



# YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND GRADUATED LICENSING

DISCUSSION PAPER

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## FOREWORD FROM THE MINISTER

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Victoria's road toll has fallen significantly through the introduction of numerous road safety measures based upon clear research evidence.

In 2004 there were 343 road deaths in Victoria. Based on our population and the numbers of vehicles on our roads, Victoria's annual rate of 6.85 deaths per 100,000 population is one of the lowest rates of road fatality in the world.

Despite these recent improvements in the road toll there are still too many young driver crashes.

Statistics show that driving a car is one of the most dangerous things a young person will ever do.

One third of the road toll results from crashes involving 18-25 year old drivers – 120 people die, 2,300 are seriously injured and nearly 10,000 people are injured in total in these crashes each year. The cost to the community of these casualties is more than \$1 billion every year.

What cannot be quantified is the pain, suffering, and the personal loss.

There is considerable opportunity to increase safety for our young drivers by better matching licensing arrangements and initiatives with their safety needs.

Graduated licensing systems allow new drivers to move from driving in lower to higher risk situations as driving experience and maturity increases.

International experience with graduated licensing systems in New Zealand, Canada and most US states is encouraging, but we need to ensure that the development of a local graduated licensing scheme is tailored to address the road safety issues in Victoria.

This paper examines the crashes and key risks for young drivers in Victoria, and identifies possible graduated licensing measures to address these issues.

Detailed analysis indicates that graduated licensing and support measures could significantly reduce young driver deaths and injuries.

The young driver crash issue does not have a simple cause and will not respond to simple solutions. As one component of the Government's broad road safety strategy, however, graduated licensing can support and protect young people on our roads.

There are approximately 217,000 probationary drivers in Victoria. The measures proposed in this paper seek a balance between protecting future young drivers in this category and allowing for their social mobility and economic needs.

I encourage individuals, groups and organisations with an interest in road safety to consider the information in this discussion paper together with the possible measures identified, and to make a submission on this important issue.

**DETAILED ANALYSIS INDICATES THAT GRADUATED LICENSING AND SUPPORT MEASURES COULD SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE YOUNG DRIVER DEATHS AND INJURIES.**



**PETER BATCHELOR**  
Minister for Transport

## YOUNG DRIVER CRASHES IN VICTORIA



**EACH YEAR 120 PEOPLE ARE KILLED AND 2,300 ARE SERIOUSLY INJURED IN CRASHES INVOLVING 18-25 YEAR OLD DRIVERS – THIS IS ONE THIRD OF THE ROAD TOLL.**

Despite significant road toll reductions since 1990, young drivers continue to have more casualty crashes than any other group of drivers on the road.

Each year 120 people are killed and 2,300 are seriously injured in crashes involving 18-25 year old drivers – this is one third of the road toll.

Probationary drivers are involved in casualty crashes at triple the rate of experienced drivers.

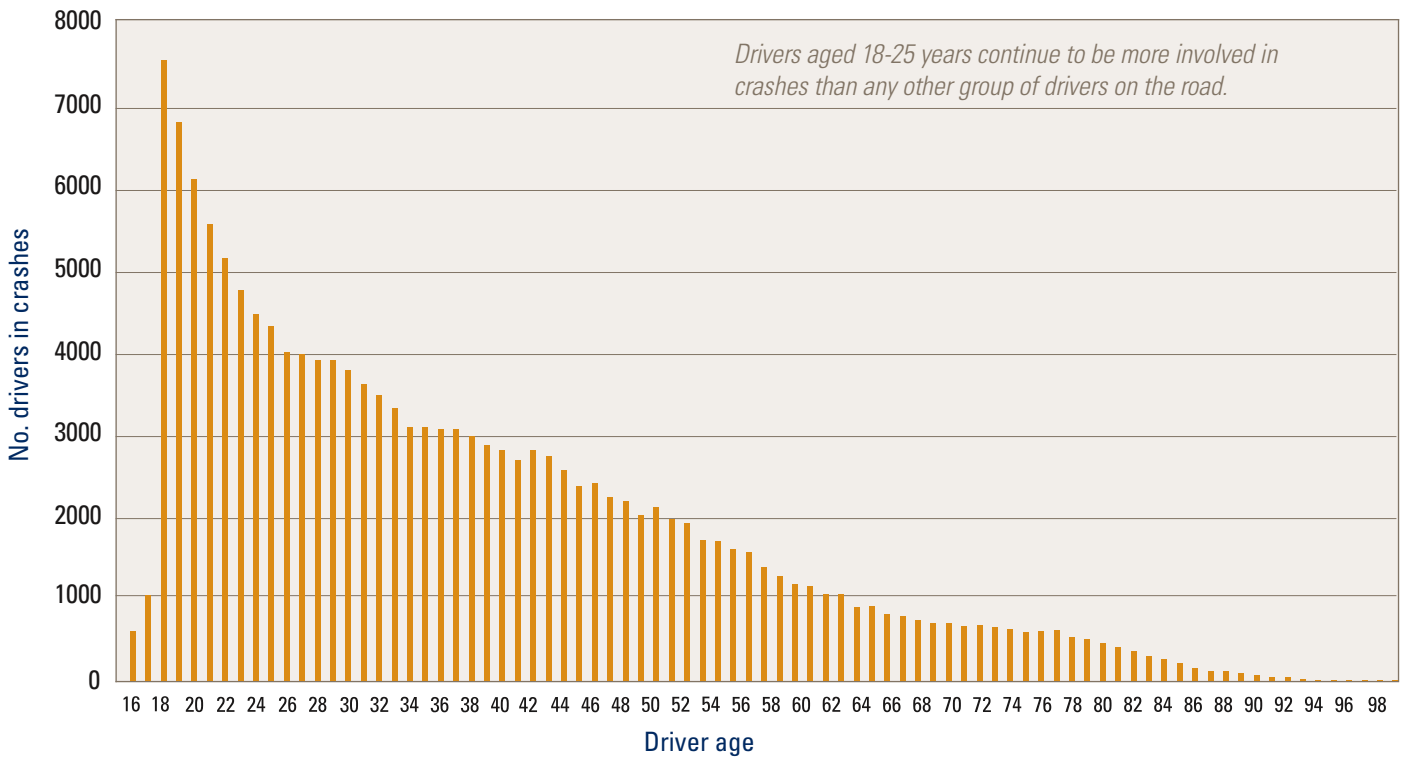
Whilst making up only 13 per cent of all licensed drivers, 18 to 25 year old drivers accounted for 27 per cent of all driver deaths in 2004.

Each year around 40-50 young drivers are killed, 100 are involved in fatal crashes, and 7,000 are involved in casualty crashes.

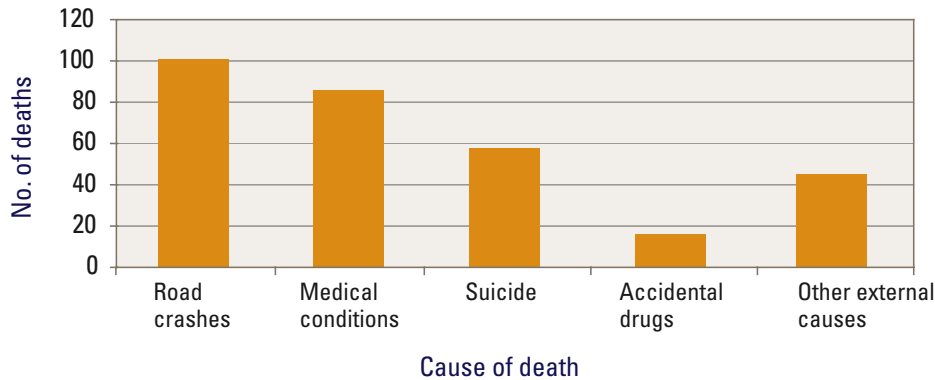
More young people die from road crashes than any other cause.

## YOUNG DRIVER CRASHES IN VICTORIA (continued)

### Age of drivers involved in casualty crashes Victoria 1999-2004.

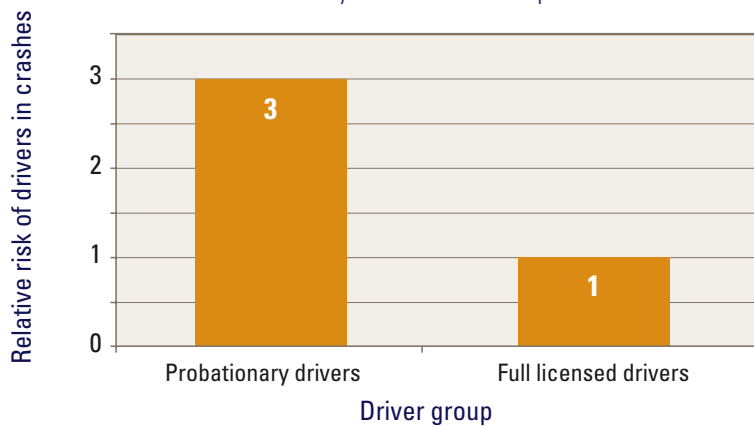


### Cause of death for 15-24 year olds Victoria 2002.



### Probationary driver risk of crashing.

Relative risk of casualty crash involvement per million km driven in Melbourne 2000-2002.



## KEY SAFETY ISSUES FOR YOUNG DRIVERS IN VICTORIA



### DRIVING IS A COMPLEX AND MENTALLY DEMANDING ACTIVITY.

NEW DRIVERS ARE AT HIGH RISK AS THEY HAVE NOT YET FULLY DEVELOPED THE CAPACITY TO MEET THE CHALLENGING DEMANDS OF DRIVING.

Detailed analysis of crashes has identified a number of key safety issues facing young drivers. These are summarised in the table opposite, and explained in greater detail on pages 8 – 13.

Crash risk reduces primarily as driving experience increases, and as young drivers get older and “mature out” of risky driving behaviour<sup>1</sup>.

Research suggests that lack of driving experience is the most significant factor contributing to young driver crashes<sup>2</sup>.

The crash profile of new drivers in Victoria (graph opposite), shows that the risk of crashing is highest in the first 6 to 12 months of the probationary licence, when the new driver is least experienced.

Due to their inexperience young drivers also find it more difficult to cope with challenging driving conditions increasing the risk of collision. Driving late at night, with multiple passengers, drink driving, using mobile telephones and towing are much higher risk activities for young inexperienced drivers.

Half of first year drivers’ fatal crashes occur whilst driving between 10pm and 6am or with multiple passengers.

## KEY SAFETY ISSUES FOR YOUNG DRIVERS IN VICTORIA (continued)

### KEY SAFETY ISSUES FOR YOUNG DRIVERS IN VICTORIA

#### Inexperience

Crashes are most likely to occur in the first six months of driving when the new driver is least experienced. Crash risk in the first year of driving is several times greater than in subsequent years. Inexperience is the most significant factor contributing to young driver crashes.

#### Drink driving

Alcohol is involved in 21 per cent of deaths for 18-20 year old drivers and in 50 per cent of 21-25 year old driver deaths.

#### Poor driving records and speeding

Young drivers who commit traffic offences, in particular for speeding, have an increased crash risk of 65 per cent. Repeat speeding offenders are a small but significant high risk group.

#### Mobile phone use

Mobile phone use, including hands free, increases crash risk by 25 per cent and driver fatality risk is 4-9 times higher.

#### Poor vehicle safety

As young drivers are more likely to drive smaller, older cars which are less crashworthy and have fewer safety features, they and their passengers are at greater risk of serious injury or dying in a crash.

#### Late night driving

Crash risk for probationary drivers is much higher when they drive between the hours of 10pm and 6am. These crashes occur most frequently in the first 6 months of driving when probationary drivers are least experienced. First year probationary drivers have 33 per cent of their fatal crashes between 10pm and 6am, yet only 9 per cent of their total driving occurs at this time.

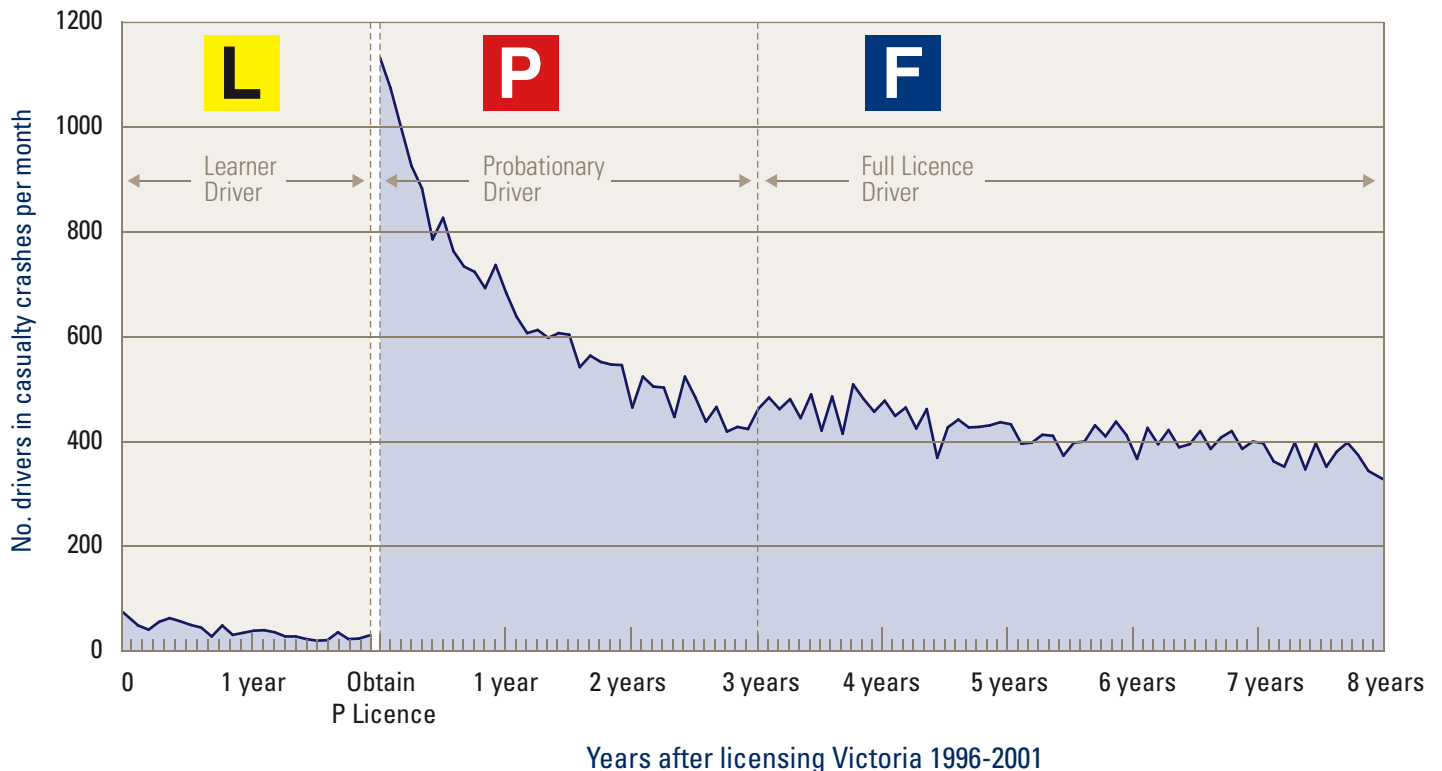
#### Multiple passengers

The rate of fatal and serious injury crashes, is elevated when probationary drivers carry two or more passengers, either day or night. 26 per cent of first year probationary drivers involved in fatal crashes are carrying two or more passengers, yet only 9 per cent of their total driving is with multiple passengers. Half of fatal crashes for first year drivers occur late at night or with multiple passengers.

#### The role of parents/carers

Parents are powerful role models and can influence children's driving behaviour, driving experience and compliance with licence restrictions.

Crash profile of new drivers.



Legend: ■ Learner and new drivers involved in casualty crashes per month 1996-2001

## KEY SAFETY ISSUES: INEXPERIENCE

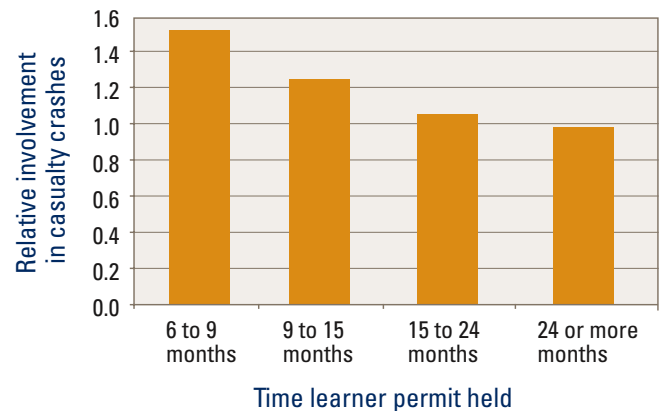
New drivers lack a number of critical traffic skills. These include the ability to observe and make sense of the road and traffic environment, to anticipate emerging hazards and recognize danger, and to make accurate assessments and decisions quickly to avoid hazards.

New drivers often cannot cope with the high level of information to be processed, or with increases in the complexity of the driving task. They often do not judge, anticipate, and compensate for hazardous conditions and what other road users are doing.

A large amount of on-road driving experience is required before traffic skills improve and crash risk reduces.

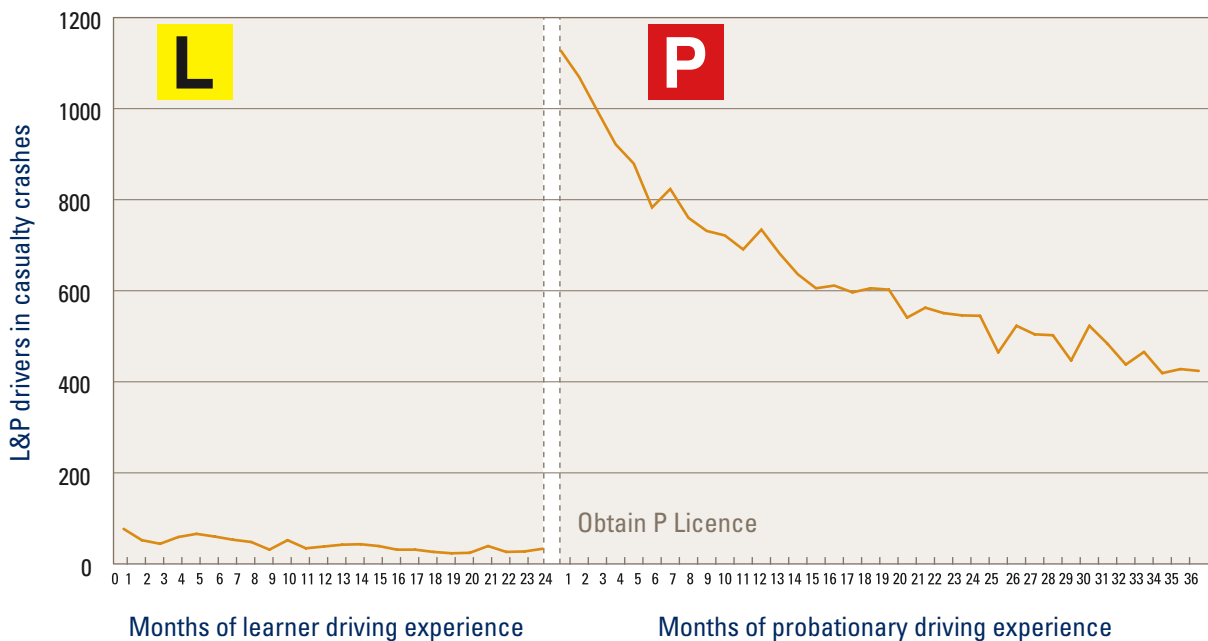
Experience reduces the mental effort needed to drive, improves judgement and anticipation, and reduces driving errors.

**Longer learner period improves safety.** Relative involvement in casualty crashes for first year P drivers licensed at age 18.



*New drivers are safer if they complete a longer learner permit period.*

### Inexperience and crashes – learner and probationary drivers Victoria 1996-2001.



*Learner drivers under supervision have a low risk of crashing. In contrast, the first 6 to 12 months of driving on a probationary licence is the most dangerous.*

### The facts: Inexperience

- Learner drivers under supervision have a low risk of crashing. In contrast, the first 6 to 12 months of driving on a P licence is when crashes most commonly occur<sup>3</sup>.
- Inexperience is the most significant crash factor for young drivers.
- Crash involvement drops dramatically with each additional month of driving experience gained over the first 6 to 12 months of a P licence. This crash pattern occurs for newly licensed drivers across the motorised world<sup>3</sup>.
- New drivers who complete a shorter learner period are estimated to have less driving practice and an increased crash risk of up to 60 per cent.
- Research shows that learners who practice more are safer as newly licensed drivers.
- Learners with 120 hours supervised learner practice have a 30 per cent lower crash risk in the first two years of licensed driving than learners with around only 40 hours of supervised practice<sup>4</sup>.
- Through significant safety promotion, Victoria's learners now get more practice. Over 97 per cent of learners also obtain driving lessons with a professional driving instructor. These learners have an average of 11 lessons. However, many learners still do not gain enough on-road supervised practice.

## KEY SAFETY ISSUES: DRINK DRIVING

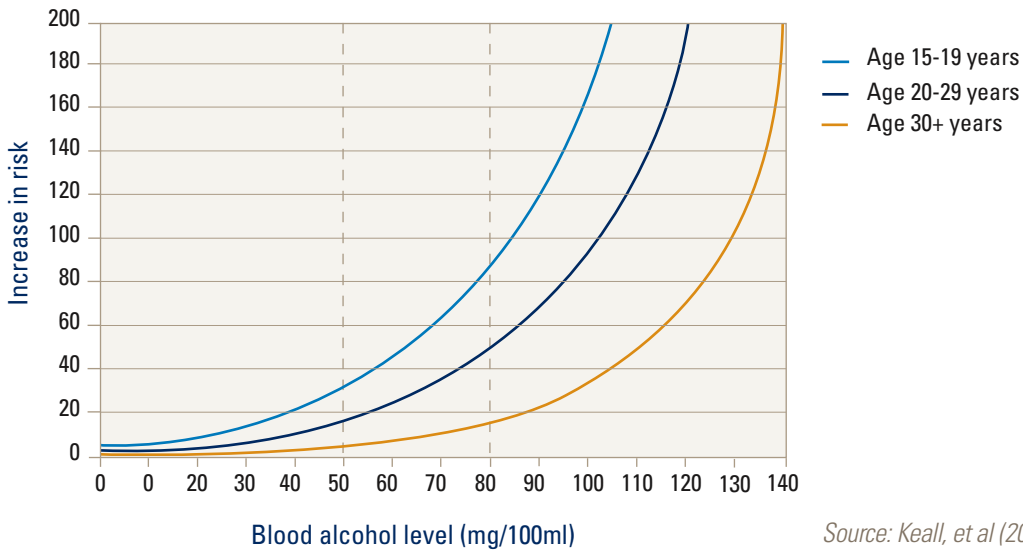
Drink driving deaths among probationary drivers have dropped. They are subject to a zero blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit.

However drink driving fatalities are still high for young drivers.

Half of 21-25 year old drivers killed on our roads are impaired by alcohol, despite a 0.05 BAC limit.

Drink driving, at all BAC levels, is much more dangerous for young drivers. The risk of fatality is extremely high for young drivers even at low BAC levels.

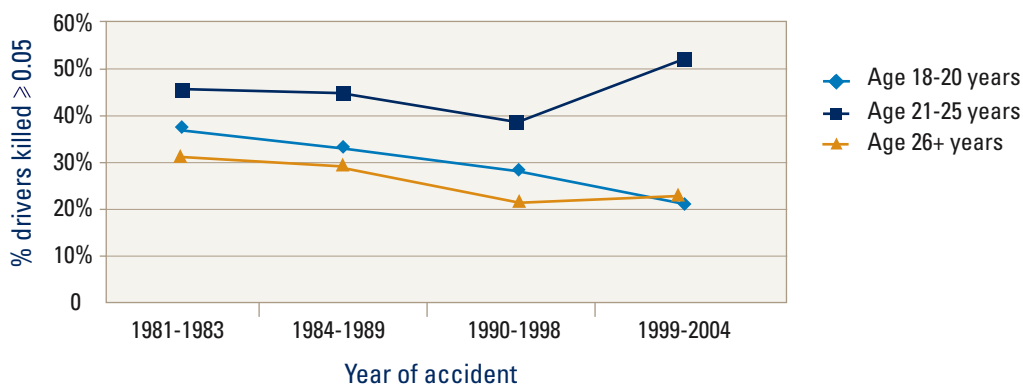
**BAC Risk curves by driver age. Risk of driver fatal injury.**  
(relative to drivers aged 30 or more at a zero blood alcohol level).



Source: Keall, et al (2004).

### Role of alcohol in driver deaths.

Percentage of drivers killed with BAC  $\geq 0.05$  g/100mL by age Victoria.



### The facts: Drink driving

- Alcohol is involved in 21 per cent of deaths for 18-20 year old drivers, and 23 per cent of deaths for drivers over 25 years of age.
- Alcohol is involved in 50 per cent of deaths for 21-25 year old drivers.
- At all BAC levels, drivers up to 19 years of age have five times the fatality risk of drivers aged 30 years or more<sup>5</sup>.
- At all BAC levels, drivers in their twenties have three times the fatality risk of drivers aged 30 years or more<sup>5</sup>.
- Repeat drink driving is a significant issue often starting from a young age.
- The zero BAC limit for probationary drivers in Victoria is estimated to have reduced serious crashes during high alcohol times by 30 per cent.

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## KEY SAFETY ISSUES: POOR DRIVING RECORDS AND SPEEDING

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A poor driving record does not currently affect a person's ability to progress to less stringent licensing stages. Yet some young drivers rapidly accumulate demerit points and those who commit traffic offences, especially speeding offences, have an increased risk of subsequent accident involvement of up to 65 per cent<sup>6</sup>. Repeat speeding offenders are a small but significant high risk group.

Some US states require new drivers to demonstrate a good driving record to progress to a less restricted licence stage. This has been estimated to reduce crashes by around five per cent<sup>7</sup>.



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## KEY SAFETY ISSUES: MOBILE PHONES

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Mobile phone use, both hands free and hand held, considerably increases crash risk.

Research shows that distracting devices such as mobile phones have a greater impact on the driving of novice drivers, in that they spend less time looking at the road and have more lateral displacement of the vehicle<sup>8</sup>. Research also shows that anticipation of hazards is also delayed when talking on a mobile phone.

The distraction of mobile phone use for inexperienced drivers poses a serious safety risk, given their hazard perception skills are already underdeveloped, much of their driving is not yet automated and they already have difficulty concurrently juggling the many perceptual, mental and physical driving tasks.

THE DISTRACTION OF MOBILE PHONE USE FOR INEXPERIENCED DRIVERS POSES A SERIOUS SAFETY RISK, GIVEN THEIR HAZARD PERCEPTION SKILLS ARE ALREADY UNDERDEVELOPED.

### The facts: Mobile phones

- Young drivers more often have a mobile phone in the vehicle when driving and have it switched on, compared with other drivers<sup>9</sup>.
- Mobile phone use, including hands free, increases crash risk by 25 per cent and fatality risk by 4-9 times.
- A number of young driver fatal crashes in Victoria have occurred while using mobile phones or sending SMS messages.
- Two states in the US have prohibited all forms of mobile phone use (including hands free) for learner and newly licensed drivers as part of their graduated licensing systems.

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## KEY SAFETY ISSUES: SAFER VEHICLES & TOWING

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Young drivers are more likely to drive older cars which offer less crash protection and fewer important safety features than modern vehicles, increasing the severity of injuries sustained to all occupants in the event of a crash.

New vehicle technology in the medium to longer term has the potential to support safer driving behaviour.

Although not a common activity, there are examples of deaths whilst towing by newly licensed drivers. This highlights the difficulty new drivers have in handling this added driving complexity, and the need for new drivers to be under instruction whilst first learning to tow.

## KEY SAFETY ISSUES: LATE NIGHT DRIVING

Late night driving substantially increases the risk of an inexperienced driver crashing.

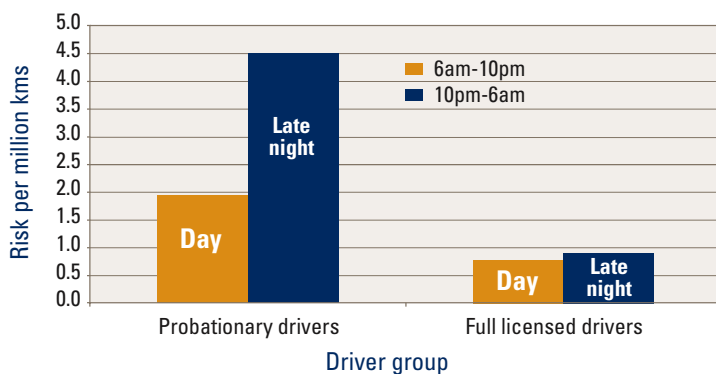
Novice drivers, who have not learned to recognize danger during the day when visibility is good, are at a particular disadvantage when vision is compromised by darkness<sup>10</sup>.

Late night driving may also involve travelling at higher speeds, driving when tired, and sometimes with peers which can distract the driver and encourage more risk taking behaviour. The majority of first year drivers killed late at night are not affected by alcohol.

**NOVICE DRIVERS, WHO HAVE NOT LEARNED TO RECOGNIZE DANGER DURING THE DAY WHEN VISIBILITY IS GOOD, ARE AT A PARTICULAR DISADVANTAGE WHEN VISION IS COMPROMISED BY DARKNESS.**

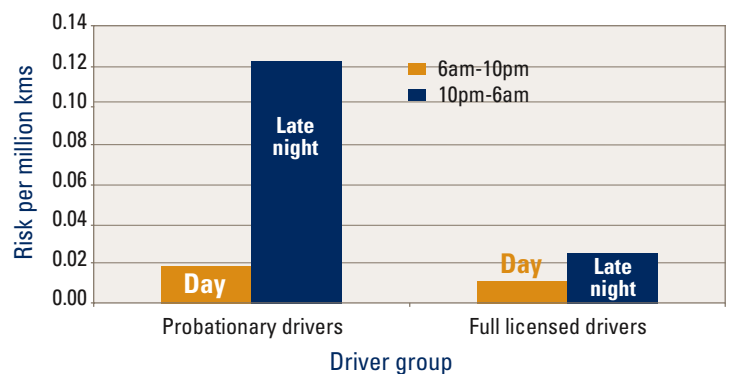
### Risk of crashing late at night.

Risk of casualty crash involvement per million km driven for probationary and full licensed drivers Melbourne 2000-2002.



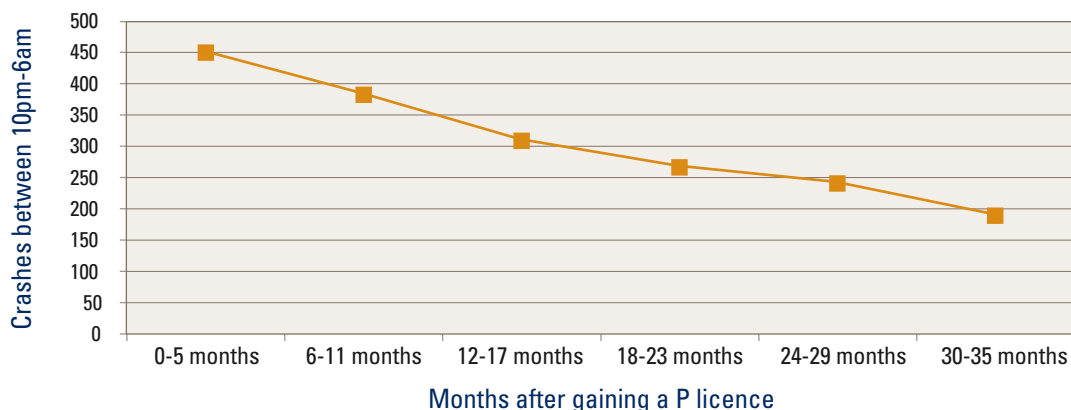
### Fatal crash risk late at night.

Risk of fatal crash involvement per million km driven for probationary and full licensed drivers Melbourne 2000-2002.



### Inexperience and late night casualty crashes 10pm-6am.

Distribution over the first 3 years of probationary driving Victoria 1996-2001.



### The facts: Late night driving

- First year probationary drivers have 33 per cent of their fatal crashes between 10pm and 6am, yet only 9 per cent of their driving occurs at this time.
- In two thirds of late night fatal crashes probationary drivers are driving alone or carrying only one passenger.
- Late night casualty crashes for probationary drivers are most frequent in the first 6 months of driving, when they are least experienced.
- 70 per cent of first year drivers killed late at night are not affected by alcohol.

## KEY SAFETY ISSUES: MULTIPLE PASSENGERS

Multiple passengers significantly increase the risk of an inexperienced driver crashing.

Multiple passengers, in particular a group of alcohol affected peer passengers, pose a dangerous distraction for an inexperienced driver – even when the young driver is sober.

Distractions increase mental workload which impairs the ability of drivers to detect changes in the environment, increasing the chance of collision.

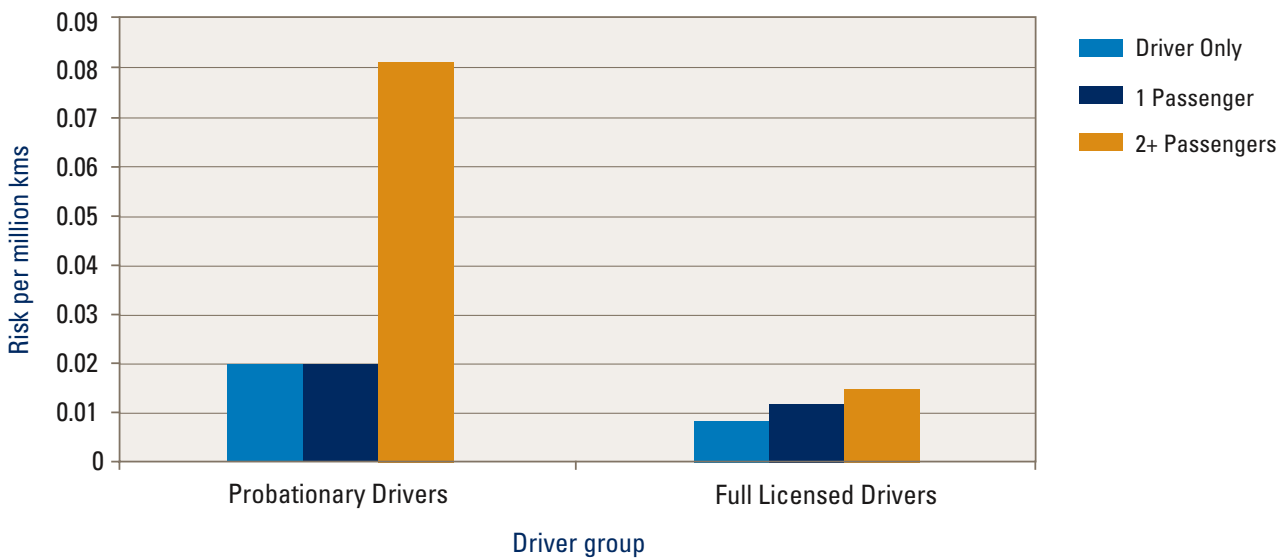
Multiple peer passengers can also directly and indirectly encourage more risk taking behaviour.

The more passengers in a crash with another vehicle or a fixed object, the greater the chance of someone being killed or injured.

**MULTIPLE PASSENGERS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE RISK OF AN INEXPERIENCED DRIVER CRASHING.**

### Fatal crash risk with multiple passengers.

Risk per million km driven for probationary and full licensed drivers Melbourne 2000-2002.



### The facts: Multiple passengers

- 26 per cent of first year probationary drivers involved in fatal crashes are carrying multiple passengers, but only 9 per cent of their total driving is with multiple passengers.
- 18 per cent of these fatal crash involvements occur during the day/evening and only 8 per cent occur late at night.
- Seat belt wearing is lower for young back seat passengers.

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## KEY SAFETY ISSUES: SAFER PARENTS

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Parents play a critical role in the safety of their children across the lifecycle. Parents are powerful role models – young people tend to adopt a similar driving style to their parents, whether positive or negative.

Parents are vital in the learner-supervisor partnership and can influence levels of driving practice. When educated about the safety limitations of their newly licensed children, parents have been found to play a key role in ensuring compliance with graduated licensing restrictions in the US, resulting in significant benefits to young drivers and their young passengers.

Special programs to address this important issue would generally provide benefits in the medium to longer-term.

**PARENTS ARE VITAL IN THE LEARNER-SUPERVISOR PARTNERSHIP AND CAN INFLUENCE LEVELS OF DRIVING PRACTICE.**



# THE CURRENT VICTORIAN LICENSING SYSTEM



Victoria's current graduated licensing system for learner and probationary drivers has been in operation since 1990.

A learner permit can be obtained from 16 years of age and must be held for a minimum of six months (three months for learners aged 25 years or more). Learner drivers may only drive with an accompanying driver who is fully licensed.

A three year probationary licence is the first licence a driver (or motorcycle rider) can obtain from 18 years of age after completing the learner permit period and passing the relevant licence tests.

There have been some improvements in young driver crashes since the introduction of the current licensing system, together with learner support programs promoting 120 hours supervised on-road practice.

However, some young driver safety issues are not addressed by the current system. Young drivers may be safer under a more graduated licensing system.

Graduated licensing systems allow new drivers to move from driving in lower to higher risk situations as driving experience and maturity increases.

## Features of the current Victorian licensing system

### Supervised learner phase

- Supervised learners have a low crash risk<sup>11</sup>, accounting for only 0.5 per cent of drivers involved in casualty crashes.
- Learner driving can begin from age 16 giving the opportunity for lots of driving practice which makes newly licensed drivers safer<sup>12</sup>.

### Probationary licences from 18 years of age

- Provides a longer time between the learner permit and licence in which to gain extended supervised experience.
- Crash risk is 9 per cent lower for drivers licensed at age 18 compared to age 17<sup>13</sup>.
- Young driver crashes increase when jurisdictions lower the licensing age<sup>14</sup>.
- Lowering the driver licensing age from 18 to 17 years would result in a long-term net increase each year of 13 extra deaths, 200 extra people seriously injured and 750 extra people with minor injuries. In the first year, 20 extra deaths and 250 extra serious injuries would be expected.

### Zero Blood Alcohol Limit for the first 3 years of driving

- Significantly reduced alcohol crashes in Victoria and elsewhere<sup>15</sup>.

### Compulsory display of P plates and carriage of licence

- Deters high risk behaviour and allows policing of probationary requirements.

### Use of vehicles with automatic transmission if tested in one

- Driving an automatic vehicle is clearly safer for new drivers than driving a manual vehicle.

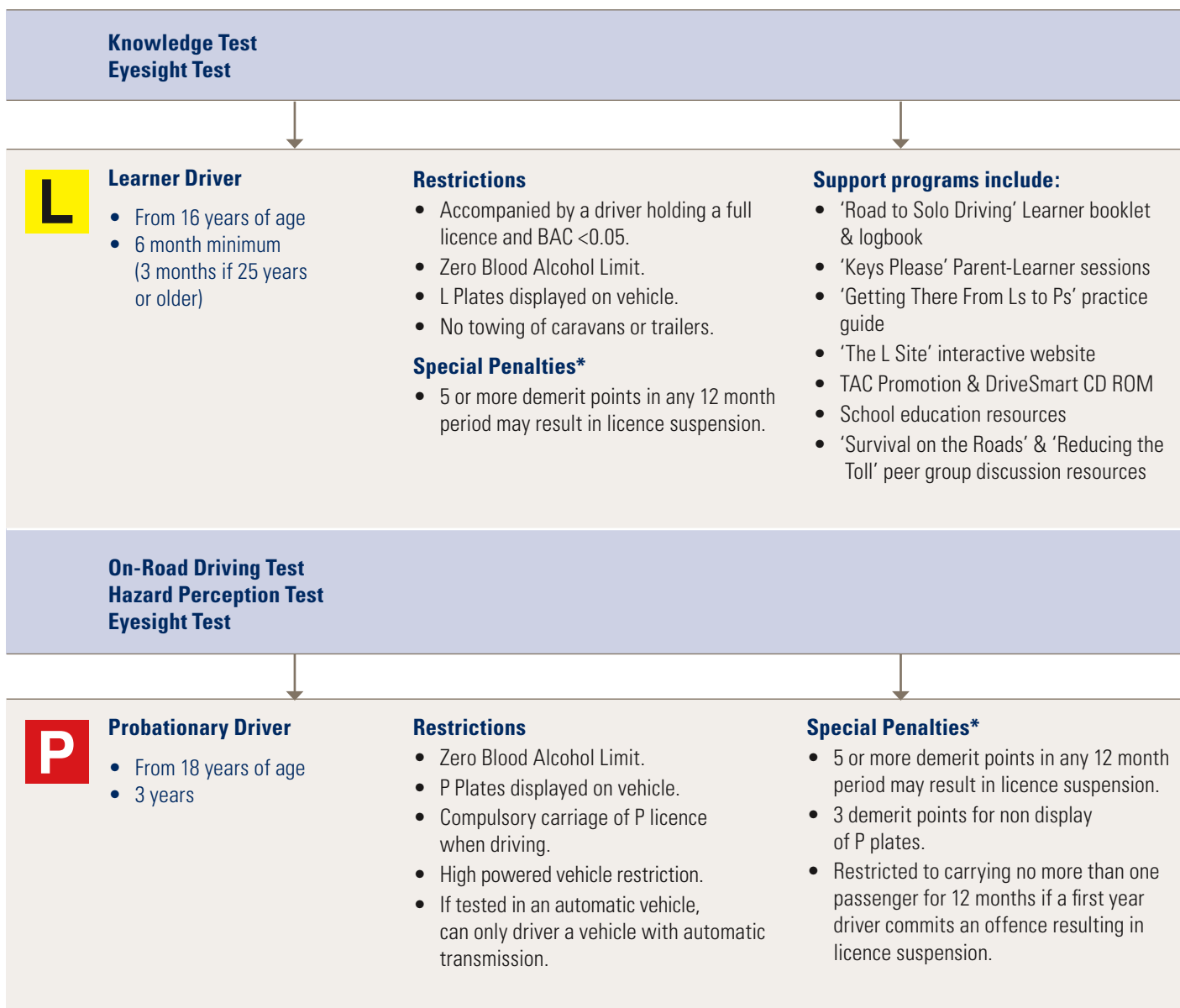
### Hazard Perception Test

- Probationary licence applicants with low scores have a higher fatal crash risk than those with average to high scores<sup>16</sup>.

### Limit of 5 demerit points for L and P drivers

- Early intervention for traffic offending through a lower demerit point limit improves safety<sup>17</sup>.

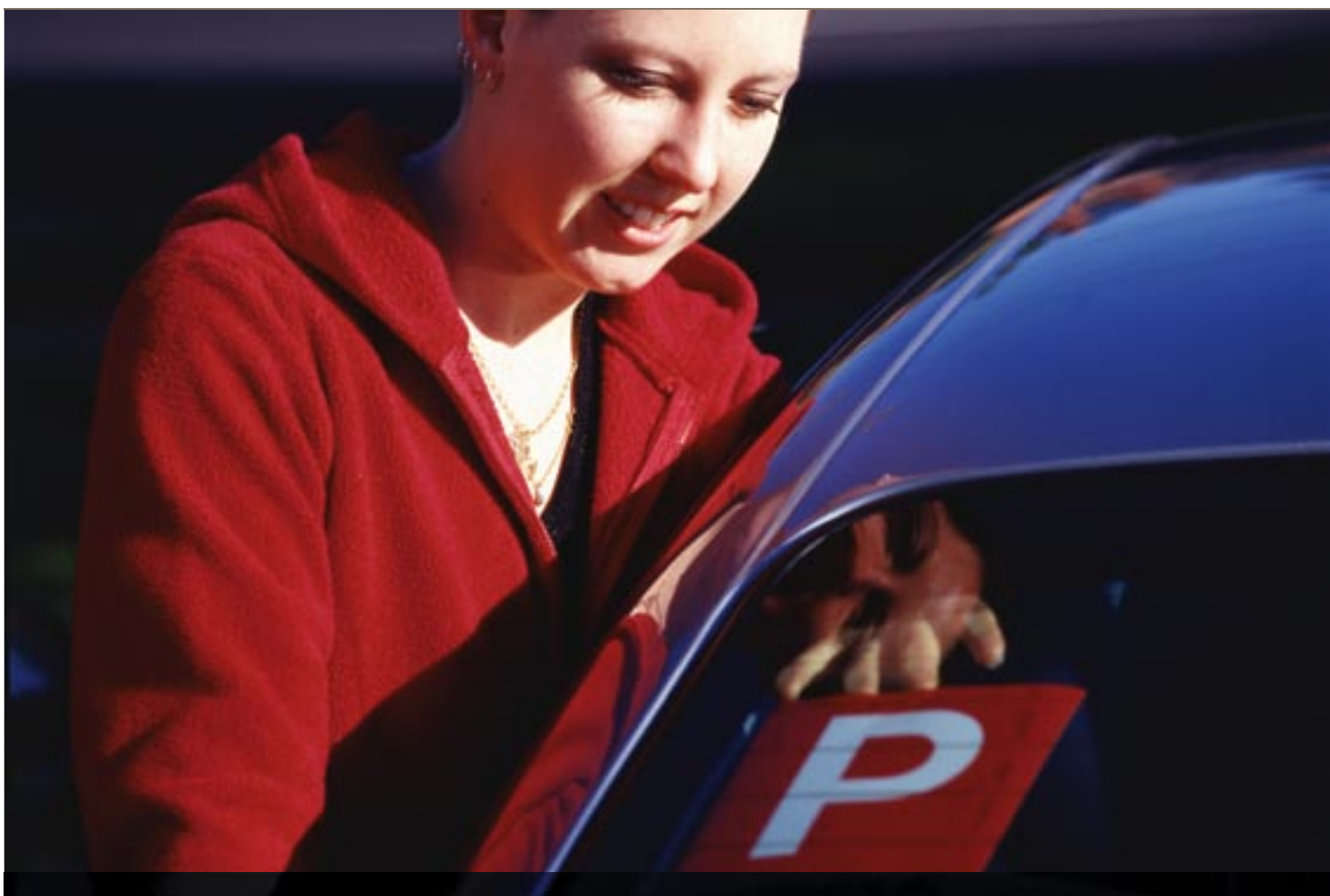
## THE CURRENT VICTORIAN LICENSING SYSTEM (continued)



### \*Drink driving offences for L and P drivers (first offences issued by Police):

- Licence/permit is cancelled for drink driving offences involving a BAC of 0.05 or more. A court order is required to get the licence/permit back. Once relicensed the Learner or Probationary period must be recommenced.
- Drink driving offences involving a BAC under 0.05 attract 10 demerit points.
- Any driver aged under 25 years of age convicted or found guilty of a drink driving offence must complete a driver education course before his/her licence/permit can be restored.

## POSSIBLE MEASURES TO IMPROVE YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY



Comprehensive examination of Victoria's young driver crashes has highlighted a number of key safety issues, particularly the following:

- Inexperience is the most significant crash factor.
- The first 6 to 12 months of driving on a P licence is the most dangerous stage of driving.
- Half of fatal crashes involving first year drivers occur late at night or with multiple passengers.
- Poor driving records, speeding and high risk behaviour by some young drivers poses an additional safety risk.
- Half of 21-25 year old drivers killed on our roads are impaired by alcohol.
- Extra safety risks due to mobile phone use.

A combination of new strategies are needed to tackle these issues if young drivers are to be safer in the future.

Driving is a complex and dangerous activity. It takes time and experience to become a safe driver. New drivers make mistakes. These can have lethal consequences, as demonstrated by their very high involvement in fatal crashes.

Strengthening Victoria's graduated licensing system and support programs recognizes that new drivers have significant limitations in their driving ability, and that there are some types of driving activities which are clearly very risky and inappropriate for new drivers.

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## POSSIBLE MEASURES TO IMPROVE YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY (continued)

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Further graduated licensing arrangements and support programs would help new drivers acquire more experience, develop safe driving skills and avoid hazardous driving situations.

A wide ranging review has identified effective young driver safety measures for further consideration.

This Discussion Paper outlines possible safety measures in key areas.

These measures are identified for public comment because they:

- target the key crash risks for Victoria's young drivers across the early stages of driving
- have been proven to be effective in preventing young driver crashes based on research evidence
- boost driving competence, experience and contribute to safer driving
- minimise as far as possible any impact on driving mobility
- offer cost-effective interventions.

It is estimated that the proposed measures outlined in this Paper could result in up to 800 fewer casualties and in excess of \$93 million in trauma savings each year with:

- 12 fewer people killed per year
- 192 fewer people seriously injured per year
- 596 fewer people with 'other' injuries per year.

Community feedback will help the Government consider the advantages and disadvantages of the possible measures outlined in this Paper.

FURTHER GRADUATED LICENSING ARRANGEMENTS AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS WOULD HELP NEW DRIVERS ACQUIRE MORE EXPERIENCE, DEVELOP SAFE DRIVING SKILLS AND AVOID HAZARDOUS DRIVING SITUATIONS.

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## NEW MEASURES FAVOURED BY THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT

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The Government supports a further graduated licensing system, incorporating measures that span all of the early stages of driving and target key safety issues within each stage.

The proposed measures aim to improve:

- Experience, development of safe driving skills and assessment of driving competence.
- Protection in the first 12 months of probationary driving.
- Awareness of key risks and personal safety strategies to manage risks.
- Motivation for safe driving behaviour and deterrence of speeding and other high risk driving behaviour.
- Deterrence of drink driving.

### **Experience, safe driving skills and competence**

#### ***Extended learning***

Increasing experience, safe driving skills and driving competence is a key focus of measures identified in the learner and early probationary driving stage.

Driving is a complex and mentally demanding activity. Safe driving skills develop with extensive on-road driving practice.

The learner driving stage needs to provide a solid foundation for the development of safe driving skills.

To better prepare new drivers for the demands of probationary driving, a number of measures are suggested in the learner driving stage to extend learning and increase supervised on-road learner practice.

These include a 12 month minimum learner period, a requirement to complete 120 hours supervised on-road driving practice and an improved driving test to obtain a P licence.

#### ***National trial of a new safety program for newly licensed probationary drivers***

Building on the learner driving stage, there is also scope to support newly licensed probationary drivers to further develop, consolidate and adopt safe driving skills.

Victoria is participating in a large scale national trial which aims to develop an effective program for newly licensed probationary drivers. The scientific project will assess the safety benefits of the program.

The program has the potential to add safety value to an extended learning and licensing system. If the program is found to reduce crashes, it could be adopted as part of a new graduated licensing system, in which new drivers would need to complete the program to progress from a more stringent to a less stringent licence stage.

### **Protection in the first 12 months of probationary driving**

#### ***A new and more restricted 12 month P1 licence***

The first six to twelve months of probationary driving is the most dangerous. New drivers have significant limitations in their driving ability. Some types of driving activities are clearly very risky for new drivers.

To better protect new probationary drivers in their first 12 months of unsupervised driving, introduction of a new 12 month P1 licence for newly licensed 18 and 19 year olds is suggested as a possible measure for consideration.

It is proposed that a number of restrictions are placed on P1 licence holders including a complete ban on any mobile phone use and restrictions on towing.

The Government has considered other possible restrictions for P1 licence holders such as a passenger limit and a late night driving restriction (with exemptions).

Whilst these restrictions have resulted in road safety benefits in Canada, the US and New Zealand, the Government does not support them at this stage because of concerns about the inconvenience and the impact on young people's social mobility associated with such restrictions. The advantages and disadvantages of such restrictions will require detailed consideration and considerable community debate.

The Government considers that substantial road safety benefits can be achieved through increasing the amount of supervised on-road driving experience learners receive, and by targeted education programs.

### **Awareness of key risks and personal safety strategies to manage risks**

#### ***Targeted education and support programs***

An extensive range of targeted support programs to address the key safety issues within each of the early stages of driving are identified as possible measures.

Such education and support programs are highlighted as an integral part of a safer driving and licensing system for young drivers.

This includes communicating to very new drivers that they need to consider carefully alternative late night travel options, and their capacity to drive large groups of people.

### **Motivation for safe driving behaviour and deterrence of speeding and other high risk driving behaviour**

A range of possible measures are identified to create a greater incentive for safer driving behaviour. It is proposed that young drivers be required to demonstrate a good driving record to progress through licence stages. Other possible measures target persistent and/or high risk traffic offenders.

### **Deterrence of drink driving**

Alcohol affected driving is a major problem for drivers aged up to and including 25 years. Half of drivers aged 21-25 years who are killed have a blood alcohol reading exceeding the 0.05 legal limit.

Possible measures which would be effective in reducing this problem include the requirement for an alcohol ignition interlock to be fitted to vehicles of all drink driving offenders 25 years or younger and all P drivers upon relicensing.

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## PROPOSED MEASURES TO IMPROVE YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY

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### (A) LEARNERS – L PLATE – 1 YEAR

#### Extend learning, increase practice & improve licence testing.

- Extend minimum L period to 12 months.
- No mobile phone use of any kind.
- Compulsory carriage of L permit when driving.
- Trial community program for disadvantaged learners.
- Retain other existing L Plate conditions.
- To obtain a P1 licence require learners to:
  - Complete a minimum of 120 hours supervised driving practice
  - Pass an improved on-road driving test.
- Support programs, including:
  - New 120 hour L Kit & Practice Diary
  - Expand 'Keys Please' Parent-Learner sessions
  - Expand 'The L Site' interactive website
  - Promote peer group discussion workshops
  - Improve professional driving instruction.

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### (B) NEW PROBATIONARY DRIVERS

#### Trial and evaluate the crash benefits of the national young driver safety program.

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### (C) P1 LICENCE – P1 PLATE – 1 YEAR / P2 LICENCE – P2 PLATE – 3 YEARS

#### Add a new & more restricted first year P1 licence (for 18 & 19 year olds only).\*

Measures proposed are:

- No mobile phone use of any kind for P1 licence holders.
- Towing for work only or if under instruction.
- Review high powered vehicle provisions.
- Retain other existing P Plate conditions.
- Require alcohol ignition interlocks for drink driving offenders.
- Support programs, including:
  - Special Solo Driving Guide for P1 drivers and parents
  - Encourage alternative late night travel arrangements for P1 licence holders
  - Encourage P1 drivers to minimise carriage of multiple passengers.

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### (D) GRADUATION FROM P1 LICENCE TO P2 LICENCE TO FULL LICENCE

#### Require a good driving record to progress through licence stages to motivate safe driving.

- Must have a good driving record to progress through licence stages.
- A poor driving record extends the P1 or P2 licence by 6 months.
- Require counselling and/or vehicle sanctions for repeat licence suspensions or speeding.
- Drag racing may result in stronger sanctions and/or vehicle sanctions.
- 'Anti-hoon' laws with sanctions to include impounding or possible confiscation of vehicles.

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### (E) P LICENCE DRIVERS AND DRIVERS AGED 25 YEARS OR YOUNGER

#### Require alcohol ignition interlocks for young drink driving offenders.

- Upon relicensing all drink driving offenders on a P licence or aged 25 years or younger with a BAC of 0.05 or more must only drive a vehicle fitted with an interlock for a minimum of 6 months.

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\* Those licensed from 20 years of age would move directly to the 3 year P2 licence. A 1 year P1 licence and 3 year P2 licence would extend the total probationary period, and zero blood alcohol limit, from 3 to 4 years for younger drivers.

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## COMMENTS – ON THE PROPOSED MEASURES

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### (A) LEARNERS – L PLATE – 1 YEAR

#### Extend learning, increase practice & improve licence testing.

##### Proposed measures

- Extend the minimum learner period from 6 to 12 months, for Learner drivers aged under 21 years.
- Require learners to complete a minimum of 120 hours supervised driving practice.
- Require learners to pass an improved on-road driving test which more effectively assesses driving experience and competence to obtain a P1 licence.
- No mobile phone use (hands free or hand held) or messaging of any kind.
- Compulsory carriage of L permit when driving.
- Trial a community volunteer program to provide practice for learners lacking opportunities and access to supervised driving.
- Retain other existing L Plate conditions.
- Targeted support programs for young people, learners, parents, supervisors, and driving instructors:
  - New 120 hour L Kit & Practice Diary to provide structured guidance to gaining practice
  - Expand Keys Please Parent-Learner sessions to improve education of learners, parents and supervisors
  - Expand 'The L Site' interactive website to provide greater personalised self assessment and feedback on driving progress, safety information and campaigns
  - Promote facilitated peer group discussion workshops to help young people with safety strategies
  - Improve professional driving instruction to help learners develop safe driving skills
  - Encourage parental involvement and role modelling of positive driving behaviour.

### BECOMING A SAFE DRIVER TAKES TIME AND EXPERIENCE – THERE ARE NO SHORT-CUTS OR SUBSTITUTES FOR EXTENSIVE ON-ROAD EXPERIENCE.

##### Comment

Extended learning offers considerable protection for new drivers – learners who practice more and hold their learner permit for longer are safer as new solo drivers.

Learners with 120 hours supervised driving practice have a 30 per cent lower risk of crashing in the first two years of solo driving than learners who get only 40 hours of supervised practice.

Becoming a safe driver takes time and experience – there are no short-cuts or substitutes for extensive on-road experience.

Through safety promotion and support programs, Victoria's learners are now getting more driving practice before obtaining a probationary licence.

Learners who obtain their learner permit at 16 years of age are now averaging in excess of 120 hours of supervised on-road driving practice before obtaining their probationary licence. Those obtaining their learner permit at 17 are averaging only 71 hours, and those obtaining their learner permit while aged 18 – 20 have only 57 hours accompanied practice on average.

Over 97 per cent of learners also have professional driving lessons. These average 11 lessons with a professional driving instructor.

However, many learners still do not gain enough on-road supervised practice.

The measures suggested address barriers to extended learning by building on the gains already made in this area.

##### Targeted support programs

Targeted support and educational programs for young people, parents and instructors will focus on practical support to achieve 120 hours supervised practice, including a more prominent 120 hour L Kit and Practice Diary, raising awareness of key risks and personal safety strategies to manage risks.

Around 3.5 per cent of younger learners have no access to supervising drivers and/or a vehicle for practice. The Government will work to ensure that these learners are not further disadvantaged by this proposal and will explore what programs and initiatives can be undertaken to provide this group with supervised practice opportunities.

A trial community-based volunteer mentoring program providing practice for learners lacking opportunities will be conducted. If successful, the trial may be extended throughout Victoria to offer vital practice opportunities, and possibly other benefits, to disadvantaged youth.

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## COMMENTS – ON THE PROPOSED MEASURES (continued)

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### **Extend minimum learner period from 6 to 12 months**

#### **Advantages**

A 12 month minimum learner period will ensure there is a more realistic period between the acquisition of a learner permit and licence in which to gain 120 hours experience, and is likely to result in more practice by learners.

The 12 month minimum L period would apply to learners aged under 21 who make up around 80 per cent of learners.

#### **Disadvantages**

A 12 month minimum learner period delays access to a licence if a permit is obtained after 17 years of age.

### **Require a minimum of 120 hours supervised on-road driving practice**

#### **Advantages**

For many years learners have been encouraged to complete 120 hours supervised practice on a voluntary basis.

Surveys show that now many learners do in fact complete 120 hours practice. However, a significant number still do not.

Given considerable community support and significant safety benefits for learners completing 120 hours practice, moving to a mandatory requirement would have additional advantages.

A mandatory requirement is likely to motivate learners and their parents/carers/supervisors to make completing 120 hours a priority when they may not have otherwise done so.

A mandatory requirement would considerably strengthen advice and guidance to learners, parents/carers/supervisors that 120 hours is an important safety goal that learners need to achieve.

This could be achieved by requiring learners to present a Statutory Declaration signed by the learner and their supervisor(s). This would include reference to completion of the total 120 hours, including a minimum of 10 hours of driving at night. Learners could also be required to produce an Official Practice Diary. This documentation would need to be produced in order to be eligible to sit for the probationary licence test.

Mandation would be supported by:

- A revised probationary drive test to better assess if learners are likely to have 120 hours of experience
- Extending the minimum learner permit duration from 6 to 12 months
- A more prominent 120 hour L Kit and Practice Diary
- Trialling community-based volunteer programs providing practice for learners lacking opportunities.

These measures are critical to maximise compliance with, and acceptance of, such a requirement.

#### **Disadvantages**

A greater time commitment will be required to achieve 120 hours practice.

Mandatory 120 hours may disadvantage learners with lower income backgrounds and learners with limited access to supervised driver opportunities. This could be addressed if a successful community-based volunteer mentoring program for disadvantaged learners can be developed.

Verifying that a learner has completed the requirement for 120 hours practice may be difficult. Whilst a concerted education campaign could be used to counter 'cheating', some learners will not comply with the requirements.

Licensing costs may increase due to the increased costs of administering this requirement for the 80,000 – 100,000 probationary licence applicants per year.

### **Review and improve the on-road driving test to obtain a P1 licence**

#### **Advantages**

The current on-road driving test was introduced in 1992 and has since then undergone minor refinements.

New information and research is now available which can be used to review and improve the capacity of the test to better assess a learner's driving experience and driving performance in critical areas.

A more rigorous licence test will not only motivate learners to gain more practice, but ensure that learners can better deal with the demands of solo driving.

Currently the on-road driving test can be passed by some learners with much less than 120 hours experience.

VicRoads has commenced a review of the test using this new information and research.

#### **Disadvantages**

A greater time commitment will be required for learners to prepare more thoroughly for the driving test.

A more rigorous licence test may result in higher test fees for licence applicants.

### (B) NEW PROBATIONARY DRIVERS

#### Trial and evaluate a national young driver safety program

##### Proposed measures

- Trial and evaluate the crash benefit of a national young driver safety program for new probationary drivers.

##### Comment

Victoria is participating in a large scale scientific trial to test the crash benefits of a new young driver safety program. The trial will be conducted in both Victoria and NSW.

The multi-million dollar national project will be conducted in association with the Federal and NSW governments, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, RACV, and Insurance Australia Group.

This program may have the potential to add safety value to an extended learner and licensing program.

The program is being developed with the input of local and international young driver safety experts to ensure the content of the program draws on best practice and research knowledge about effective road safety and health education interventions for young people.

This is because, disappointingly, jurisdictions which have relied heavily on compulsory (and voluntary) pre- and post-licence education, defensive and advanced driver training programs, to solve their young driver problem for the last 30 years, have not reduced young driver crashes.

Reviews of the effectiveness of such programs for novice drivers persistently find such programs to be ineffective in making this high risk group safer. Some have been found to have an unintended negative effect by increasing crash involvement, particularly advanced off-road driver training programs which include skid training. The negative results of skid training programs led Norway a number of years ago to stop skid training for novices as part of the licensing process.

Research, development, trialling and evaluation of new types of driver training and education programs continues in some countries.

**THIS PROGRAM MAY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO ADD SAFETY VALUE TO AN EXTENDED LEARNER AND LICENSING PROGRAM.**

It is therefore important that the national program is based on the most up-to-date knowledge about approaches which have the greatest chance of success, and that the program is rigorously tested. The program is likely to include a focus on these key areas:

- Minimising exposure to high risk driving situations in the early months after first granting a probationary licence.
- Personal feedback on the young driver's risk profile in relation to driving.
- Facilitated group discussion to increase the novice's appreciation of the demands and complexity of driving, their own driving limitations due to inexperience, and key safety related skills which can increase their safety, particularly:
  - speed control,
  - managing safe space and following distances around their vehicle, and
  - choosing safe gaps in traffic.
- The emphasis will be on improving the young driver's self management as a driver and the development of personal safety strategies.
- On-road in-car coaching, providing feedback on the young driver's driving.

The trial is being designed to rigorously test the program's effectiveness in reducing crashes for newly licensed drivers.

To do this several thousand new P drivers will be recruited to participate in the program. The same number will be recruited as a comparison group.

If successful the program would be considered for inclusion in any new graduated licensing scheme to complement existing programs to provide better protection for our young drivers.

Such a program, if successful, could provide the basis for a Novice Driver Safety Program to be completed in order to progress from a P1 to a P2 licence.

### **(C) P1 LICENCE – P1 PLATE – 1 YEAR P2 LICENCE – P2 PLATE – 3 YEARS**

#### **Introduce an additional & more restricted P1 licence.**

#### **The proposed restrictions and measures for the P1 Licence include:**

- No mobile phone use or messaging of any kind.
- Towing for work only or if under instruction.
- The provisions and penalties for high powered vehicles are being reviewed.
- Retain other existing P Plate conditions.
- Require alcohol ignition interlocks for drink driving offenders upon relicensing.
- Targeted support programs for P1 drivers and their parents would include:

#### **A Special P1 Solo Driving Guide to encourage compliance with licence restrictions and practical safety information about:**

- personal risk assessment
- the driving limitations of newly licensing drivers
- complying with licensing requirements
- strategies to help manage risks during the first 12 months of driving
- minimising exposure to high risk situations, including late night driving and carriage of multiple passengers
- safety ratings of vehicles to improve choices when buying a car
- tips and feedback on driving to move safely onto the P2 licence.

#### **A promotional campaign to encourage alternative late night travel arrangements and minimising carriage of multiple passengers:**

- young people to continue to make travel arrangements as they did prior to probationary licensing
- use of the NightRider Bus Service which provides late night transport from the CBD to outer Melbourne and surrounds
- use of taxis
- bus services provided by licensed premises in rural regions
- staying overnight (only if safe)
- lifts with more experienced and sober drivers
- driving with no more than one passenger wherever possible.

#### **Require completion of a Novice Driver Safety Program to progress to the 3 year P2 Licence if it is found to reduce crashes (See B).**

#### **Comment**

New probationary drivers have the most crashes.

Adding a new more restricted P1 licence before progressing to a 3 year P2 licence reinforces the critical step in initially going from supervised driving to solo driving.

A P1 licence would protect newly licensed drivers by keeping them out of high risk situations.

Key crash risks are highlighted, and consolidating driving experience under lower risk conditions is encouraged.

No blanket restrictions are suggested – proposed measures focus on the first and most dangerous 12 months of driving only, and make practical allowances.

P1 would only apply to those getting a licence at 18 or 19 years of age, who make up around 80 per cent of newly licensed drivers.

Those licensed from 20 years of age would move directly to a 3 year P2 licence.

Review of the high powered vehicle restriction will aim to enable enforcement to be more readily carried out and thereby improve compliance.

Upon relicensing drink driving offenders would be required to drive a vehicle fitted with an alcohol ignition interlock for a minimum of 6 months (refer to section E).

#### **Total four year P period for younger drivers**

##### **Advantages**

A 1 year P1 licence and 3 year P2 licence would extend the total probationary period, and zero blood alcohol limit, from three to four years for younger drivers. This alone is estimated to save 1 death, 16 serious injuries and 47 other injuries each year.

##### **Disadvantages**

For an extra year young people will not be able to drink any alcohol when they drive or they will need to use alternative transport options when drinking alcohol at low levels.

#### **No mobile phone use or towing**

##### **Advantages**

Both activities are associated with higher risks especially for inexperienced drivers.

Though not common, there have been deaths involving newly licensed drivers whilst towing. Towing would still be allowed for work purposes or if under instruction.

A number of young driver fatal crashes in Victoria have occurred whilst using mobile phones or sending SMS messages. Two US states have prohibited all forms of mobile phone use (including hands free) for learner and new drivers.

##### **Disadvantages**

First year drivers will not be able to use a hands free mobile phone whilst driving for work or any other circumstances, which may be inconvenient in some jobs.

However, the high risk of crashing in the first year of driving and occupational health and safety considerations make mobile phone use for P1 drivers highly undesirable. Police enforcement of this restriction would also be hampered if P1 drivers could claim that they were using the mobile phone for work.

### (D) GRADUATION FROM P1 LICENCE TO P2 LICENCE TO FULL LICENCE

**Require a good driving record to progress through licence stages to motivate safer driving.**

#### Proposed Measures

- Require a good driving record to progress through each licence stages from P1 to P2 to a Full Licence.
- A poor driving record extends the P1 or P2 licence by 6 months.
- Probationary drivers with a second licence suspension or repeat speed offenders, could be required to undertake a rehabilitation/ counselling program and/or face vehicle sanctions.
- Drag racing and other reckless activities endangering public safety could result in stronger sanctions including possible vehicle sanctions.
- The Government has announced its intention to introduce 'anti-hoon' laws which will provide for impounding or possible confiscation of the vehicles involved in serious 'hoon' driving.

#### Comment

Licence suspension due to traffic offences or too many demerit points would result in a 6 month extension to the P1 or P2 licence, in addition to applicable penalties. Any drink driving offence for a blood alcohol reading up to 0.05 would also extend the P1 or P2 licence by 6 months.

Consequently, suspended drivers would spend longer on the zero blood alcohol limit and other relevant P licence restrictions.

Measures also target repeat offenders and high risk driving.

Note that current arrangements for drink driving offences for a blood alcohol reading of 0.05 or more would remain unchanged (ie. mandatory licence loss and recommencement of the relevant P licence period upon relicensing).

#### Advantages

Requiring new drivers to demonstrate a good driving record to progress to a less restricted licence stage has been estimated to reduce crashes by around five per cent.

This requirement provides new drivers with an incentive for safer driving behaviour and extends the time spent on a restricted licence for those with poor driving records.

Clearer and stronger interventions to curtail repeated risky driving and irresponsible behaviour are needed to address a significant group of drivers who are not deterred by current consequences for traffic offending.

Review of the high powered vehicle restriction will aim to enable enforcement to be more readily carried out and thereby improve compliance.

#### Disadvantages

Vehicle sanctions for repeat offending, drag racing and other serious 'hoon' driving could provide effective intervention with high risk groups. The benefits however need to be weighed against the inconvenience to those who may share a vehicle with an offender and who would also be affected by any vehicle sanctions.

### (E) P LICENCE DRIVERS AND DRIVERS AGED 25 YEARS OR YOUNGER

**Require alcohol ignition interlocks for young drink driving offenders.**

#### Proposed Measures

- Upon relicensing all drink driving offenders aged 25 years or younger with a BAC of 0.05 or more must only drive a vehicle fitted with an interlock for a minimum of 6 months.

#### Comment

Drink driving occurs in 21 per cent of drivers killed aged 18-20 and half of drivers killed aged 21-25 years.

#### Advantages

Alcohol ignition interlocks are a well established anti-drink driving measure.

They provide a practical rehabilitative tool for drink drivers. Currently in Victoria interlock devices are mandatory for use by returning drink drivers with multiple offences.

Extending the requirement for an interlock device to be fitted to the vehicles used by young first offenders can help deter drink driving and creates the opportunity to intervene early to prevent repeat drink driving.

Licence loss would also become mandatory at a BAC of 0.05 (rather than at 0.07) for full licence drivers aged 25 years or less to bring them into line with P drivers.

#### Disadvantages

The expected cost for the returning driver of fitting and maintaining an alcohol ignition interlock is currently around \$800 for a 6 month requirement.

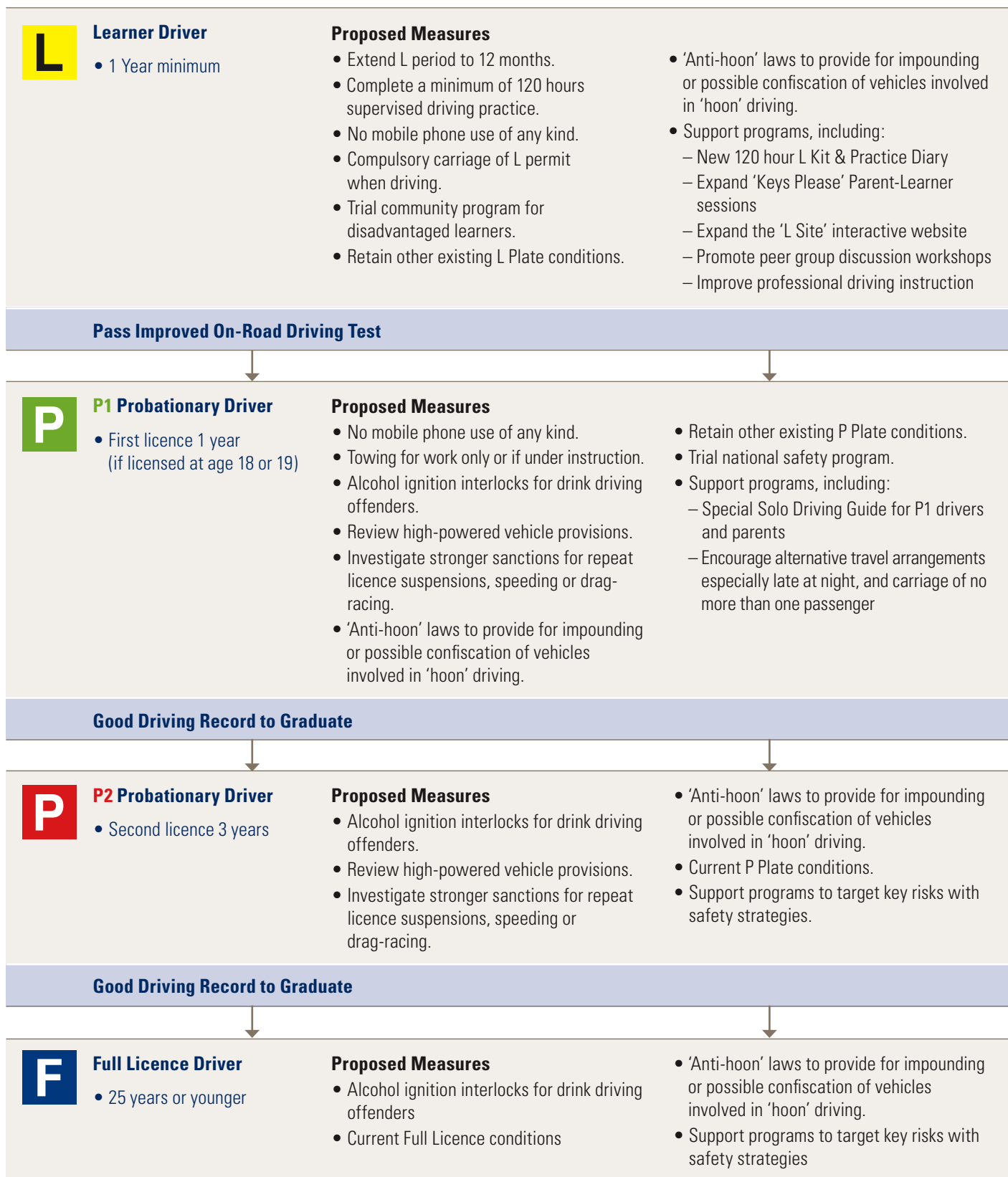
**EXTENDING THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN INTERLOCK DEVICE TO BE FITTED TO THE VEHICLES USED BY YOUNG FIRST OFFENDERS CAN HELP DETER DRINK DRIVING AND CREATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERVENE EARLY TO PREVENT REPEAT DRINK DRIVING.**

## COMMENTS – FRAMEWORK FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE LICENSING MODEL

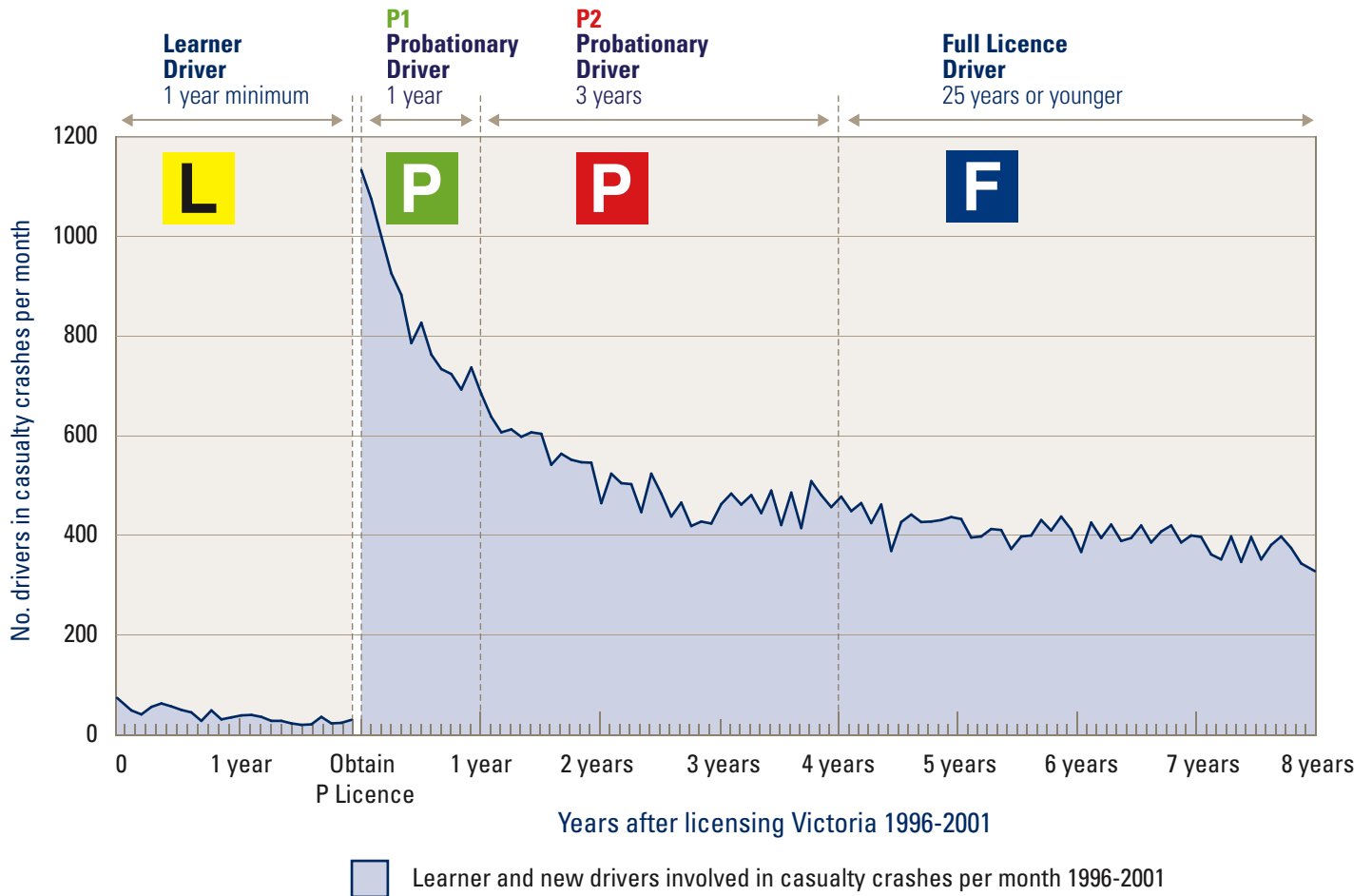
The diagram below shows how the proposed measures could be introduced within a four stage licensing framework.

The graph on page 26 shows how the four stage licensing framework targets the crash profile of new drivers.

Separate licences would be issued for each stage of licensing. Licence renewal periods would match the minimum duration of each licence, with progression dependent on a good driving record.



**Possible four stage licensing framework targeting the crash profile of new drivers**



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## MEASURES NOT PROPOSED TO BE ADOPTED BY THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT

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### **Late night driving restrictions not proposed**

The Government does not propose to adopt a measure restricting new drivers in the first 6-12 months of licensing driving during late night hours.

The Government considers that a late night driving restriction would have unacceptable impacts on young people's social mobility, particularly those residing in rural areas. Alternative travel arrangements can be more difficult for some people, for example those living on properties remote from country towns or on the fringes of the metropolitan area, if they are unable to get a lift home with unrestricted drivers.

The Government believes this issue can be better tackled through education.

A targeted campaign for parents and young people could be undertaken to promote alternative late night travel arrangements and harm minimisation behaviour. This would also help reduce drink driving.

### **Passenger restrictions not proposed**

The Government does not intend to impose passenger restrictions on young drivers. Passenger restrictions generally allow no peer passengers, or only one passenger, to ride with an unsupervised novice driver for the first 6-12 months of their licence, unless they are dependents, a spouse or other family members. New Zealand and 25 US states have passenger restrictions on newly licensed drivers.

The overall crash benefits of limiting passengers of new drivers need to be weighed against the impact on social mobility and access for young people. Restrictions on passengers would mean that first year drivers would not be able to take on the role of designated driver for multiple passengers.

Affected peer groups would need to plan and find alternative transport if a P2 driver was not available. This may be more difficult for those who live in areas where alternative transport options are limited.

Education programs could be undertaken encouraging new drivers in P1 phase to drive with no more than one passenger.

### **Time discounts for driver education courses not proposed**

Licensing systems that allow faster progression to unsupervised licensed driving for drivers who complete a driver education course have found no safety benefits.

In fact, reducing the minimum learner permit period for those who complete a driver education course undermines safety outcomes for drivers, and dilutes the potential benefit of graduated licensing schemes.

Such negative outcomes have been reported in New Zealand, Nova Scotia and Ontario<sup>18</sup>. Accordingly, the Government does not propose to adopt time discounts.

### **Lowering the licensing age not proposed**

A reduction in the licensing age in Canada from 18 to 16 years resulted in a 24 per cent increase in fatalities among new drivers<sup>19</sup>.

Lowering the Victorian driver licensing age from 18 to 17 years is likely to result in a long-term net increase each year of 13 extra deaths, 200 extra people seriously injured and 750 extra people with minor injuries. In the first year, 20 extra deaths and 250 extra serious injuries would be expected.

## GRADUATED LICENSING – THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



A VARIETY OF GRADUATED LICENSING SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN ADOPTED IN NEW ZEALAND, CANADA, AND MOST US STATES. CRASH REDUCTIONS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED. THE DRIVING AGE IN MOST OF THESE JURISDICTIONS IS AS LOW AS 16, COMPARED TO VICTORIA'S AGE OF 18.

Young drivers have a high crash risk due to the combination of inexperience and risky behaviour. Their likelihood of crashing is highest during the first 6 to 12 months of a probationary licence.

Graduated licensing reduces this high crash risk by easing young drivers into the full range of driving conditions.

Similar to an apprenticeship, newly licensed drivers graduate from driving in lower to higher risk situations. Young drivers in some jurisdictions are prohibited from higher risk situations in the early stages of licensing. As driving experience, competence and maturity increases, driving is progressively permitted in more demanding conditions.

A variety of graduated licensing systems have been adopted in New Zealand, Canada, and most US states. Crash reductions have been experienced in these jurisdictions<sup>20</sup>.

YOUNG DRIVERS IN SOME JURISDICTIONS ARE PROHIBITED FROM HIGHER RISK SITUATIONS IN THE EARLY STAGES OF LICENSING. AS DRIVING EXPERIENCE, COMPETENCE AND MATURITY INCREASES, DRIVING IS PROGRESSIVELY ALLOWED IN MORE DEMANDING CONDITIONS.

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## GRADUATED LICENSING – THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### **Key features of graduated licensing overseas**

Graduated licensing systems introduced overseas generally have the following features:

- extended supervised learning periods and practice
- late night driving restrictions, with exemptions
- passenger restrictions, with exemptions
- early intervention for traffic offending through a lower demerit point threshold
- progression through licensing stages contingent on good driving records
- zero BAC limits and compulsory seat belt wearing.

The driving age in most of these jurisdictions is as low as 16.

### **Late night driving restrictions, with exemptions**

A new driver in the first 6-12 months of licensing may only drive during late night hours for essential activities, such as work or study, or if under supervision by a full licence holder.

Night restriction start times can range between 9pm and midnight and usually end at 5am.

Driving for essential activities during these hours is exempted through legislation.

Late night driving restrictions operate in 37 US states, Canada and New Zealand for newly licensed drivers for the first 6-12 months of driving.

Young driver crash reductions have resulted<sup>21</sup> – for instance, 25 per cent in North Carolina, 53 per cent in Michigan and 37 per cent in New Zealand<sup>22</sup>.

### **Passenger restrictions, with exemptions**

Passenger restrictions generally allow no peer passengers, or only one passenger, to ride with an unsupervised novice driver for the first 6-12 months of their licence, unless they are dependents, a spouse or other family members. Exemptions may also apply where transport options are limited for travel to work or study.

New Zealand and 25 US states have passenger restrictions on newly licensed drivers. A 9 per cent reduction in crashes involving teenage passengers of restricted drivers was observed in New Zealand and a 23 per cent reduction in passenger injuries was found in California<sup>23</sup>.

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## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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This discussion paper has been prepared to promote discussion about possible introduction of graduated licensing and other safety measures in Victoria.

The Government is interested in your views on the possible measures for Victoria. You can use the tear-out comments page at the back of this paper. You should forward your views in response to this discussion paper by 11 November 2005.

Once your views have been heard, the Government will consider the need for these possible measures in Victoria. Legislation would be required to introduce these measures.

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## HOW TO COMMENT

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The Government is interested in receiving your views. You can use this tear-out comments page to respond.

Written submissions should be sent to:

**Discussion Paper – Young Driver Safety**

VicRoads  
Reply Paid 61943  
KEW VIC 3101

Note: A stamp on the envelope is not required.

Or via the websites:

[www.arrivealive.vic.gov.au](http://www.arrivealive.vic.gov.au)  
[www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au](http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au)

Or by email to:

[youngdriversafety@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:youngdriversafety@roads.vic.gov.au)

All submissions will be treated as public documents unless otherwise requested.

Submissions should be made by 11 November 2005.

For general inquiries telephone the VicRoads Call Centre on 13 11 71.

If you are interested in reading further on the issue of young driver safety and graduated licensing, the list of references on the last page of this Discussion Paper may be useful. Links are provided where the information is available on the web or online. All the papers listed are available at the VicRoads Business Information Centre, which is located at:

**VicRoads**

Ground Floor  
60 Denmark Street  
KEW VIC 3101

Tel: (03) 9854 2231  
Fax: (03) 9853 0084  
Email: [library@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:library@roads.vic.gov.au)





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## LIST OF DEFINITIONS

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### **Graduated licensing**

New drivers are eased into the full range of driving conditions, graduating from lower to higher risk driving situations as driving experience and maturity increases. Driving is progressively permitted in more demanding conditions as new drivers pass through licensing stages.

### **Young Drivers**

Drivers aged 18-25 holding a driver licence.

### **Learner Drivers**

Drivers holding a learner permit and who may only drive if accompanied by a full licensed driver.

### **Probationary Drivers**

Drivers holding a probationary driver licence. This is the first licence given to new drivers after completing the learner permit period and passing the licence test. It allows them to drive unaccompanied and must be held for three years during which the driver must comply with a range of special restrictions such as a zero blood alcohol limit and a high powered vehicle restriction.

### **Road Toll**

Deaths and injuries resulting from road crashes.

### **Casualty Crash**

A road crash in which one or more person(s) is killed or injured.

### **Serious Injury Crash**

A road crash in which one or more person(s) is injured and is taken to hospital.

### **Fatal Crash**

A road crash in which one or more person(s) is killed, or dies as a result of the crash, within 30 days of the crash.

### **Experienced Drivers**

Drivers who have been driving for many years and hold a full driver licence. Experienced drivers are therefore usually older than those with less driving experience.

### **Inexperienced Drivers / Newly Licensed Drivers**

Drivers who have been driving for less than three years as probationary drivers. Most inexperienced drivers are therefore also young, aged between 18 and 21 years.

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