

Peer-reviewed Papers

Review of the graduated driver licensing programs in Australasia

By Bridie Scott-Parker^{1, 2, 3} and Karina Rune^{1, 2, 3}

¹ *Adolescent Risk Research Unit (ARRU), Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience – Thompson Institute,*

² *School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Business and Law, University of the Sunshine Coast*

³ *Sustainability Research Centre (SRC), Faculty of Arts and Business, University of the Sunshine Coast*

Abstract

This paper overviews the mandatory conditions and restrictions applied within graduated driver licensing (GDL) programs throughout Australasia, focusing upon changes in Australia since 2009, in addition to the GDL program in New Zealand. Important changes relate to increased restrictions on demerit point thresholds, limits to blood alcohol content for supervisory drivers, a no drug-driving policy, and increased restrictions regarding all mobile phone usage, while increases were introduced to mandated supervised driving hours and holding period. Changes to the GDL programs in the last decade are largely positive and have contributed to significant decreases in road crash injuries and fatalities in young novice drivers. Interestingly, however a number of Australasian jurisdictions do not meet the US Insurance Institute for Highway Safety GDL rating system criteria for a ‘good’ GDL program. As such, some jurisdictions could benefit from tighter regulations, particularly in regards to night-time and passenger restrictions and increased holding periods.

Keywords

Graduated driver licensing, GDL, Learner, Pre-Learner, Provisional, Teen driver, Young driver

Introduction

The pervasive problem of young and novice drivers being disproportionately represented in road crash injuries and fatalities is well-recognised around the world. Graduated driver licensing programs (GDL) were introduced in Australia and New Zealand (referred to as Australasia) as a driving exposure measure, such that more driving experience can be gained over an extended period and in lower risk circumstances. During the learner stage, the young novice driver is introduced to driving while under the direction of a supervisor (including lay instructors

such as parents, and qualified driving instructors). In the following provisional (restricted/intermediate) phase, the novice driver can drive unsupervised, but with specific conditions and restrictions which are designed to minimise their exposure to risk from known factors, for example passenger limits emerge from known risk factors such as passenger presence (e.g., see Tefft et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2012). The final phase is an open (unrestricted) licence. Thus, during the learner and provisional phases, young and novice drivers must comply with both GDL and general road rules relevant to their jurisdiction.

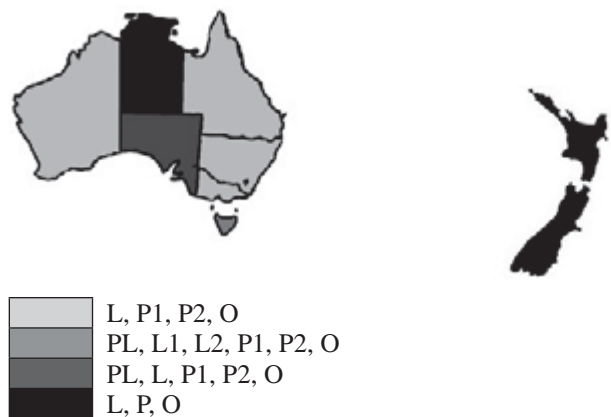
There is a growing body of evidence confirming the effectiveness of GDL, with evaluations (Hartling et al., 2009) in New Zealand (e.g., Begg & Stephenson, 2003; Lewis-Evans & Lukkien, 2007), the United States and Canada (Fell et al., 2011; Mayhew, Simpson, Singhal, & Desmond, 2006; Vanlaar et al., 2009) demonstrating reduced risk for teen and novice drivers. Programs with night-driving and passenger restrictions (Masten et al., 2013; Morrisey et al., 2006), and a minimum Learner duration, which therefore increases the age at which independent driving can begin, appear to be the most effective (McCartt et al., 2010; Preusser & Tison, 2007; Williams, 2007). The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) developed a system for rating GDL strength, with points allocated for program elements pertaining to the learner (maximum of 4 points; e.g., minimum holding period < 3 months = 0 points, 6+ months = 2 points) and provisional (maximum of 6 points; e.g., no restriction on night driving = 0 points; 10 pm or earlier restriction = 2 points) phases. Programs with a good rating require 6 or more points, whilst programs receiving fewer than 2 points are rated as poor. Programs with good ratings are associated with improved road safety outcomes, such as increased seatbelt use by young drivers and their young passengers, thus improving road safety outcomes for vehicle occupants more generally (Fu et al., 2013).

A review of the GDL systems in operation or about to be introduced in Australia in 2007 summarised key rules and regulations in each Australian state and territory (Senserrick, 2007). As significant changes took place in the following two years in most jurisdictions, a further review was undertaken (Senserrick, 2009). Since this time, several Australian states increased the minimum holding period for a learner licence (from 6 to 12 months) and introduced – or increased – mandatory learner driving hours. Further, mobile phone restrictions were applied to both the learner and provisional stage of the GDL. Reflecting the increased risk of injury or death from a car crash, particularly during the first six months of a provisional licence, restrictions were also placed on high-power vehicles, night-time driving, and the number of passengers that can be carried at high-risk times such as at night. Furthermore, whilst the previous two papers by Senserrick (2007, 2009) provided a summary of the rules and regulations relating to GDL in Australia, they did not include the GDL program in New Zealand (NZ). In addition, unlike the United States (GHSA, 2015), there currently is no readily-accessible resource (online or other) which succinctly summarises the features, conditions, and restrictions of Australasian GDL programs. Thus, the current paper summarises GDL programs in place in Australasia as at August 2014, while highlighting Australian program changes since 2009. In addition, the strength of the Australasian GDL programs will be examined within the context of the IIHS ratings model.

GDL models

Currently, several Australian states have moved beyond the traditional three stage GDL program (see Figure 1 for an overview). Further, in Australia, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Northern Territory (NT) and South Australia (SA) offer two parallel pathways to progress from a learner licence to a provisional licence. The choice is between showing driving skills and abilities during a driving test by a government assessor, or competency based training and assessment (CBTA) which includes a continued form of assessment including examination and certification of a range of driving skills and related attitudes during the learner period. CBTA can be undertaken with an Accredited Driving Instructor or through a supervisor acquired by the learner driver themselves (e.g., parent, spouse, or friend).

In addition, both the ACT and NZ have an educational alternative to progress through the provisional licence period. In the ACT, a provisional driver who undertakes the *Road Ready Driving Course* can remove their P plates after six months with an increase in the demerit point threshold from four to eight points in three years. In NZ only, undertaking an *Advanced Driving Skill* course effectively reduces the minimum age from 18 years to 17.5 years, and the duration upon a restricted (note the Australian equivalent: provisional) licence by 3 to 6 months, depending on age.



PL = pre learner; L = learner licence; L1 = Learner phase 1; L2 = learner phase 2; P = provisional licence; P1 = provisional phase 1; P2 = provisional phase 2; O = open licence

Figure 1. Summary of Australasian graduated driver licensing programs

Recent changes to GDL programs in Australasia

Key requirements and restrictions for young novice drivers in Australasia (predominantly referring to drivers less than 25 years of age) are summarised in Tables 1 and 2. For older drivers (generally over 25 years, but in some places referring to drivers between 21 and 23 years of age) there are different requirements mainly relating to a shorter holding period for learner and provisional licence, bypassing the first stage of the provisional licence (P1), and no restrictions on night time driving.

At a broad level, significant changes that have taken place during the learner phase relate to a clearly specified Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) limit for supervisor drivers and the introduction of a ‘no drug policy’ in many jurisdictions. Practical driving tests were introduced in two Australian states (Tasmania [TAS], Western Australia [WA]) in order to progress from the first to the second phase of a learner licence, while all other areas require an on-road driving test before a provisional licence can be issued. Further increases to supervised driving hours and minimum holding periods were introduced, and demerit point thresholds were applied broadly. Previously, many jurisdictions did not enforce any restrictions on mobile phone use (e.g., could use hands-free, blue tooth or speaker function in both learner and provisional stages); however, most areas now enforce mobile phone restrictions, including all handheld devices, for learner drivers and drivers in the early provisional phase.

Table 1. Learner Licence requirements and restrictions in Australasian graduated driver licensing programs

Condition and Restrictions	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	NZ
<i>Prior to licensure</i>									
Minimum age (years)	PL 15yrs 9mth	16	16	16	PL <16 ° L 16	PL 15yrs 11mth L1 16 L2 16yrs 3mth	16	16	16
Mandatory education	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Eyesight test	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	L1 Yes L2 No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Road law knowledge test	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	L1 Yes (PL) L2 No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>During licensure</i>									
Duration licence valid (years)	2	5	2	3	2	L1 3 L2 3	10	3	NA
Minimum holding period (months)	6	< 25yrs 12	6	12	< 25yrs 12 ≥ 25yrs 6	L1 3 L2 9	< 21yrs 12 21-25yrs 6 > 25yrs 3	12 (6mth pre PDA and 6 mth post PDA)	6
Practical test	No	No	No	No	No	L1 Yes L2 No	No	Yes after 25 hours supervised driving	No
Display L-plates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mandatory education and instruction	No Yes if CBTA	No	No Yes if DS	No	No Yes if CBTA	No	No	No	No
Logbook required	No	<25 yrs	No	< 25 yrs	Yes	L1 No L2 Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Professional instruction 3-for-1 ^a	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Mandatory minimum driving (hours)	No	120 (20 at night)	No	100 (10 at night)	75 hours (15 at night)	L1 No L2 50	< 21 yrs 120 (10 at night)	50	No 120 re-commended
Supervisory driver minimum requirements	Full Licence 4 yrs 0% BAC	Full licence < 0.05% BAC	Full licence < 0.05% BAC	Full Licence 1 yr < 0.05%	Full Licence 2 years violation-free < 0.05% BAC	Full licence 2 yrs violation-free < 0.05% BAC	Full licence < 0.05% BAC	Full Licence 4 yrs < 0.05% BAC	Full Licence 2 yrs NA
BAC limit (mg/100mL)	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero	<20yrs Zero >20yrs 400

Condition and Restrictions	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	NZ
Illicit drugs	NA	NA	NA	No drugs	No drugs	No drugs	NA	NA	No impairment ^b
Maximum speed restriction (km/h)	No	90	80	No	100	80 (L1) 100 (L2)	No	100	No
Mobile phone restriction (all use)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Towing restriction GVM	Yes >750kg	Yes	No	No	No	L1 & L2Yes	Yes	No	No
Demerit point threshold (points in months) ^c	No	4 in 12	5 in 12	4 in 12	4 in 12	4 in 12	5 in 12	4 in 12	No
Restrictions on locations ^d	No	Yes ^e	No	No	No	No	No	Yes ^e	No

Note: CBTA = Competency Training and Assessment, DS = DriveSafe driver education and training program, yrs = years, mth = months, PL = pre learner, L1 = learner licence 1, L2 = learner licence 2, PDA = practical driving assessment, NS = not specified, GVM = gross vehicle mass.

^a Learner drivers who complete a one hour driving lesson with a fully licensed qualified driving instructor can record three driving hours in their logbook, up to a maximum of 10 hours professional instruction (therefore, 30 logbook hours).

^b It is an offence to drive while impaired and with evidence of a qualifying drug in the bloodstream.

^c Demerit point threshold refers to maximum number of points a licence holder can accumulate before their driver's licence is, and therefore their driving privileges are, suspended.

^d In NSW learner drivers must not drive in Parramatta Park or Centennial Park in Sydney; in WA learner drivers are not allowed to drive within the boundaries of Kings Park and wherever signs prohibit learner drivers.

^e Whilst no conditions are attached to this pre-learner phase, future-drivers are explicitly encouraged to become informed in car and road safety and to learn the road rules.

Table 2. Provisional Licence requirements and restrictions in Australasian graduated driver licensing programs

Conditions and restrictions	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	NZ
<i>Prior to licensure</i>									
Minimum age (years)	17	P1 17 P2 18	16.5	P1 17 P2 18	P1 17 P2 18	P1 17 P2 18	P1 18 P2 19	P1 17 P2 17.5	16.5
Practical test	Yes No if CBTA	P1 Yes P2 No	Yes	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 No P2 No	Yes
<i>During licensure</i>									
Minimum period (months)	36	P1 12 P2 24	< 25yrs 24 ≥ 25yrs 12	P1 12 P2 < 25yrs 24, ≥ 25yrs 12	P1 12 P2 24	P1 12 P2 < 23yrs 24; ≥ 23yrs 12	P1 12 P2 36	< 19yrs P1 6mth P2 18mth	< 25yrs 18 >25yrs 6 ADS < 25yrs 12 ADS ≥ 25yrs 3

Condition and Restrictions	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	NZ
Hazard perception test	No	P1 No P2 Yes**	No	P1 No P2 Yes**	P1 Yes* P2 No	P1 No P2 No	P1 Yes* P2 No	P1 Yes* P2 No	No
Display P-plates	Yes RRP at 6mth No	P1 Yes P2 Yes	Yes	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 Yes P2 Yes	No
BAC limit (mg/100mL)	Zero	P1 Zero P2 Zero	Zero	P1 Zero P2 Zero	P1 Zero P2 Zero	P1 Zero P2 Zero	P1 Zero P2 Zero	P1 Zero P2 Zero	< 20yrs Zero < 20yrs (80/100)
Illicit drugs	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	No drugs	No drugs	No drugs	Not specified	Not specified	No impairment
Maximum speed restriction (km/h)	No	P1 90 P2 100	100	P1 No P2 No	P1 100 P2 No	P1 80 P2 No	No	No	No
Automatic transmission restriction	Yes	P1 Yes P2 No	Yes	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 No P2 No	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 Yes P2 Yes	Yes
Mandatory education and instruction	No Yes if RRP	No	No	P1 No P2 No	P1 No P2 No	No	No	No	No Yes if ADS
Night-time or passenger (yrs) restriction	No	P1 <25yr 1 passenger <21yr btw 11pm- 5am P2 No ^b	No	P1 1 passenger <21 btw 11pm- 5am ^b P2 No	P1 midnight- 5am 1 pass. 16-20 yrs unless supervised P2 No	P1 No P2 No	P1 1 passenger 16-22yrs ^b P2 No	P1 midnight - 5am ^a P2 No	Yes 10pm- 5am 0 passengers unless supervised ^b
Mobile phone restriction (all use)	No	P1 Yes P2 No	Yes	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 Yes P2 No	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 No P2 No	No
High-powered vehicle restriction	No	P1 Yes P2 Yes	No	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 Yes <25 yrs P2 Yes <25yrs	P1 No P2 No	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 No P2 No	No
Towing restriction	<750GVM first 12mth	P1 <250kg P2 No	No	P1 No P2 No	P1 No P2 No	P1 No P2 No	P1 Yes P2 Yes	P1 No P2 No	No
Demerit point threshold (points in months) ^a	4 in 36 RRP & >26 yrs 7 in 36*	P1 4 in P2 7 in	5 in 12	4 in 12	P1 4 in 36 P2 4 in 36	P1 4 in 12 P2 4 in 12	P1 5 in 12 &/or 12 in 36 P2 5 in 12 &/or 12 in 36	P1 4 in 12 P2 8 in 24	Not specified
Exit test	No	P1 No P2 Yes	No	No	P1 No P2 No	No	No	No	Yes
Minimum age for full licence (years)	20	20	18.5	20	19	20	22	19	18 17.5yrs ADS

Note: CBTA = Competency Training and Assessment, RRP = Road Ready Plus course, ADS = Advanced Driving Skill course, P1 = provisional licence 1; P2 = provisional licence 2, yrs = years, mth = months, btw = between, GVM = gross vehicle mass.

^a If disqualified from driving while a provisional licence holder will be restricted to carrying one passenger at all times while driving for a period of 12 months.

^b If not an immediate family member.

^c Demerit point threshold refers to maximum number of points a licence holder can accumulate before their driver's licence is, and therefore their driving privileges are, suspended.

* In order to be issued with a probationary driver licence (P1), a hazard perception test must first be completed.

** In order to be issued with a probationary driver licence (P2), a hazard perception test must first be completed

In regards to the provisional licence, the structure was revised considerably with the introduction of a second provisional stage (P2) now in place in all jurisdictions except the ACT, NT and NZ, and adjustments to the minimum holding period, and minimum age, for either the first or second phase of the licence in NZ. Restrictions on automatic transmission now applies across the board except in SA, which is the only state that still allows provisional drivers who pass their test in an automatic vehicle to be immediately eligible to drive a manual car. Lastly, as in the learner stages, reduced demerit point thresholds now exist throughout Australia.

GDL changes according to Australasian jurisdiction

Whilst minor changes were introduced to the GDL programs throughout Australasia since 2009, it is noteworthy that several Australian states underwent major changes to their GDL program in the preceding five years. SA considerably revised its GDL in 2014 by broadly tightening the rules and restrictions in place. Significant changes in the learner phase included an increase in the minimum holding period for a learner licence from 6 to 12 months; an increase in mandatory supervised driving hours from 50 to 75 hours; a no drug policy; a 100km/h speed limit; and mobile phone restrictions. Further, for the first stage of the provisional licence, recent restrictions were applied to night time driving between midnight and 5am, unless for work purposes; no more than one passenger aged 16-20, unless immediate family members, between midnight and 5am; and all mobile (including handheld, loudspeaker, Bluetooth) phone use. Other significant changes include moving the hazard perception test forward by making it a requirement to progress from the learner to first stage of the provisional licence, (previously, the hazard perception test was required to move from the first to the second stage of the provisional licence), and removing regression to a previous licence stage as an additional punishment following a disqualified period. Instead disqualified learner and provisional drivers will return to the driver's licence stage they held at the time the offence was detected.

In Queensland (QLD) the following changes were applied: a BAC limit for supervisory drivers; no drug policy; and a reduced demerit point threshold for learner drivers. In TAS significant changes also took place in 2009 including: a

restructuring of the learner stage into a pre-learner, learner 1 and learner 2 phase, a practical driving test during the second learner phase; an increase in the minimum holding period of a learner licence from 6 to 12 months; a no drug policy; and restrictions on mobile phone use. During the provisional licence phase, restrictions now apply to automatic transmission, and all mobile phone use (first stage of provisional licence). The minimum age for the second stage of the provisional licence has been reduced to 18 years, and drivers no longer need to display plates during this phase.

In 2012, WA introduced a practical driving test after 25 hours driving with a learner licence and at a minimum 16.5 years; mandatory supervised driving hours increased from 25 hours to 50 hours; BAC limits were introduced for supervisory drivers; a revised demerit point threshold; an automotive transmission restriction; and the introduction of a second provisional phase. In NZ, changes in 2011 included an increase in the minimum licensing age for a learner licence from 15 to 16 years; restricted (provisional) licence from 15.5 to 16.5 years, and 17 to 18 years for a full licence, or 17.5 if the driver has had a restricted licence for at least 12 months and completed an approved *Advanced Driving Skill* course. In addition, ACT commenced community consultation regarding reviewing the GDL program in April 2014.

Differences between Australian states and territories, and between Australia and New Zealand

In Australia, the two territories ACT and NT are largely treated like the other states in that they are self-governing entities, with their own parliament and the ability to make their own laws. The similarity between territory and state is reflected in the GDL programs which can be seen as being relatively similar throughout Australia. However, in a few key areas, the GDL programs in the ACT and the NT are more consistent with the GDL program in NZ than the remaining Australian states. Specifically, all three jurisdictions have fewer restrictions and conditions in place overall. Moreover, contrary to all of the Australian states, none of these jurisdictions requires mandatory driving hours or log book entries, with a 6-month only holding period during the learner licence stage. Further, all three jurisdictions have only a single-phase provisional licence.

With regards to NZ specifically where a GDL program was introduced in 1984 (Baughan & Simpson, 2002), few updates appear to have taken place in the past three decades. This is surprising as NZ was a pioneer through being the first jurisdiction in the world to implement a formal GDL program as a way to manage young novice driver risk. Although the minimum age was increased at each stage of the GDL in 2011, NZ overall has less rigorous restrictions in place regarding learner and provisional stages in comparison to Australia. For example, unlike most other areas in Australia, NZ has no mandatory supervised driving hours during the learner stage, requires only a 6-month holding period, and does not specify a maximum BAC limit for supervisory drivers. Despite research indicating the dangers of mobile phone use, especially for young drivers (e.g., Bellinger et al., 2009; Haque & Washington, 2014), NZ has not introduced mobile phone restriction during either the learner or provisional phases. Further, unlike Australia, there is no reduced demerit point threshold in place, when deterrence theory (Homel, 1988; also see the reconceptualisation of deterrence theory by Stafford and Warr, 1993) would suggest that such a condition would act as a deterrent for risky and dangerous driving during the first few years of novice licensure. Finally, NZ holds the youngest minimum age to obtain a full licence with an unrestricted licence possibly gained as young as 17.5 years, an age where most young Australian drivers would be subjected to the increased restrictions in place to guide them through the well-recognised hazardous first stages of independent driving.

Australasian GDL program strength ratings

Interestingly, an examination of the learner and provisional conditions as summarised in Tables 1 and 2, and application of the IIHS GDL strength rating system, revealed that only three Australian states (NSW, QLD, VIC) received a good rating (6 points each); three Australian states (SA, TAS, WA) received a fair rating (4-5 points each); and the two Australian territories (NT, ACT) and NZ received a marginal rating (2-3 points). As such, despite the recent improvements apparent in all of the reviewed GDL programs, and despite NZ being the first jurisdiction to introduce a GDL program for young novice drivers, there remains room for improvement.

Concluding comments

Changes to GDL programs in place throughout Australasia during the last decade offer promising improvements to the training of young novice drivers, and preliminary investigations indicate a reduction in young novice driver crash involvement. In addition to the changes discussed by Senserrick (2007, 2009), some recent enhancements are of particular significance. These include clearly specified BAC limits for supervising drivers and a no drug policy, reduced demerit point threshold, mobile phone restrictions and increases in supervised driving hours and holding periods for young novice drivers. While these changes are likely to have a positive effect on the number of injuries and fatalities seen in young novice drivers, there is still

scope for improvement. Further, many jurisdictions still do not have specific rules in place regarding night-time driving and number of (peer) passengers. As this has been found to significantly reduce the risk of fatal road crashes in young drivers and is one of the most successful aspects of the NZ GDL (Begg & Stephenson, 2003), it is imperative that future revisions to GDL programs in Australasia consider implementing tighter restrictions, particular during the early provisional phase.

References

- Baughan, C., & Simpson, H. (2002). *Graduated driver licensing – A review of some current systems*. TRL Report TRL529. Berkshire: Transport Research Laboratory.
- Begg, D., & Stephenson, S. (2003). Graduated driver licensing: the New Zealand experience. *Journal of Safety Research*, 34, 99–105.
- Bellinger, D. B., Budde, B. M., Machida, M., Richardson, G. B., & Berg, W. P. (2009). The effect of cellular telephone conversation and music listening on response time in braking. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 12(6), 441–451.
- Fell, J. C., Jones, K., Romano, E., & Voas, R. (2011). An evaluation of graduated driver licensing effects on fatal crash involvements of young drivers in the United States. *Traffic Injury Prevention*, 12(5).
- Fu, J., Anderson, C. L., Dziura, J. D., Crowley, M. J., & Vaca, F. E. (2013). The impact of state level graduated driver licensing programs on rates of passenger restraint use and unlicensed driving in fatal crashes. *Annals of Advances in Automotive Medicine*, 57, 89–98.
- Fuller, R. (2002). The psychology of the young driver. In Fuller, R., & Santos, J. A., (Eds). *Human factors for highway engineers* (pp. 241–253). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Gibbs, S. (2014). Apple's iPhone 'lock-out' patent could end texting while driving. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 20 September 2014 from <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/apr/24/apples-iphone-lock-out-patent-could-end-texting-while-driving>
- GHSA. (2015). *Graduated driver licensing laws*. Governors Highway Safety Association. Retrieved 7 April 2015 from http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/license_laws.html
- Haque, M. M., & Washington, S. (2014). A parametric duration model of the reaction times of drivers distracted by mobile phone conversations. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 62, 42–53.
- Hartling, L., Wiebe, N., Russell, K. F., Petruk, J., Spinola, C., & Klassen, T. P. (2004). Graduated driver licensing for reducing motor vehicle crashes among young drivers (Review). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2004, 2, CD003300.
- Homel, R. (1988). *Policing and Punishing the Drinking Driver: A Study of General and Specific Deterrence*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Lewis-Evans, B., & Lukkien, C. (2007). Crash profile of New Zealand novice drivers. In *Proceedings of the Australasian*

- Road Safety, Research, Policing and Education Conference*, 17-19 October, Melbourne, Australia.
- Masten, S. V., Foss, R. D., Marshall, S. W. (2013). Graduated driver licensing program component calibrations and their association with fatal crash involvement. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 57, 105-113.
- Mayhew, D. R., Simpson, H. M., Singhal, D., & Desmond, K. (2006). *Reducing the crash risk for young drivers*. Ontario: TIRF.
- McCartt, A. T., Teoh, E. R., Fields, M., Braitman, K. A., & Hellinga, L. A. (2010). Graduated licensing laws and fatal crashes of teenage drivers: A national study. *Traffic Injury Prevention*, 11(3), 240-248.
- Morrisey, M. A., Grabowski, D. C., Dee, T., & Campbell, C. (2006). The strength of graduated drivers license programs and fatalities among teen drivers and passengers. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 38, 135-141.
- Preusser, D. F., & Tison, J. (2007). GDL then and now. *Journal of Safety Research*, 38, 159-163.
- Senserrick, T. M. (2007). Recent developments in young driver education, training and licensing in Australia. *Journal of Safety Research*, 38(2), 237-244.
- Senserrick, T.M. (2009). Australian graduated driver licensing systems. *Journal of the Australasian College of Road Safety*, 20(1), 20-26.
- Williams, A. F., Tefft, B. C., & Grabowski, J. G. (2012) Graduated Driver Licensing research, 2010-Present. *Journal of Safety Research*, 43(3), 195-203.

Changing licensing trends and travel mode choices of young adults

By Trevor J Bailey¹, Lisa N Wundersitz¹, Simon J Raftery¹, Matthew R J Baldock² and Rebekah Smith³

¹(Research Fellows), Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR), University of Adelaide, South Australia,

²(Senior Research Fellow), Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR), University of Adelaide, South Australia,

³Education Program Coordinator, Royal Automobile Club of Victoria Limited (RACV)

Abstract

Analysis of driver licensing rates among young adults in Victoria, Australia, found declines in licensing since 2001. In 2014, over one-third of 18-24 year-olds did not hold a licence. Also, a survey of 147 non-driving young Australians found the most frequent main reasons for not holding a licence included the difficulty of the licensing process or its expense, not liking driving or preferring walking. Over a third of those surveyed aged 25-30 said they had never learned to drive, or were still learning. Young Victorian adults are changing their travel modes by driving less, not at all or delaying getting a licence, along with strong preferences for other travel modes, such as public transport and walking. Potential road safety implications include reduced road deaths and injuries, but also an ongoing demand for safer infrastructure for vulnerable road users. Also, all drivers will increasingly experience a road system comprising users aged over fifty along with road safety measures targeting that age group.

Keywords

Licensing, Travel mode, Young adults, Young drivers

Introduction

Are young adults' choices of travel mode changing? This is an important question because road user age can influence choice of travel mode, use of or exposure to the road

system, and consequently road safety. For example, if fewer young adults choose to take up driving, this could translate into fewer crashes involving that age group as well as travel mode patterns that persist into later adulthood. Declines in licensing rates also have the potential, in broad government and industry policy circles, to affect future transportation needs, driver supply in the transport industries, preferences for non-driving travel modes, vehicle purchases, and environmental consequences.

Changing travel mode choices among young people, particularly declines in the percentages with driver's licences, have been found in several countries. These declines are unique to young adults as they occur alongside increased proportions of licensed drivers of other ages. The countries included the US, Canada, Sweden, Norway, the UK and Germany (van Dender, 2013; Sivak, 2012), but also Australia (Raimond, 2010; Dutzik 2014; Delbosc 2013). Among North American young adults, common reasons given for *not* holding a driver's licence included that they were too busy to get a licence; owning and maintaining a vehicle is too expensive; they are able to get transport from others; and that they prefer walking, cycling or public transport to driving as travel mode choices (Schoettle 2013). Young adults researched elsewhere have given similar reasons (Dutzik 2014; Davis 2012; Foss 2014; Le Vine 2014).