Course should be delivered based on adolescent learning principles including a focus on attitudinal and behavioural change
Course Objectives

To assist young learners to:

– improve their capabilities to drive safely by reducing and managing their road safety risks, hazard response skills, and low risk driving behaviours

– acquire additional safe driving skills, knowledge and insights into their driving vulnerabilities, to complement their on-road driving experience within the context of the log book driving requirement.

Course Outcomes

The Course is designed to:

– assist learner drivers understand the heightened risk once they drive independently

– acquaint learner drivers with typical crash scenarios and to make links with common young driver behaviour

– provide learner drivers with specific safe driving strategies

– highlight that their safety and vulnerability as independent drivers is in their hands and dependant on their choices, decisions, attitudes and risk taking actions

– assist learner drivers to become more resilient to pressures which heighten their risk of negative road safety outcomes
Course Design and Eligibility

The Course is designed for:

– Learner drivers aged 16 – 24 years old
– With a minimum of 50 hours supervised driving experience
– Use facilitated discussions, coaching and driver self-assessment approaches
– Completion of the course provides a reduction of 20 hours from the 120 hour supervised driving requirement
– Further 20 hour reduction available through ‘3 for 1’ professional driving instruction (a total of 40 hours reduction if do both)

Course Structure

Module 1
Face to Face facilitated group discussion

• 3 hours duration
• Up to 12 learner participants
• Led by facilitator with experience working with young people (trained on course)
• Key content:
  • Low risk driving strategies
  • Managing other risk factors
  • Building resilience
  • Making safe decisions

Module 2
In vehicle coaching

• 2 hours duration
• 2 learner participants in vehicle
• Led by coach (driving instructors trained in coaching approach)
• Key content:
  • Low risk driving
  • Hazard identification and management
  • Speed management
  • Developing a plan for further practice
Course Delivery

• Provider accreditation by Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) via an open tender process

• Course needs to be engaging for young people, to be delivered by qualified facilitators and coaches

• The Course is available to learners at an affordable fee of $140

• Additional cost is met by the NSW Government through the Community Road Safety Fund

Communication & Information

Key items include:

− A range of media coverage in both regional and local newspapers
− RMS ‘Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers’ workshops will promote to parents
− Presentation to over 18,000 senior high school students attending Bstreetsmart Event
− Posters and promotional resources for motor registries
− Award-winning promotional video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jazLJdz5ts&list=TL0n1_HuubbboV1OQ- _WZsDs2TAY6n_Ygta
**Monitoring & Evaluation**

- Regular monitoring of Course delivery and participant feedback to identify
  - intended and unintended impacts
- Formal evaluation will be conducted in 3 to 5 years
- The Course will be assessed on its effectiveness in building:
  - Awareness of personal vulnerabilities
  - Understanding of driving risks
  - Low risk driving strategies including hazard perception and speed management

**Implementation**

- Safer Drivers Courses available in NSW since July 2013
- As of 30 September 2013:
  - 1814 learner drivers have completed the Course
  - 14 service providers are accredited to deliver the Course
  - 116 facilitators and 214 coaches have been trained
- For the first six months, the Course is available in 49 locations across NSW
- From January 2014 the Course will be rolled out across a greater geographical area of NSW with more providers
- Initial feedback from participants, parents and providers has been positive