

## **Enhancing the NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme – Communication and Implementation**

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### **Abstract**

The NSW Government has enhanced the NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) to align more closely with the Australian GLS Exemplar model. The changes, which impacted over 800,000 licence holders, built on a successful existing GLS policy framework.

In recognition of the complexity of the changes, a comprehensive media and communications strategy was developed to ensure accurate and consistent messaging, with the social media campaign rated as one of the most engaged-with NSW Government campaigns for 2017.

The impacts of the GLS enhancements will be evaluated at a later date.

### **Context**

In 2014 the Australian GLS Policy Framework was developed, providing an opportunity to make further gains in novice driver road safety and work towards a national approach to graduated licensing (Centre for Road Safety, 2014). The framework outlines a best-practice approach to novice driver licensing, with three levels: a 'Standard GLS', an 'Enhanced GLS' and an 'Exemplar GLS'.

The approach recognises that each jurisdiction has a different starting point and improvements to existing GLS systems may be incremental. This results in a framework that is achievable for all states and has strong national support.

In 2016/17 the NSW Government more closely aligned the NSW GLS with the Australian GLS Exemplar model by:

- extending the ban on mobile phone use for P2 drivers, delaying the use of hands-free mobile phones by novice drivers until they complete the P2 period
- repositioning the Hazard Perception Test from the end of the P1 phase to the Learner phase
- removing the Driver Qualification Test
- extending provisional periods for higher risk drivers.

Having a strong, evidence-based and nationally endorsed framework has been critical in maintaining policy intent and achieving further incremental changes.

The GLS is part of a broader framework for novice drivers in NSW, which also includes the Safer Drivers Course, the Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers workshop, and the 3 for 1 scheme for professional driving lessons.

### **Implementation**

The amendments impacted over 800,000 NSW licence holders. Communicating the complex changes to the various cohorts was identified as a challenge, despite strong community support. A detailed communication strategy was developed, including a mail-out, social media, radio and service centre campaign, representation at events and a media strategy.

Location-specific campaigns were launched months prior to the go-live date and remained active up to six months after launch. The social media campaign rated as one of the most engaged-with NSW Government campaigns for 2017. The GLS Changes social media posts successfully drove over 124,665 people to the Roads and Maritime website for more information, with a very high click-through rate of 3.05%. Agencies reached out to community partners, education organisations and driving schools with posters, information sheets and social media campaigns for circulation to their networks. Extensive Q&A documents were prepared for Government officers to ensure all public-facing communication contained accurate and consistent messaging.

### **Next steps**

The impacts of the GLS enhancements will be evaluated, and the approach applied to improving the GLS for drivers will inform the review of the Motorcycle GLS and consideration of enhancements.

NSW has not adopted all of features of the Exemplar model. Additional features may be considered in future; however, close engagement with young drivers and the community would be required.

Transport for NSW is also modernising the learner driver licence experience to provide interactive and connected learning experiences for novice drivers, parents and supervisors.

### **References**

Centre for Road Safety, 2014. Australian graduated licensing scheme: Policy framework. Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW, Sydney.