

6. Provide information to parents/carers that will encourage them to reinforce and practise road safety skills developed in the classroom, in the real road environment.
7. Encourage students to support and influence their peers positively as a way of improving road safety behaviour.

#### ETHOS AND ENVIRONMENT

8. Consult the wider school community when developing road safety guidelines and policies and then disseminate this information to families and monitor implementation.
9. School management actively promotes road safety education by supporting staff to plan and implement road safety education within the curriculum and other school programs and initiatives.
10. School management actively encourages staff to model appropriate road safety behaviour and attitudes consistent with the school's road safety guidelines.
11. Encourage and promote school-community participation in school road safety programs.

12. Review and update where necessary, in partnership with external authorities, the school road environment to encourage and support parents and carers to practise safer road safety skills.

#### PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

13. Provide parents and carers with information that will assist them to reinforce appropriate road safety messages and skills (including school guidelines and policies) at home.
14. Provide parents and carers with practical, opportunistic and planned, on-road training for modelling of appropriate behaviours to their children.
15. Establish and maintain links and involve community agencies and local government in the delivery of road safety messages that complement and support existing school road safety programs.
16. Engage, train and resource school health service staff to complement and support road safety education programs and other initiatives in schools.

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## keys2drive: An evolution or revolution in the way Australian learner drivers are taught?

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### Introduction

keys2drive is a joint initiative of the AAA (Australian Automobile Association) and the Australian Government. It is perhaps the most extensive and far reaching novice driver training and road safety education initiative in Australia's history. The program has been developed by the AAA and its members (NRMA, RACV, RACQ, RAC(WA), RAA(SA), RACT and AANT) with strong support from the driver training industry and funding from the Australian Government.

keys2drive consists of three major components:

- a free lesson delivered by a keys2drive-accredited professional driving instructor to learner drivers, accompanied by their supervising driver
- a sophisticated website for learner and novice drivers, supervising drivers and professional driving instructors, rich with information and ongoing learning experiences
- a voluntary accreditation scheme for professional driving instructors who wish to participate, involving initial training, professional development and commitment to the keys2drive code of conduct.

With an aim of 'six months on P-plates with zero harm', the program is designed to contribute to a reduction in the number and severity of crashes involving young drivers. Central to this aim is a change in how novice drivers are taught by both the

professional driver training industry and by their supervising driver.

keys2drive has introduced a coaching method called 'Find your own way'. This method encourages the learning-to-drive process to be student focussed and encourages learner drivers to take an active role in their learning.

This paper highlights the results of an independent review of the program completed in November 2010 by Ken Ogden and Associates Pty Ltd, as well as audit results and research conducted by the AAA in 2010 involving learner drivers, their supervisors and the driver training industry.

### Background

In 2009, 1507 people were killed on Australian roads – on average, over four deaths every day. Young people aged 17 to 25 years accounted for 361 fatalities, or nearly one-quarter of these deaths, despite representing less than 15% of the population [1].

Research from around the world shows that one of the best things that can be done for novice drivers is to help them gain more real-world, on-road supervised driving experience before they go solo [2]. In May 2008, the Federal government committed \$17 million over five years for the AAA to develop keys2drive and deliver free lessons to learners accompanied by their supervising driver. The program was trialled in Tasmania in mid-2009, introduced to the mainland in Victoria in November 2010 and has been progressively rolled out around the country since.

## Driving instructors - changing the way young people are taught to drive

‘The AAA has put considerable effort into developing a best practice learning design, which would form the basis of the free keys2drive lessons and ideally be used by driving instructors as a basis for all their lessons. The learning design is pedagogically sound and evidence-based, being based on coaching (as distinct from “training” or “instructing” it is referred to as “find your own way”) and arguably represents a significant advance in learner driver education.’ [3]

The keys2drive approach and program relies on the skill of the driving instructor to move from a traditional teacher-focussed method of teaching to one that is student-focussed and directed. This new approach, called ‘Find your own way’ (FYOW), encourages the learner driver to ask questions, better recognise risky situations, and find and fix mistakes. FYOW encourages learners to practice for longer, have lots of variations when driving, and actively learn by self-assessing and self-reflecting.

To become keys2drive accredited, driving instructors have to complete:

- an eight-hour classroom-based workshop, facilitated by one of 12 specially trained and experienced coaches (also licensed driving instructors), followed by
- five online, written self-reflection tasks that require the instructor to practice what they have been taught during the training day.

Coupled with this, there are the requirements of:

- a minimum four-star ANCAP (Australasian New Car Assessment Program) safety rating for instructors’ vehicles by December 2011
- a minimum of Certificate IV in Driving Instructing (also by December 2011)
- abiding by a keys2drive Code of Practice (developed by the AAA in consultation with the driving training industry) that ensures professional practices.

To date (5 January 2011), more than 98 workshops have been held across the country in every state and territory. A significant number of driving instructors who attended a one-day training course chose not to complete the self-reflection tasks and forfeited the opportunity to gain full accreditation. The reasons for non-completion have been many and varied – for some the requirements proved too difficult and/or time consuming to achieve, while others disagreed with the new approach or requirements.

There are no official or accurate statistics recording the total number of driving instructors in Australia. However, AAA’s estimate of the numbers in each jurisdiction, along with the number of keys2drive driving instructor registrations and accreditations as at 5 January 2011, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Estimated number of driving instructors and keys2drive accreditations as of 5 January 2011

Jurisdiction	Estimated DIs	DIs who registered an interest in keys2drive	keys2drive accredited
NSW	2000	529	153
VIC	1500	724	308
QLD	1200	354	88
TAS	50	50	24
SA	500	140	34
WA	500	142	31
ACT	50	41	8
NT	30	10	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>5830</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>650</b>

Based on current figures, less than one-third of driving instructors who expressed interest in the program became accredited. The AAA believes that this has ensured that only those driving instructors who are committed to the program have gone on to gain full accreditation.

The AAA was aware from the beginning that this program would not be taken up by all driving instructors, so the focus became an evolution in the way that learner drivers are taught rather than a revolution. Pleasingly, keys2drive has a strong network of driving instructors that stretches from Bunbury to Cairns and Darwin to Hobart, with more than one-third based in regional Australia.

Ogden & Associates’ independent review of keys2drive revealed strong acceptance of the accreditation scheme from driving instructors:

- ‘The driving instructors who have embraced the program can become passionate and committed, they liked being networked, believe in the FYOW philosophy, see the difference it makes in learners, and see their business improving as a result.
- I became involved because I value the training, enhanced my professional development, and it made me a better driving instructor.
- keys2drive has played a vital role in the resurgence of my business over the past 12 months.’ [3]

The program has 16 ‘champion’ driving instructors who have delivered more than 100 keys2drive lessons and are now reporting that the program has helped to grow their business by repeats and referrals. Positive word of mouth referrals from driving instructors have assisted greatly in promoting the program to potential students and other driving instructors.

The Ogden & Associates’ review concludes that while there is probably no objective measure of best practice, the following can be stated about the keys2drive program as it currently stands:

- ‘It has been developed with significant (but not total) industry participation.
- It has been well received by those driving instructors who have participated.

**The traditional approach to teaching a young person to drive:**

Supervised

*'Do as I say'*

Unsupervised

*'Now find your own way'***The keys2drive Find Your Own Way (FYOW) approach to learner driving:**

Supervised

*'Find your own way and I'll help you in whatever ways I can for as long as you want.'*

Unsupervised



Figure 1. A comparison of traditional and keys2drive approaches to learning to drive

- It has requirements and a code of practices which, prima facie, seem reasonable and accepted by much of the industry.
- It has a sound pedagogical basis in learning design which forms the basis of keys2drive lessons, reflected in the 'Find your own way' philosophy with an emphasis on coaching as distinct from "training" or "instructing". [3]

In 2011, the focus of driving instructor training will move from recruiting new instructors to up-skilling those driving instructors already fully accredited. This is seen as an important refresh as well as an audit mechanism to ensure that driving instructors remain true to the keys2drive philosophy. This will be done on a one-on-one basis using the existing network of keys2drive coaches.

Added to this are the 'maintaining accreditation' requirements – short on-line tasks provided to driving instructors every six months, which are designed to professionally develop and continuously improve the keys2drive pool of driving instructors.

**Supporting learner drivers and supervisors**

As well as the free lesson, the program offers support for learner drivers and supervisors via a comprehensive website, [www.keys2drive.com.au](http://www.keys2drive.com.au). The website has recently been refreshed to allow content that was previously available only to registered users to be available to anyone visiting the site. This is designed to assist learners and supervisors alike throughout the learning process from the time before they get their L-plates to when they receive their P-plates.

The website reinforces the key messages of the FYOW approach and explains the importance of 'long, wide and deep' learning experiences. In a keys2drive context, 'long' refers to having lots of practice, 'wide' refers to having a variety of driving experiences, and 'deep' refers to the active learning or thinking and reflecting associated with each lesson.

keys2drive encourages learner drivers to begin to have P-plate driving experiences while they are on their L-plates to better prepare them for the realities of driving unassisted on P-plates. The program also encourages learners to realise that, even though they may have their P-plates, they are still a beginning driver and should continue to actively learn the skills and attitudes needed to be a safe driver. Figure 1 illustrates the traditional approach to learning to drive compared to the keys2drive approach.

**Evaluation – supervisors and learner drivers**

The AAA completed two participant surveys in April 2010 and October 2010 among learners and supervisors, which provided a useful measure of the program's effectiveness. In each case, 200 supervisors or learners were telephoned and asked seven questions about their keys2drive free lesson experience.

One of the most significant questions asked was, "Does the supervisor consider that what the beginning driver learned in the keys2drive lesson helped them to be a safer driver?" In April 2010, 93% of respondents answered "yes" and a further 5.5% answered "possibly". In October 2010, a similar question, "Will the keys2drive lesson help the learner be a safer driver?" yielded similar results with 92% of respondents answering "yes" and a further 6% answering "possibly". Overall satisfaction ratings with the program were also extremely encouraging, with 30.5% of respondents rating overall satisfaction levels at 10 out of 10 in April 2010 and 39.5% giving 10 out of 10 in October 2010.

Another positive outcome from the program is that more than 15% of supervisors and learner drivers are returning to the keys2drive website after a lesson to post comments on their experience, such as:

- "My son was very reluctant to attend this service but afterwards realised the importance of the keys2drive program, thanks for opening our eyes
- The Driving Instructor I had was excellent, so excellent in fact I will be using him for all my driving lessons
- I thought it was done really well, I got a lot out of it and I told all my friends who have their L-plates
- My instructor was great, he was really patient and encouraging. Plus my mum learnt a few new things too."

The AAA believes that the many positive comments made about keys2drive can be attributed to the fact that lessons are given in a style that is consistent with how young people are now taught in schools. In essence, this is a shift from one of control to one of empowerment:

'While the approach may be seen as a radical departure from traditional learn-to-drive approaches – and is seen by many driving instructors as such – it actually reflects contemporary

teaching methods for the learner driver age group. In fact, several driving instructors interviewed claimed to be using a similar method; these were the ones who enthusiastically embraced the FYOW approach and keys2drive in general.' [3]

## Raising public awareness

To generate more lesson bookings and attendance, and to increase general public awareness for the substantial benefits to be derived from receiving a lesson from a keys2drive accredited professional instructor, a national marketing and communications campaign was launched in December 2010. Preliminary market testing involved piloting a range of key messages to determine the strongest approach and best performing channels. In addition, a number of individuals who the keys2drive team has identified as appropriate and relevant social 'influencers' will be approached with a view to engaging them to assist in increasing awareness for the program.

From November 2010, intensive media monitoring of national newspapers provided further opportunities to respond to stories featuring learner drivers with the keys2drive message. These searches included any stories with references to L-platers, P-platers, and learner drivers generally. Most articles referred to general issues and debate concerning learning to drive, and the keys2drive response consisted of a letter to the editor.

A Facebook page was also set up in response to the dramatic growth in social networking to encourage learner drivers to share their driving experiences and promote the program with their friends. Facebook has more than 500 million active users per month worldwide, and it has become widely accepted as an important communication tool for young people in Australia [4].

The 'wall' element of the keys2drive Facebook page includes tips by driving instructors and is designed to generate general discussion and feedback about the program, as shown in Figure 2.

The AAA has also leveraged its connections with the motoring clubs within each state to assist with marketing and promotion. With a combined membership of more than six million members, an extensive network of retail outlets and access to

some of the most widely distributed magazines in the country, this is a uniquely powerful network for reaching novice drivers and their families.

keys2drive has also received strong support from a number of state-based licensing authorities. Recent agreements in Queensland and South Australia will see all learner drivers who receive their learners permit being given a keys2drive 'postcard' with information on how to access a free lesson.

## Conclusion

With a refreshed keys2drive website and hundreds of keys2drive-accredited driving instructors in place around Australia, the program is poised to respond to a significant ramping up in the delivery of free lessons. The success of keys2drive will be judged on its ability to lift instructional standards, as well as its influence in changing the current culture of learner and P-plate drivers.

Passing a test does not guarantee that you are a safe driver. keys2drive offers the ability to empower young people by encouraging them to have 'long, wide and deep' learner driver experiences that ensure they are better prepared for the realities of P-plate driving. Significantly, the vast majority of people who have completed a keys2drive lesson believe the experience will help the learner be a safer driver (93% in April 2010 and 92% in October 2010). These experiences assist learner drivers in the way that they think and behave and, coupled with a change in learner driving culture, will help to ensure a safer driving future for the next generation of young Australians.

## References

1. Road deaths Australia: 2009 statistical summary. Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2010.
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3. Ogden K. Keys2drive program evaluation. Australian Automobile Association, November 2010.
4. Sydney Morning Herald, Facebook steals Google's thunder in website hits: Study. Based on comScore data, January 3, 2011.



Figure 2. The keys2drive Facebook page