

Development of a learning to drive framework for Victoria

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Abstract

The Victorian Government has made a commitment to further reduce young driver crash rates, and to maintain Victoria's leadership in youth road safety. This will be achieved through the development and delivery of a suite of education and training initiatives, referred to as the Young Driver Safety Package (YSDP). This includes establishment of a road safety education complex and creation of a practical safe driving program. These are important components of Victoria's road safety strategy, *Towards Zero*, with its vision of zero deaths and zero serious injuries on Victorian roads.

To inform the development of these initiatives a learning to drive framework for education and training requirements in Victoria was commissioned by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and VicRoads. This learning framework recognises that young people need to develop specific knowledge, skills and behaviours for them to be able to use the road system safely. The framework also recognises the important role that parents/significant adults and other stakeholders play in youth road safety.

Background

Analysis of Victorian crash data shows that between the 5 year periods of 2001-2005 and 2009-2013, the rate of deaths of drivers aged 18 to 25 years reduced by 46% (from 9.1 per 100,000 persons to 4.9 per 100,000 persons). With the aim of improving youth road safety, a number of complementary initiatives have been introduced in Victoria. In developing these initiatives, an evidence-based approach has been taken that ensures resources are targeted towards strategies that are based on rigorous and systematic research, and best practice, and that will yield demonstrable road safety benefits.

At the core of these initiatives is Victoria's Graduated Licensing System (GLS), which includes the requirement for learner drivers to accrue a minimum of 120 hours of supervised driving practice. Supporting Victoria's GLS is an extensive range of road safety education programs and resources for children, young people, and their parents/carers.

Despite the reduction in the rate of young driver lives lost, young novice drivers still represent a high-risk group with 22% of drivers killed in 2015 aged 18 to 25 years. Road crashes continue to constitute one of the leading causes of death for young people in this age group. The Victorian Government has made a commitment to further reduce young driver crash rates, and to maintain Victoria's leadership in youth road safety. This will be achieved through the development and delivery of a suite of education and training initiatives, referred to as the Young Driver Safety Package (YSDP). The YDSP is made up of a suite of initiatives comprising: Road Safety Education Complex; Practical Safe Driving Program (PSDP); L2P – learner driver mentor program; the Free licence scheme; and Youth grants, communication opportunities and student forums.

The Road Safety Education Complex and PSDP are two major initiatives under the YDSP. The Road Safety Education Complex represents a global hub for road safety, featuring evidence-based and best practice programs to extend, enhance and engage young people and the community in the prevention of road trauma, consistent with the Safe System. The overarching goal of the PSDP is to provide beginner drivers and supervising drivers with the capabilities to lay the foundations for safe driving, helping to support and enhance Victoria's GLS.

A learning to drive framework was developed to guide design and development of the Young Driver Safety Package initiatives, the Road Safety Education Complex and PSDP, in particular. The framework is based on the Victorian GLS, and the relationship between opportunities in road safety education and training, and the school curricula in Victoria is demonstrated.

Method

The key government agencies responsible for young novice driver initiatives in Victoria, the TAC and VicRoads, commissioned the development of a learning framework to inform the development of the Young Driver Safety Package for Victoria.

Experts in curriculum development, adult learning, road safety and instructional design were convened to form the development team. The framework was developed in an iterative process with input and feedback from key road safety staff at the TAC and VicRoads.

The framework development was undertaken in three stages:

- Review of:
 - relevant literature in driver training and education, and in effecting positive behaviours and behaviour change
 - the Victorian GLS
 - the Victorian education curriculum framework
 - existing best practice road safety education resources and programs.
- Identification of the knowledge, skills and behaviours required at the pre-Learner, Learner and Probationary licencing stages for young people and their parents/carers (in their role as supervising drivers).
- Creation of a young driver learning model and the detailed learning framework.

Following the development of the learning framework, existing young driver training and education programs and initiatives were mapped to the framework, and gaps and opportunities identified.

Learning framework

The framework has been designed to take into consideration what road safety research, behaviour change theory, and best practice in road safety education and training tells us about how we can help young people to become safer drivers. The framework considers:

- the target knowledge, skills and behaviours required by young drivers and their supervising drivers
- the requirements of the Victorian GLS
- the Victorian education curriculum frameworks.

The learning framework recognises that young people need to develop specific knowledge, skills and behaviours for them to be able to use the road system safely. In addition to more familiar driver learning goals, the framework also recognises the need for skills to review own safe driving performance and cope with internal and external influences that could adversely affect safe driving behaviours. These knowledge, skills and behaviours develop over time: before the young person enters the system as a driver; while they are learning to drive; and once they are fully licensed and more experienced drivers. While some of this development occurs through learning efforts that can be best described as incidental and informal, there are specific periods or stages when the development of key knowledge, skills and behaviours might benefit from more active learning efforts, as might be realised through education and training.

While the focus of the framework is on 15 – 26 year old young people, the role of parents/carers and other significant adults are also taken into account.

Current education and training initiatives, gaps and opportunities

Existing young driver education and training initiatives developed and/or supported by TAC and VicRoads have been mapped to the framework. The framework will also be a useful tool for mapping other existing Victorian Government school, community, education programs and resources that focus on young drivers, and their parents/carers and other significant adults.

This mapping allows for determining the extent to which existing programs and resources support the development of target knowledge, skills and behaviours. The framework also allows for the identification of potential opportunities for consolidation and/or redevelopment of existing young driver programs and for the identification of gaps where new programs may be required. Most importantly, it informs the Young Driver Safety Package initiatives – the Road Safety Education Complex and PSDP in particular.

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