

Title Of Extended Abstract Times (20 word limit)Thompson, J¹, Mudford, J¹, Condon, L², Rowe, B²VicRoads¹ and Deloitte Access Economics²**Abstract**

The L2P – Learner driver mentor program (L2P) is a Transport Accident Commission (TAC) funded initiative which is coordinated by VicRoads. L2P provides supervised driving experience to young learner drivers aged 16-21 who do not have access to a supervising driver or vehicle. In 2018, VicRoads commissioned an evaluation to assess the program's performance and contribution to young driver safety in Victoria. L2P was found to generate significant road safety benefits along with social and economic value by increasing economic participation and reducing social isolation.

Background,

L2P supports disadvantaged young people to achieve the 120 hours of supervised driving required under Victoria's GLS. The primary object of the evaluation was to review the existing funding arrangements and service model to assess the program's overall merit and worth. Deloitte Access Economics was appointed to conduct the evaluation which highlighted a number of program improvements which have subsequently informed significant program reform.

Method

The evaluation consisted of six stages; needs analysis, funding model review, value for money analysis, road safety assessment, rapid review of alternative models and synthesis process. A program logic was developed to support the identification of evaluation questions and performance indicators. Data collection included primary and secondary sources, including demographic data, stakeholder surveys and interviews with 599 mentors, 396 learners and 51 program Coordinators and published and unpublished research literature.

Results

The L2P program was found to have a benefit-cost ratio of 1.68 due to significant road safety, mobility and social benefits to learner driver participants, and social benefits to the volunteer mentors. Over 1,600 young people gain supervised driving experience from the program annually. Participation in the program improves road safety by reducing the prevalence of unlicensed driving, reducing crash risk after obtaining a licence and improving young people's perceptions of risky driving. The program is estimated to prevent 8 fatal and serious injury crashes and 26 casualty crashes from 2015-19.

The L2P program has successfully graduated 4,400 learners to their P licence since 2012 and engages with more people from socio-economically disadvantaged areas and more than half of L2P participants were from rural areas. The evaluation found there is evidence that the L2P program increases the life aspirations, confidence, social, and behavioural outcomes of learner drivers. Mentors participating in the L2P program were found to have a reduced level of social isolation.

The evaluation identified areas for improvement including expanding the program to increase the help meet need levels, and direct resources towards those socially and transport disadvantaged, particularly those in interface and rural areas.

Conclusions

This is the third and most comprehensive evaluation of the L2P Program in Victoria. It has demonstrated its significant road safety and social value and provided an opportunity to establish a strong, yet conservative, measure of its economic value which strengthens the program's credentials

and probability of long-term sustainability and expansion. One of the most significant findings of the evaluation are those benefits which accrue alongside the road safety benefit of supervising driver; essentially L2P's success is the result of a strong partnership between government and community.