

## **Regional Pilot of a Restricted P1 Provisional Licence**

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### **Abstract**

This paper outlines the pilot of a restricted provisional P1 driver licence which commenced in three remote areas of NSW in July 2013.

The restricted P1 provisional licence aims to facilitate access to services for young people in the selected pilot areas. The pilot is limited to three communities west of the Newell Highway, in remote areas of NSW, because it has been identified that alternative transport options and young driver support services may be limited in these areas, and access to opportunities may be dependent upon driver licensing. The pilot will run for 24 months.

Within the pilot, a restricted P1 provisional licence is available to learner drivers under 25 years of age that reside in pilot areas. The licence enables pilot participants to drive only for the purposes of work, education or medical appointments – restrictions which apply for the first six months of the provisional (P1) licence period.

In NSW, learner drivers are required to complete 120 hours of supervised driving before applying for a provisional driver licence. The restricted P1 provisional licence is available to learner drivers who have completed 50 hours of supervised driving (including 10 hours of night time driving) and pass the driving test. Those applying for a restricted P1 provisional licence still need to complete 12 months on a learner licence.

After successfully completing six months of driving with a restricted P1 provisional licence, participants will graduate to a provisional licence and no longer be restricted to driving only for the purposes of work, education or medical appointments.

### **Keywords**

Driver licence, provisional, restricted, pilot, transport, evaluation.

### **Introduction and Approach**

In NSW, learner drivers are required to complete 120 hours of supervised driving before applying for a provisional driver licence. While this requirement applies to learner drivers across the state, it has been identified that alternative transport options and young driver support services may be limited in rural areas of NSW, meaning that access to opportunities may be dependent upon driver licensing.

Accordingly, the NSW Government is piloting a restricted P1 provisional licence in three remote areas of NSW west of the Newell Highway to help young drivers access health appointments, education and work.

A board of road safety experts was established in April 2012, to design the curriculum for the NSW Safer Driver Course. The board includes representatives from the NSW Centre for Road Safety, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), NSW Police Force, road safety researchers and education specialists. During the curriculum design process, the board considered a number of

options to help young drivers from remote, lower socio-economic and Aboriginal communities to qualify for their P-plates – recognising that access and licensing issues are key issues faced by disadvantaged learner drivers.

The NSW Government developed the restricted P1 provisional licence pilot which presents an opportunity for under 25-year-olds in pilot areas to obtain a provisional driver licence, only for the purpose of driving to work, education and medical appointments. Applicants must complete at least 50 supervised driving hours and pass the driving test to qualify for the restricted licence.

### **Target group for the Restricted P1 Provisional Licence**

Learner licences are available to those aged 16 and above in NSW. Learners under 25 years of age are required to complete at least 12 months on a learner licence, keep a logbook and complete 120 hours of supervised driving before they can apply for a P1 provisional licence.

The pilot is targeted at young learner drivers in specific areas that may have difficulty meeting the criteria for a P1 provisional licence.

The pilot commenced from 1 July 2013 and will run for two years. The pilot is open to young drivers in three remote areas of NSW:

- Area 1 (North West): Brewarrina, Walgett and Bourke LGAs
- Area 2 (Far West): Broken Hill City LGA
- Area 3 (Murray and Murrumbidgee): Balranald and Hay LGAs

In selecting pilot locations, TfNSW assessed local government areas wholly west of the Newell Highway. This focused the pilot in areas with comparatively less access to regional service centres or significant socio-economic and transport disadvantage. A map of the pilot areas is provided as Appendix A.

The following factors were considered during the selection of the pilot communities:

- Comparative socio-economic disadvantage
- Number of learner licence holders (potential participants)
- Young driver licensing rates
- Availability of registration and licensing services from RMS
- Rates of unauthorised driving
- Young driver crash analysis
- Availability of young driver support services, such as Aboriginal licensing partnerships

### **Requirements of the Pilot**

Restricted P1 provisional licences enable pilot participants to drive only for the purposes of work, education or medical appointments. The following definitions are applied within the pilot:

Purpose	Definition
Education	A trip will be for the primary purpose of your education when the trip is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to or from education facilities/institutions or courses,</li> <li>• as part of an education course,</li> <li>• to enrol in an education course, or</li> <li>• to, from or in the course of vocational training.</li> </ul>
Employment	A trip will be for the primary purpose of your employment when the trip is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to, from or in the course of paid employment,</li> <li>• seeking paid employment (e.g. a job interview)</li> <li>• to, from or in the course of formal community service (e.g. rural fire service or SES).</li> </ul>
Medical appointments and/or treatment	A trip will be for the primary purpose of medical appointments or treatment when the trip is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to or from medical or health support for yourself or another person.</li> </ul>

Restricted P1 provisional licence holders are also permitted to break their trips for the reasonable purposes of food, fuel and rest.

Learners that do not want to be bound by the restrictions associated with the restricted provisional licence are encouraged to complete 120 supervised hours and apply for a provisional licence without these restrictions.

Pilot participants are also required to display a ‘C’ sticker on their P plates for the six months that restrictions apply, to enable easy identification of pilot participants on NSW roads. ‘C’ stickers have no meaning outside of the pilot, and are not used for any other licence conditions on NSW roads. ‘C’ stickers are issued along with the restricted P1 provisional licence (shown affixed to a P plate below), and additional stickers are available if participants require more.



Pilot participants are encouraged to carry supporting information to demonstrate the purposes of their trips if stopped by police. Such supporting information could include a university or TAFE timetable or notice of a doctor’s appointment.

## **Sanctions**

Pilot participants caught driving outside of their restricted licence conditions will receive a penalty of two demerit points and fine of \$236 (*Failure to comply with licence conditions - Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Regulation 2008, cl. 114*). However, no regulatory amendments have been made for the pilot, so there is no penalty if pilot participants do not display a ‘C’ sticker.

Pilot participants that are suspended have their licence restrictions extended until the restrictions have applied for a total period of six months.

Pilot participants disqualified from driving (other than on medical grounds) are not allowed to apply for another restricted P1 provisional licence, and will need to complete the remaining 120 hours of supervised log book hours before applying for a standard red P licence. If a pilot participant is disqualified from driving, the log book hours completed to enter the pilot will be recognised as part of any application for a replacement licence. Pilot participants are accordingly encouraged to retain their learner logbook.

## **Communication Initiatives**

The joint TfNSW / RMS project team met with key stakeholders throughout planning for the pilot, and developed targeted communications documents for staff from RMS and the NSW Police Force such as fact sheets, Q and A’s and operational procedures. Project information is also available on the Centre for Road Safety and RMS websites.

The Centre for Road Safety wrote to learner licence holders in the three pilot areas, to inform learners about the restricted P1 provisional licence and encourage applications through local registries and service centres. Community information sessions were also held in pilot areas along with key stakeholders including local police, local MPs, health, education and employment representatives. Informal networking sessions were also held with service providers in pilot areas, to develop an understanding of access and pilot implementation issues.

Information is also available from Service NSW centres and RMS registries, and the RMS contact centre.

## **Evaluation**

Pilot participants are encouraged to participate in an evaluation of the pilot, which will run for two years, concurrently with the pilot.

The evaluation will include participant surveys at different points in the licensing cycle, licensing and crash data analysis, and in-depth focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of the participants’ experience, and any limitations of the initiative. This work will be both critical for understanding the success of the pilot and also for refining and developing further young driver licensing initiatives.

Young people that elected not to participate in the pilot (and were not issued with a restricted P1 provisional licence), community members, delivery partners and stakeholders will be included in the evaluation. The evaluation will enable Transport for NSW to gain a better understanding of the key licensing and road safety challenges facing young people in Western NSW.

TfNSW, RMS and the NSW Police Force will also monitor the impact on road safety throughout the pilot.

### **Early Learnings**

The Centre for Road Safety is monitoring the enquiries to the RMS contact centre and the number of applications for restricted P1 provisional licences, to gauge the interest in this initiative within participating communities.

While this initiative is specifically targeted to a small group of applicants, there has not been a significant number of enquiries about, or applications for, the restricted P1 provisional licence to date. A very small number of initial reports from local RMS and road safety staff in the three pilot areas suggest that learners in these areas are interested in the restricted P1 provisional licence.

There may be other reasons that prevent this group from applying for restricted P1 provisional licences. Restricted P1 provisional licence does not allow driving for social events, and also precludes the driver from gaining more driving experience with a supervising driver, given that is not one of the purposes covered under the Restricted P1 licence.

### **Conclusion**

The regional pilot of a restricted P1 provisional licence aims to increase access to work, education and medical appointments for young drivers living in remote areas of NSW. Monitoring and evaluation of the pilot has commenced, and the evaluation will run for two years concurrently with the pilot.

As the pilot includes road safety and licensing requirements and there is a relatively low learner population in remote areas, the number of pilot participants may not be high. Regardless, the pilot will evaluate the extent that this initiative can assist young drivers to access the licensing system, and the appropriateness of the restricted licence conditions.

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### Appendix A - Areas Included within the Restricted P1 Provisional Licence Pilot

