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11 JAN 2010



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BY: _____

Mr Geoff Corrigan MP
Chair
STAYSAFE
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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correspondence.



21 JAN 2010

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Dear Mr Corrigan

Thank you for your letter to the former Minister for Roads about the Staysafe Committee's Report 1/54 on Young Driver Safety and Education Programs. The Minister for Transport and Roads now has responsibility for this portfolio, and has asked me to respond on his behalf. I apologise for the delay.

The NSW Government and the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) takes the safety of young drivers very seriously. On 1 September 2008, the RTA introduced further reforms to improve the safety of novice drivers. The details of these reforms and other young driver safety initiatives are outlined in the RTA response to this report which is enclosed.

I note the concerns you have raised regarding the 120 hours mandatory requirement for learner drivers. On the 21 November 2009 the Minister Assisting the Minister for Roads, the Hon David Borger MP, announced new rules for learner drivers. Under the new rules introduced from 19 December 2009, learner drivers who complete a one hour structured driving lesson with a fully licensed driving instructor can record three hours driving experience in the *Learner driver log book*. A maximum of 10 hours of lessons will be accepted and recorded as 30 hours in the *Learner driver log book*. In addition, learner drivers who are aged 25 and over will no longer be required to present a *Learner driver log book* before attempting the driving test.

Driving instructors involved in the new scheme must be able to develop a lesson plan and deliver a structured lesson, linked to the *Learner driver log book* and based on the needs of the learner driver. The lesson plan must be developed in conjunction with the supervising driver and the learner, using the Driving Instructor Structured Lesson Planner, available from the RTA. Each lesson must aim to develop and enhance the learner driver's practical application of safe driving behaviours, as outlined in the *Learner driver log book*.

Driving instructors are required to keep a copy of each lesson plan completed in the Driving Instructor Structured Lesson Planner for auditing purposes together with other records required under the legislation. Instructors who fail to maintain the required records will be excluded from the scheme. This is to ensure that learner drivers are receiving high quality structured lessons tailored to the needs of each learner driver. A letter has been mailed to all driving instructors informing them of these changes. Learner drivers have also been informed of these changes.

With regard to your comments about log book accreditation for professional driving instruction, there have been major developments in this area.

In 2007, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) identified driving instructors as a profession to be examined under the review of mutual recognition and national land transport licensing. Subsequently, COAG instructed Austroads to undertake a national review of driving instructor training and licensing. Accordingly, the Austroads' Registration and Licensing Task Force (RLTF) set up a working group to manage the project.

As a member of the working group, the RTA worked closely with Austroads to develop a nationally recognised driving instructor qualification, built using the parameters of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The AQTF is the national set of standards, which assures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia's vocational education and training system. In conjunction with the Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council, the Austroads' working group developed a new Certificate IV level driving instructor qualification (code TLI 41207). Features of the new qualification include rigorous academic standards and a robust final competency assessment. In addition, two new units in the training package emphasise a greater understanding and awareness of 'low risk' driving principles in trainee driving instructors.

The RTA was one of the first states to roll out the new, nationally recognised qualification for driving instructors. From December 2009, all the Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) of driving instructor training in NSW have been audited by the RTA using the national driving instructor audit tool, and approved to deliver the new qualification.

The new standard requires driving instructors to develop comprehensive structured lessons, coupled with a range of teaching and learning strategies to initiate behavioural change in younger drivers. Furthermore, the Deed of Agreement between the RTA and the RTO's gives the RTA unilateral powers to investigate and revoke the RTO status of any driving instructor provider should they fail in their duty to accredit only high quality driving instructors.

The new national driving instructor qualification and audit process in NSW is further bolstered by the already significant and wide ranging powers presented in the NSW *Driving Instructor Act 1992* and its associated Regulations. This is an extra safeguard that gives the RTA the power to suspend or cancel a driving instructor's licence. Among a number of grounds for suspension or cancellation of licence noted in the Act, the Authority can suspend or cancel any driving instructor's licence if the Authority is satisfied that the holder of the licence is not a fit and proper person to act as a driving instructor.

During the national review of driving instructor training and licensing, the NSW driving instructor legislation was widely acknowledged as best practice. The NSW Driving Instructor Act and Regulation are recognised by other Australian jurisdictions as the most robust and effective legislation in the protection of learner drivers.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write to the former Minister with your views. If you require any further information on this matter, please contact Ms Maureen Elliott, General Manager Safer People at the RTA's NSW Centre for Road Safety on (02) 8588 5801.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "MBR" followed by a stylized surname.

Michael Bushby
Chief Executive

23 DEC 2009

NSW Roads and Traffic Authority Response to the STAYSAFE Report
1/54: Inquiry into Young Driver Safety and Education Programs
November 2008

1. The Committee recommends the establishment of an interagency working group, comprising of the RTA, NSW Health, NSW Police and other Government agencies currently collecting statistical information on road safety issues. The working group should develop a comprehensive plan to collect and disseminate consistent road safety statistics and information.

Comment:

NSW Police are the provider agency of crash data which are used by the RTA as the major input to the RTA's road safety database. There have been a number of exercises undertaken to link this database with other databases, both internal and external. For example, licensing, registration, offence and health data.

Current position:

The RTA recognises that there are opportunities to work more closely with other road safety stakeholder agencies. Such collaboration should incorporate both the input and output sides. Police and to a lesser extent the Department of Health provide source data, whilst Police, Health and the MAA are the prime NSW Government agencies collecting road safety information. The RTA, Health and MAA already have an ongoing working relationship based on collation of crash data, through the joint funding of the Injury Risk Management Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. The RTA holds regular meeting with NSW Police, MAA and NSW Health. A number of linkage projects been undertaken and are in the planning stage. The NSW Government Roundtable held on 9 July 2009 identified further opportunities for data sharing.

2. The Committee further recommends that the Centre for Road Safety be the responsible lead agency to house and promote a database and ensure that collected data are made widely available, free of charge, in a variety of formats to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders and interest groups.

Comment:

The RTA's road safety database, CrashLink, currently provides road safety stakeholders throughout the Authority with access to data on-line for the last 13 years. Furthermore, it is RTA policy to provide crash data for road safety purposes at no charge to the general public. Generic formats, including those for use in geographical information systems (GIS), enable the data to be imported into a wide range of applications.

Current position:

The RTA supports the recommendation to establish an interagency working group comprising government agencies collecting and collating statistical information on road safety issues.

The RTA will issue invitations to relevant agencies in early 2010 and convene the inaugural meeting in March 2010. The focus for the first meeting will be to establish the terms of reference for the working group and to highlight the key issues to be addressed, including the need to distinguish between serious and minor injury data. This agency network is already in place with Government agencies.

3. The Committee recommends that the RTA Centre for Road Safety commission further research into the causes of young driver risk in order to devise more effective countermeasures. In particular, such research should focus on the psychological competencies to drive safely, including impulse control and self regulation.

Comment:

The NSW Government is working with the Federal and Victorian Governments and other agencies including the Victorian Transport Accident Commission, Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, Insurance Australia Group and Royal Automobile Club of Victoria to conduct a trial of the Novice Driver Program focusing on driver behaviour and hazard perception.

The focus of the program is on self-awareness, driver behaviour and hazard perception with the aim of achieving a statistically significant reduction in the number and or severity of crashes experienced by novice drivers. The program consists of classroom and in-vehicle activities and will target drivers who have held a provisional licence for up to three months.

In developing the program curriculum and its key components and activities, extensive research was conducted into risky driving behaviours, reduction of exposure to high risk situations and changing young driver risk perceptions. The research has shown for example, that the social cognitive models of behaviour change that emphasises 'self-regulation' may be effective in the revision of behaviour. As a result the social cognitive model of behaviour change as well as other theories of behaviour change underpins the novice driver program curriculum.

Current position:

The Novice Driver Program trial curriculum has been finalised and tenders for the evaluation and the program management being finalised. All program modules have been piloted individually with the full pilot of the curriculum scheduled to commence 2010.

The RTA is one of the funding partners of a three year research project with the Injury Risk Management Centre based at University of New South Wales. This research will investigate impulse control and novice drivers.

4. The Committee also recommends that the NSW Centre for Road Safety sponsor further research into the impact of drugs and driving, in conjunction with the recent introduction of random drug testing of drivers in NSW. Additional research should also be focussed on the effect of driver fatigue in relation to age and driving experience.

Comment:

The Centre for Road Safety has already completed a suite of research in 2008 on drug driving attitudes and self-reported behaviours to monitor the impact of the introduction of new roadside drug testing legislation.

Research on attitudes and self-reported behaviours regarding driver fatigue was conducted in 2006. The research involved 17-25 year old males.

Current position:

Extensive research already exists demonstrating harmful effects of drugs and of fatigue. The RTA will release a new public education campaign targeting fatigue in 2010.

Drug driving is already illegal and enforced. The aim of the RTA drug driving study was to assess how the legislation and resulting police roadside drug testing operations impacted on drug user's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours relating to drug driving. This study sought to provide comparative data with an earlier study conducted on drug driving behaviours in 2003.

A review of *Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drug Testing) Act 2006* has shown that it has been implemented effectively and is operating as intended. The implementation of this legislation should continue to deter drug drivers and potential drug drivers and make NSW roads safer for all road users.

5. The Committee recommends that the NSW Minister for Transport, through the Australian Transport Council, requests that the Australian Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics provide information on the costs of young driver road crashes as part of their current national study.

Comment:

The Minister for Roads and Transport serves on the Australia Transport Council (ATC) and represents New South Wales on road safety.

Current position:

The RTA has already researched ways to assess to impact of certain road safety strategies on road crashes known as "willingness to pay". This approach could be considered for young driver crashes.

6. The Committee has serious concerns that the impact of peer passenger restrictions and the increase in logbook hours from 50 to 120, particularly for rural populations, has not been adequately evaluated and recommends that the RTA commissions a further assessment to determine the social and economic costs of these changes and whether the stated objectives of these policies have been achieved.

Comment:

The RTA has monitored the impact of the increase in logbook hours from 50 to 120 hours. A range of new initiatives will be introduced on 19 December 2009. Learner drivers under 25 years of age who get structured lessons with a professional driving instructor can enter three hours in their learner driver logbook for every one hour of structured professional driving instruction up to a maximum of 10 hours of driving instruction. By capping '3 for 1' at 10 hours of professional instruction, the underlying intent of obtaining as much practice as possible will remain. Driving instructors will work in partnership with parents and supervisors to develop structured lessons which will maximise road safety benefits. There is no requirement to obtain professional lessons and this will mean that learner drivers can continue to learn to drive exactly as they do now with a parent, friend or any one who holds an unrestricted class C driver licence.

Learner drivers over 25 years of age will continue to be required to pass the Driver Knowledge Test and Driving Test, but will not be required to complete the *Learner driver log book*.

The RTA has funded Youthsafe to support the development of community-based mentoring programs. Youthsafe provides training for mentors of community-based programs for young people and provides best practice advice to assist community-based program development. In 2009 the RTA and Youthsafe assisted Youth off the Streets develop a mentoring program for homeless youth. Youthsafe, funded by the RTA also conducted a professional forum on the 120 hours and best practice community mentoring programs.

Current position:

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is monitoring the implementation and impact of the new laws. The economic and social costs relating to the initiatives will be examined. These initiatives are already delivering road safety benefits. Fatal crash involvements of P1 driver in the two year periods before and after the 2007 reforms declined by 35% compared to 2006. A comparison in the two period before and after the July 2007 since the introduction of the new P1 speeding laws has shown a 37% reduction in crashes involving a P1 speeding driver.

Further reforms for provisional and learner drivers were introduced on 1 September 2008. A learner driver will incur automatic licence suspension and confiscation if they drive without a supervisor holding an unrestricted licence. Learner or provisional drivers face immediate roadside suspension and confiscation of a licence for speeding more than 30km/h over the limit. Following the success of the zero tolerance for P1 drivers, changes were made to the

demerits for P2 licence holders on 1 July 2009. Provisional (P2) licence holders caught speeding will incur four demerit points and a fine. A P2 licence holder will now be suspended for at least three months for two speeding offences.

The RTA continues to support regional and local road safety initiatives, to ensure the success of the night-time peer-passenger restrictions for P1 drivers. The RTA has also funded Youthsafe to research and promote safe travel options for youth.

The RTA will continue to monitor the implementation of the Graduated Licensing Scheme and the December 2009 changes to the learner licensing process.

7. The Committee recommends that the RTA examines other ways to address specific safety needs of rural and regional communities and adopt a more localised approach to road safety in New South Wales. In order to maximise the efficient use of resources and to ensure collective ownership of solutions as part of this process, the RTA should instigate a collaborative consultation with local professionals (road safety officers, emergency services, educators, youth workers, and community organisations) to deliver a range of road safety programs tailored to local needs. These consultations should also involve the Ministry of Transport.

Comment:

Each of the RTA's 6 regions employs several road user safety officers who are responsible for:

- Developing regional road safety projects which aim to address road safety issues with the Region. In doing so, these officers work with local representatives of relevant NSW government agencies including the Police, Health, the Ministry of Transport, Gaming and Racing, as appropriate.
- Working with council road safety officers (RSOs) to assist them develop and implement road safety projects to address road safety problems within their local communities. RSOs are strongly encouraged to collaborate with all existing community groups (e.g. seniors, youth, and sports groups) and relevant agencies and businesses (e.g. police, liquor accords, licensed clubs, health professionals) during all project stages. The Ministry of Transport is included when relevant road safety solutions (e.g. alternate transport schemes) are planned.

Current position:

The RTA will continue to support regional and local road safety initiatives, and develop strategies to improve community involvement.

The RTA has funded Youthsafe to support best practice programs that support the development of community-based safe travel options.

8. The Committee recommends that the NSW Government seek to bring to a successful conclusion, discussions with the Commonwealth Government and other State/Territory governments regarding the introduction of a national policy to display ANCAP ratings on all vehicles at point of sale.

Comment:

The National Safety and Security Working Group drafted a paper for the Australian Transport Council (ATC) meeting of 7 November in which it recommended a number of key components in a proposed strategy for introducing ‘stars on cars’ at the point of sale. Whereas the RTA supports this initiative – and did so previously when ANCAP tried to introduce it – it stated its belief that the strategy should focus on mandating the requirement rather than have it as a voluntary scheme.

Current position:

Despite the RTA’s support for a mandatory scheme, the Australian Transport Council (ATC) has voted to develop the display of ANCAP ratings as a voluntary scheme. However, it will establish goals and associated timeframes, and if these are not achieved, it will then consider introducing legislation that will make the scheme mandatory. The RTA maintains that vehicle manufacturers are unlikely to display poor ANCAP results on subject vehicles, and rather than waiting to assess whether targets have been achieved, the legislative process should commence now as it will take a number of years for any legislation to be introduced. Nevertheless, the RTA supports the concept and will assist in its development, introduction and monitoring.

9. The Committee recommends that the RTA, in consultation with Local Traffic Committees, review its processes for determining speed limits on rural roads. These processes should involve the local community by providing information, conducting public forums about the setting of such speed limits and establishing appropriate stakeholders.

Comment:

The NSW Speed Zone Guidelines is the main reference document to determine speed limits in NSW on both urban and rural roads. The document is developed through extensive consultation with road safety experts, traffic engineers, police, local councils and the general public. It provides comprehensive technical information needed to understand the basis of speed zoning and the procedure for establishing, reviewing and signposting speed zones. The guidelines comply with Australian Standards and relevant Austroads documents.

Current position:

The revised version of *NSW Speed Zone Guidelines* was released on 6 May 2009 and are available on the RTA website.

The NSW Centre for Road Safety has conducted workshops and training for practitioners in four of the six RTA regions to make sure that the safety principles and procedures underlying the document are properly understood by staff. Further workshops are scheduled to be conducted in 2010.

10. The Committee recommends that the RTA, through the Centre for Road Safety, investigate compliance with current seatbelt restraint driver and passenger requirements, particularly in rural parts of NSW and if appropriate, initiate a new campaign of enforcement and promotion to reinforce the seatbelt safety message.

Comment:

NSW introduced the mandatory wearing of seatbelts in 1971. A dramatic drop in road fatalities was associated with its introduction.

Observational studies indicate a high level of compliance with the law, with an overall wearing rate of 96.7 per cent across NSW. Compliance rates are slightly higher in urban areas, at around 97.5 per cent, and slightly lower in rural areas at around 95.9 per cent.

Substantial penalties now apply to both drivers and adult passengers for not wearing a seatbelt. Double demerit point penalties also apply during holiday periods, which further reinforce the importance of wearing a seatbelt among the community. State-wide advertising accompanies double demerit holiday periods.

In addition to state-wide operations, the RTA currently promotes the wearing of seatbelts in high risk regional and rural areas by conducting local advertising campaigns in conjunction with Police enforcement, and distributing public education materials targeting specific road users such as truck drivers, Aboriginal communities and parents of young children.

The mandatory seatbelt laws in NSW are enforced by the Police. Through its Enhanced Enforcement Program, the RTA provides additional funding to the Police to target non-wearing of seatbelts.

Furthermore, given that non-wearing of seatbelts is often associated with other high risk activities such as drink driving, strategies aimed at reducing this behaviour may also improve the wearing rates of seatbelts.

Current position:

The RTA will conduct an observational study to update its information regarding seatbelt wearing rates.

Once the study is complete, the RTA will determine the need for countermeasures and develop policies or strategies as required.

11. The Committee is concerned about the high incidence of aggressive behaviour by certain young male drivers and strongly recommends that the RTA Centre for Road Safety sponsor immediate further research into the links between anti-social behaviour, substance abuse and high-risk driving behaviour for young people, particularly young male drivers.

Comment:

Males are overrepresented in all areas of road trauma and unintentional injury.

Current position:

The Centre for Road Safety will consider the scope and investigate current research in this area.

12. The Committee recommends that the Centre for Road Safety, in conjunction with other NSW Government agencies, supplement this work with further research to develop driver offender programs specifically targeting young re-offenders. Research should focus on a range of interventions such as one-on-one and group offender programs to address re-offending risks, particularly in the case management of young people on supervised court orders.

Comment:

The NSW Sober Driver Program already targets re-offenders, including young drink driving re-offenders aged 18-25 years). This program is delivered by Probation and Parole, Department of Corrective Services for offenders on supervised court orders.

Current position:

The NSW Centre for Road Safety will review the handling of repeat offenders and re-offending as part of the NSW Government's 30 point plan which was developed through the NSW Government Roundtable.

13. For young drivers less than 18 years of age, the Committee recommends that the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Department of Juvenile Justice become involved in the design and delivery of evidence-based early intervention programs for young offenders which confer resistance to further offending behaviour.

Comment:

The RTA funds the Department of Education and Training to deliver the NSW Road Safety Education Program in NSW Government schools. The Department of Education and Training has responsibility for the education of students attending schools based in Juvenile Justice Centres.

Current position:

The NSW Centre for Road Safety will investigate in consultation with Juvenile Justice and the Department of Education and Training opportunities for the education of young offenders as part of the NSW Road Safety Education Program.

14. The Committee recommends that the RTA, in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education, NSW Police, the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Attorney-General's Department conduct a review of the effectiveness of the Traffic Offender Intervention Program. Such a review should distinguish between reductions in re-offending and crash rates.

Comment:

The Attorney General's Department regulate Traffic Offender Intervention Programs (TOIP's) through the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Traffic Offender Intervention Program) Regulation 2007, and would therefore be the lead agency involved in conducting a review of the effectiveness of TOIP's.

Current position:

The review is the responsibility of the Attorney-General's Department. Traffic Offenders Programs vary from location to location making overall evaluations problematic.

15. The Committee recommends that the RTA, in consultation with the ADTA, develop an improved regulatory framework for assessing driving instructor competency, including regular and random assessment of instructors to provide greater quality assurance in the industry.

Comment:

In NSW, driving instructors are regulated by the Driving Instructors Act 1992 and Regulation 2003.

The Act and Regulation provide a robust approach to ensuring standards, competence, and appropriate behaviour. For example for serious alleged misconduct, the Act enables the RTA to immediately suspend a driving instructor's licence until the matter has been dealt with.

In addition to instructor behaviour, character and conduct, the Act is also very comprehensive in other areas, for example in relation to testing the competence

of instructors. Under the Act, all licensed instructors are re-tested every five years to ensure they have an up-to-date knowledge of the road rules. In addition, instructors' competence as a driver of motor vehicles may also be re-assessed.

The provisions of the Act and Regulation are supported by appropriate penalties that range from fines to instructor licence cancellation.

The RTA has a comprehensive auditing regime and carries out regular monitoring exercises of driving schools and instructors. This includes monitoring of pass rates and desk top audits. In-vehicle monitoring occurs in the case of complaints. These measures ensure the ongoing quality and integrity of service delivery. Action in the form of a 'Show Cause' letter may be issued for breaches of the act or regulation.

During 2007, the RTA as part of an Austroads working group developed a national qualification for the licensing of driving instructors. The new qualification, the Certificate IV in Transport and Logistics (Road Transport Driving Instruction) course code TLI41207 was developed through consultation with the Council of Australian Government the Transport Industry Skills Council and the driver training industry nationally.

The Austroads working group also introduced national standards for the assessing and auditing of driving instructors. NSW along with all other Australian driver licence regulators have adopted the new national qualification, assessment and auditing standards.

Current position:

It is anticipated that the Code will support the legal and regulatory requirements for maintaining appropriate standards that are expected in terms of performance and conduct.

Observance of the ADTA code is a mandatory requirement of the RTA for a driving instructor to be accredited to undertake older driver licence assessments.

The Driving Instructor Regulations have recently been reviewed under the Subordinate Legislation Act. This process included a regulatory framework impact statement which was published for public comment.

16. The Committee recommends that the RTA boost support for initiatives such as the *Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers* workshops in order to encourage greater attendance. Additionally, the RTA should provide greater resources for Logbook Runs and mentoring programs.

Comment:

The RTA has continued to expand the promotion of the *Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers* workshops. In 2008, the Centre for Road Safety developed best practice guidelines to support local councils in the delivery of community events such as log book runs. In 2009, the RTA funded Youthsafe to conduct a forum for community groups interested in the delivery of community-based mentoring programs.

Current position:

The Centre for Road Safety supports the delivery of mentoring programs and log book run community events where identified as key community road safety projects within the Local Government Road Safety Program.

Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers Workshops are promoted in the RTA *Learner Driver Log Book* which is issued to all learner drivers and the *Learner Driver Pack* which is issued to all new learner drivers. Information is provided to the general public in the RTA *Shortcuts* publication which is distributed with licensing information also promotes the workshops.

Targeted workshops have also been developed to engage the participation of Aboriginal and Arabic communities.

17. The Committee also recommends that the RTA investigate interactive web-based programs to support enhanced information provision for young drivers and their parents.

Comment:

The RTA curriculum support resource *Shifting Gears* and *Shifting up a Gear in TAFE NSW* contains interactive technology in CD-ROMS to enhance road safety teaching and learning experiences in school and TAFE programs.

Current position:

The RTA will investigate the efficacy of interactive web-based programs in the redesign of the NSW Centre for Road Safety website.

18. The Committee recommends that the Novice Driver Trial be subject to oversight and scrutiny by independent experts who can bring objectivity and scientific rigour to the process and to the subsequent evaluation results.

Comment:

The Roads and Traffic Authority is party to a seven-member partnership to develop and conduct a Novice Driver Program Trial in NSW and Victoria. While the RTA is a major partner in the project, the Federal Government has been the lead agency, with all project management processes being conducted within their administrative structure. The leadership of the project is currently in the process of being transferred from the Federal to the Victorian Government. A new governance structure will be developed to support this process.

However, the project to-date has used independent experts and organisations selected through a public tendering process in the development of all components of the program.

Current position:

Throughout the project internationally recognised consultants have been engaged to develop each aspect of the program. Their work has been checked and validated by independent experts. This process will continue throughout the project.

19. In relation to school-based road safety programs, the Committee recommends that appropriately vocationally qualified and experienced road safety practitioners participate in the delivery of the PDHPE curriculum by presenting material in a different format to that delivered by the classroom teacher. This material would have to be endorsed by the RTA and the DET.

Comment:

The delivery of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum in schools is the responsibility of the three education agencies in New South Wales,

The RTA and NSW Department of Education (DET) do not endorse externally provided programs. The decision to access these programs is a decision made by individual schools.

Current position:

The RTA will continue to provide quality school educational resources and support teachers through professional development provided by qualified and experienced road safety education consultants. In 2009, the RTA has conducted an evaluation of student knowledge and awareness of the programs, and will consider changes on the basis of these results. The results showed a high level of recall by students regarding road safety messages delivered during their schooling years.

20. The Committee recommends that school-based programs be subjected to rigorous evaluation to assess their efficacy and to develop a best practice model, with standardised delivery and implementation measures.

Comment:

The RTA presently conducts an independent evaluation of the NSW Schools Road Safety Education Program on a four yearly basis. These evaluations aim to provide information for future directions and identify improvements, as well as demonstrating accountability to the NSW Government.

Current position:

The RTA will continue to conduct independent evaluations of the program to ensure efficacy and world's best practice pedagogy.

21. In relation to community-based programs, the Committee recommends that, in the short term, the RTA update its publication: *Principles of Effective Community-based Safer Driving Programs for Novice Drivers and Passengers* to assist driver education providers on the ground. As a longer term objective the Committee recommends that the RTA design a template for a model young driver education program, thereby enabling a more standardised approach based on empirical evidence of efficacy and utility.

Comment:

The *Principles of Effective Community-Based Programs for Novice Drivers and Passengers* was developed in 2002 to inform the community about best practice road safety education.

Current position:

The RTA has reviewed the current research related to the principles of this policy. A further review of this policy will be informed by the outcomes of the NSW Government's 30 point road safety plan. A sub-group of psychologists have been engaged to report on the value of graphic images on advertising campaigns and road safety messages.

22. As part of the development of a young driver education template, the Committee also recommends that the RTA establish a consultation process with external agencies community providers and young people to ensure broad support and shared ownership of this initiative.

Comment:

The RTA funds program partners such as the Department of Education and Training (DET), TAFE and Youthsafe to engage and consult with young people in the development and trial of resources and programs.

Current position:

The RTA ensures that young people (17-25 years of age) are engaged and consulted in RTA marketing and focus group research.

23. The Committee recommends that the RTA, through the Centre for Road Safety, promote road safety initiatives and activities in a more proactive manner by hosting its own website and providing a more targeted range of information services to young drivers, parents, researchers, policy makers and other road users.

Comment:

In 2008, the RTA launched a dedicated *GEARED* website to provide young people with information about road safety and licensing. On 1 July 2007 when a range of new laws and conditions were introduced for novice drivers eight new pages were uploaded on the RTA website to provide information to parents, young drivers, policy makers and other road users. The RTA also provided information to the government agencies, for example TAFE NSW and three education sectors have designed a road safety webpage for teachers and students to communicate road safety policy and programs to staff.

Current situation:

A new NSW Centre for Road Safety website is currently in development.

24. The Committee recommends that the RTA provides more information regarding its rationale for increasing the number of logbook hours required before drivers can sit for a driving test. This is in addition to the evaluation of the impact of this change; already recommended.

Comment:

The Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) was introduced to New South Wales in 2000 and required learner drivers to log 50 hours of supervised driving prior to gaining a Provisional (P1) Licence. These hours are logged in a Learner Driver Log Book. A review of the use of the log books identified that current learners were on average experiencing 59 hours of supervised driving experience.

The RTA sought community comment from the community to increase the log book hours from 50 to 100 hours through the NSW Government discussion paper entitled: *Improving the safety for young drivers* November 2004. The community was supportive of increasing the supervised learning process.

Overseas experience identified that longer periods of supervised driving experience lead to safer outcomes when young drivers first drive solo. In Sweden, increasing experience as a learner driver resulted in a 15% reduction in the risk of crashes in the first two years of driving. (Gregerson 2000). A report commissioned by the NRMA on a review of novice driver programs (Harrison 2003) confirmed that the most effective means of reducing novice driver crashes is to increase learner driver practice in wide ranging conditions such as driving at night, driving in the rain, driving on open highways and driving in adverse conditions. This report supported the Swedish study by Gregerson confirming again that more on road hours are necessary to obtain maximum road safety benefit and crash reduction.

Crash data identify that the learner period is the safest time to gain driving experience. The learner phase provides the new driver with the opportunity to develop a range and variety of driving experiences and traffic situations with the support of a supervisor. Potential risk taking is also reduced when accompanied by a supervisor.

If insufficient driving experience is gained during this supervised learner period then this learning would be undertaken in first few months of driving when the

provisional driver may be driving alone. RTA crash data has identified an increased crash rate for provisional drivers in the first few months of driving. Gaining this experience in the learner driver phase therefore reduces the crash risk.

A 120 hour learner period with a mandatory 20 hour night driving component was introduced on 1 July 2007. This learning was supported by clear learning goals and learning content.

The importance of obtaining as much experience under supervision is widely accepted as a road safety strategy, for example in Victoria learner drivers under 21 years of age must complete 120 hours of supervised driving, 10 hours of which must be at night. In Queensland, learner drivers under 25 must complete 100 hours of supervised driving, 10 hours of which must be at night. South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania have also introduced requirements for minimum mandatory hours of supervised driving practice.

A state-wide community education program provides support supervisors of learner drivers are delivered in local government areas. The *Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers workshop* informs the community of the rationale and benefits of planning a variety of on-road driving experiences or log book hours for learner drivers.

Current position:

As of the 19 December 2009, in New South Wales a minimum of 120 hours of on-road driving now only applies to new learner drivers under 25 years of age. This on-road driving experience should provide significant road safety benefits for the whole community.

25. The Committee recommends that the RTA, as part of its current assessment of the Road Safety Officer Program, provide greater clarity concerning the future of this Program and give strong consideration to providing increased levels of funding and support to Road Safety Officers. The continuation and expansion of this Program will increase Council involvement in locally-based road safety initiatives, such as assisting with the provision of additional transport options in rural and regional areas and in coordinating the activities of local government in the area of young driver safety more generally.

Comment:

The Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP), which incorporates the Road Safety Officer Program, has been in operation since 1992. The NSW Government's strategic plan *Road Safety 2010* provided an integrated framework within which the LGRSP is delivered.

Road Safety Officers are strongly encouraged to implement local educational and behavioural projects, including parent learner workshops, to youth in their local council areas, particularly where there are high numbers of learner drivers.

The LGRSP, along with a number of other long term road safety programs, is currently being reviewed. The Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) has been contracted to carry out this review, and in doing so has consulted widely with council personnel including Road Safety Officers. An aim of the review is to develop a strategy to increase the involvement of local councils, given that currently, only two thirds of NSW councils participate in the LGRSP

Current position:

At this stage the current program will continue. Concurrently the RTA will pilot a new strategy with a few councils.

26. The Committee recommends that the RTA evaluate the current range of road safety bodies and committees and develop a more inclusive model, involving government and non-government agencies and stakeholder groups in the setting of priorities and the development of new policy. Such a model should provide a greater level of transparency and accountability and include representation by young drivers. It should also foster greater collaborative partnerships and information and resource sharing by those who are directly responsible for road safety management.

Comment:

The RTA has representation on a number of government and community road safety bodies.

Current position:

The RTA is developing a new governance model to guide the delivery of road safety outcomes in NSW. The model under consideration brings agencies together in a consistent and systematic framework and seeks to ensure effective community consultation.

It is anticipated that the new governance arrangements will be announced and implemented in early 2010.