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Abstract Neilson Associates Pty Ltd was commissioned by FORS to develop workable proposals for the implementation of graduated driver licensing (GDL) and suggest a course of action for the implementation of GDL. The report examines the possibility of GDL in terms of objectives, various viewpoints and available options. Issues covered include the background and rationale on GDL, the existing driver licensing system, current GDL proposals, reactions of officials and the community and information on young driver licensing and crash involvement rates.

KEYWORDS: DRIVER LICENSING, YOUNG DRIVERS, GRADUATED LICENSING,
 ROAD SAFETY.

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FEDERAL OFFICE OF ROAD SAFETY

IMPLEMENTATION OF GRADUATED LICENSING
FOR YOUNG DRIVERS

Neilson Associates Pty Ltd
Lansley, Hayes & Storer

November 1986

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IMPLEMENTATION OF GRADUATED LICENSING

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SUMMARY

Background

1. The aim of graduated licensing is to reduce or eliminate some of the factors known to contribute to the much higher crash rates of young drivers, namely, inexperience, alcohol, night driving and driving with peers. It is considered that better experience in acquiring roadcraft skills and developing correct attitudes would be achieved by driving under the supervision of an experienced driver initially. Graduated licensing would involve full supervision at first, reducing as the novice becomes more experienced.
2. Graduated licensing has been considered by the Australian Transport Advisory Council (ATAC) since 1980, together with the idea of a pilot study in one Australian State. The concept was endorsed and the pilot study was also recommended by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Road Safety in 1982.
3. The key characteristics of graduated licensing recommended by the Motor Transport Group of ATAC in 1984 were:
 - extended period of supervision
 - consideration of zero BAC for learners
 - possible restrictions on passengers
 - possible restrictions on use of vehicles
4. The graduated licensing model proposed by the Federal Office of Road Safety (in 1983) involves four learner licence stages of six months each. There would be licensed adult supervision at all times in the first 12 months. Night driving would not be allowed in Stage 1, but would be allowed under adult supervision only in Stages 2 and 3. Passengers (apart from family) could only be carried in Stage 4, and then not at night when solo. A zero BAC requirement would apply throughout and for the first year with a full licence.
5. The purpose of the current study is to establish the factors involved in the **implementation** of graduated licensing.
6. This report is based on:
 - a) discussions with officials in the States and Territories in the fields of licensing, road safety research and education, enforcement and associations with an interest in novice driver licensing;
 - b) selective community consultations with young people, parents and other interested community members in Melbourne, Adelaide, Mildura and Wollongong.

Existing Licensing Situation

7. The minimum learner permit age varies from 16 to 17 years, and the minimum duration varies from effectively nil to three months. In Victoria and in Tasmania a person obtaining a learner permit followed by a probationary licence at the minimum ages would have a learner

permit for 12 months. The minimum solo driving age varies from 16 to 18 years, but is most commonly 17 years. The minimum length of the probationary licence period is most commonly one year, but is three years in Victoria and non-existent in the Australian Capital Territory.

State and Territory Proposals and Attitudes to Graduated Licensing

8. No State or Territory has yet decided to implement a FORS form of graduated licensing.
9. Officials in the States and Territories have considered, to varying degrees, the introduction of graduated licensing. While the concept is accepted in principle, there are general doubts related to: requiring proof that individual components of the scheme would reduce crash rates; suspected political unacceptability particularly on curfews and other restrictions; and a belief that reduced starting age would be untenable.
10. Some States consider that with learner permits, probationary licences, BAC limits and transitions from car to truck licences, they already have forms of graduated licensing.
11. Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia are the States which are actively exploring the introduction of graduated licensing. Other States and Territories are seeking a lead from the larger States, in terms of greater proof and intention to implement, or are awaiting the outcome of a pilot study in one State.
12. Probably the greatest area of conceptual concern is the age versus experience factors in explaining the higher crash rates of young drivers.
13. The idea of a reduced starting age (i.e. less than 16 years) is almost universally condemned. People (officials and community) are very sceptical of the idea that younger learner drivers would be more positively influenced by their parents. However, there is a common view that there could be benefits from separating the learning to drive age from the learning to drink age.
14. In South Australia a probationary licence holder may drive unaccompanied at age 16 years. Graduated licensing (or a variant) is seen by South Australian officials mainly as a means by which crash rates will be reduced by deferring the age at which a person may drive unaccompanied. The concept of a structured learning process is considered to carry far less weight. Analytical justification for the scheme, and evidence are sought that the scheme would be politically acceptable to the affected community.
15. In Victoria, a probationary licence permitting solo driving is not awarded until a minimum age of 18 years, with probationary conditions for a further three years. There is a great reluctance by officials to reduce the solo driving age because it is estimated that young driver crashes would increase significantly (an additional 30-50 fatalities per year by reducing the solo driving age to 17 years).

16. In Victoria, a Bill has been drafted, proposing amendments to the licensing system:
- 18 year licensing (probationary) age retained
 - probationary period reduced from three years to two (i.e. minimum 20 years for a full licence)
 - zero BAC for full probationary period
 - P Plate display for full two years
 - curfew component considered but deleted because of expected political resistance
 - novice drivers over 25 years not subject to probationary requirements
 - licensed adult supervision for three to nine months (according to whether learner permit obtained at minimum age of 17 years or wait till 17 years 9 months)
 - may drive solo (unsupervised) in the probationary period
 - penalties rationalised and aimed towards regressing a stage rather than suspension.
17. The proposed amendments for Victoria were underpinned by Road Traffic Authority analysis which found that
- the estimated number of casualty crashes increases with reduced solo driving age
 - the earlier the curfew the better the outcome in reduced crash involvement
 - the need for passenger limitation correlates with the need for an earlier curfew; if the curfew is early enough, there is no need for a passenger limitation.
18. In South Australia, the greatest concern is to find a way of eliminating licences for 16 year olds, to remove this highest crash-risk group. However, there is an uncertainty on the part of officials as to whether a probationary solo licence age of 17 years would be politically acceptable.
19. In Western Australia, the FORS model (but with 0.02 rather than zero BAC) is being considered by a Committee, but it is understood that the likely outcome is a two year probationary period rather than the full graduated licensing scheme.

Community Consultations

20. Community consultations in Melbourne, Adelaide, Mildura and Wollongong involved young people, parents and other members of the community. They produced the following responses to graduated licensing:

- a. There is a widespread belief that something must be done about the young driver crash rate. Young people and their parents accept the idea of graduated licensing, can see that there are problems, but want them to be overcome. If anything, young people would accept more restrictions more readily than older people.
- b. Few people are happy with the current learner driver arrangements.
- c. No serious alternatives to the FORS model were put forward. The model is regarded as a step in the right direction. A high level of public acceptance could be expected with refinement of the implementation details.
- d. People think that licensing should be linked to compulsory driver education and stronger enforcement measures. A compulsory school-based theory and practice course in road safety and driver education is wanted by 75% of sample, preferably in or before year 10 to ensure that early leavers are covered.
- e. Age. For a learner permit, all consider 15 years too young, 70 percent would favour 16 years, 25 percent 17 years and the rest 18 years. People consider that graduated licensing should apply to all ages regardless. The problem is seen as lack of experience rather than being young. The preferred solo driving age is 17 years, and the full licence age 18 years, to accord with adulthood and to dissociate learning to drive with learning to drink ages.
- f. Supervision. There is support for licensed adult supervision for the first six to nine months, providing there are adequate opportunities to learn. The preferred unsupervised probationary period would be 12 months. The idea of having a log book recording the amount of experience is favoured.
- g. Passengers. There is some resistance to passenger restrictions which are seen to limit part of the learning experience. A passenger limit of two or three is seen as being reasonable.
- h. Alcohol. There is unanimity on zero or near-zero BAC. Most people are happy to divorce alcohol from the first two years of driving. Some people would like a near-zero limit to cover alleged inaccuracies in measuring equipment, cough mixtures etc.
- i. Curfews. This is probably the most contentious issue. People can see the reasons for a curfew. Country people consider a curfew to be difficult because of its impact on employment (particularly early morning starts), sport and recreation. In metropolitan areas, if a curfew were too early it would seriously restrict time available for teaching driving. A 10 pm to 5 am curfew would be an acceptable compromise for metropolitan and country, enabling evening courses, sport and recreation, much evening employment and learning to drive.

- j. **Enforcement.** Most people are in favour of random licence checks; they are aware of a considerable number of unlicensed drivers. Photographic licences are supported by the community, and considered by police to be an essential component of graduated licensing.
- k. **Penalties.** There is agreement that penalties should be known and built into the system, with little discretion being given to the courts. Some support the points system, but consider that it should reflect the gravity of the offence. Some think that an offender should revert to the previous stage for one offence, and back to the beginning for two offences. A small proportion consider there should be six months disqualification.
- l. **Period of graduated licensing process.** Many think that two years is too long; Country people favour one year, and city people 1.5 to 2 years.
- n. **Testing.** People want more stringent testing and would like to see periodic re-testing.

Implementation

- 21. The points of view of officials, road safety researchers, politicians and the community, seem to differ somewhat on the introduction of graduated licensing.
- 22. Officials see "political difficulties" in implementation, particularly in curfews, passenger restrictions and altering the minimum learner or solo driving ages.
- 23. The community consultations showed that, while people realise there are difficulties, they are insistent that they should be overcome, and have indicated that they would accept the FORS model.
- 24. Some State officials believe that elements of graduated licensing already exist in the learner/probationary driver schemes, in learner driver supervision and in alcohol limitations.
- 25. **Concept.** The community places more credence on the **graduated** licensing concept than officials or researchers do. They emphasise supervision, education and training as part of the licensing process. The case for increased supervision was not raised by any officials or researchers.
- 26. **Age and licensing stages.** One of the two jurisdictions with a solo driving age of 16 years would like to increase this to 17 years. Jurisdictions with a solo driving age of 17 years (or about) see no reason to change. Victoria, with the highest solo driving age of 18 years, is strongly opposed to a reduction, arguing that a reduction would lead to a calculable increase in casualties. The community generally prefers a solo driving age of 17 years, to dissociate learning to drive from learning to drink and to permit the award of a full licence at 18 years when adulthood is reached.

27. Supervision. Officials could see no reason to increase the supervised learner period beyond the typical three months duration. The community prefers six to nine months duration.
28. Alcohol. The six States have zero or near-zero BAC. The community would accept zero or near-zero. It should not be too difficult to have zero BAC adopted.
29. Curfew. A sunset to sunrise curfew is unrealistic, but a 10 pm to 5 am curfew should enjoy widespread community acceptance and limit hardship.
30. Passengers. Victorian researchers consider that a passenger limitation should be unnecessary if a 10 pm to 5 am curfew is introduced.
31. Driver education and training. The community is keen on integrating formal driver education and training with a graduated licensing scheme.
32. Enforcement. Requirement to carry a licence is an essential aspect of enforcement. Photographic licences are widely supported by the police and are being introduced in several jurisdictions. The idea is widely supported by the community as is random licence checking.
33. Penalties. Officials and the community agree that penalties should relate to the gravity of the offence. Regressing a stage is preferred to suspension.
34. Mature Age Novices. Road safety researchers see the novice driver problem as one of age rather than experience. Young people see the problem as one of gaining experience, and consider that, on equity grounds a graduated licensing scheme should apply to all novice drivers, not just young novices.
35. Implementation of a Complete Graduated Licensing Scheme.
 - a. No jurisdiction intends to implement a complete graduated licensing scheme having the concept endorsed by ATAC and developed by FORS.
 - b. The community is more enthusiastic than officials or researchers about the idea of a structured learning process with initial full supervision, progressively reducing supervision coupled with increasing responsibility. State and Territory licensing administrations and road safety research agencies now have reason to think again about the inclusion of a structured supervision component in their driver licensing systems.
 - c. Jurisdictions which have studied graduated licensing in depth stress the importance of minimum solo driving age, at the expense of a structured scheme and an extended supervision requirement.
 - d. Victoria's draft proposals in its Road Safety Bill rationalise the licensing process, but without reducing the minimum solo driving age. A curfew has been omitted from the proposals, but the results of the current study community consultation provide a basis for saying that a 10 pm to 5 am curfew would be politically acceptable.

- e. With systematic and rigorous monitoring, the new Victorian legislation (and hopefully a curfew will be included) will provide a pilot or demonstration which can be closely watched by other jurisdictions with the view to applying relevant findings to their own situation.
- f. South Australia would like to find a way of avoiding solo driving at age 16 years. The assessments by the Victorian RTA indicate that there is a rational road safety basis for doing so. The selective community consultations in this study provide a measure of confidence that the community would accept supervised learner permit driving from 16th to 17th birthdays to increase the minimum solo driving age to 17 years.
- g. Western Australia. The introduction of a two year probationary licence period could benefit from having the first year as a supervised learner phase.
- h. Australian Capital Territory does not have a probationary licence, nor does it have a zero BAC requirement for novice drivers. The BAC limit is 0.08 as for experienced drivers. The Commonwealth could set an example by changing this situation and introducing a graduated licensing scheme.

1. INTRODUCTION

Inexperienced young drivers are seriously over-represented in fatalities and injuries from road crashes. Road crash studies have identified factors connected with the higher crash risk:

- inexperience
- drink driving
- night driving particularly at weekends
- being accompanied by their peers, taking greater risks and skylarking
- the non-wearing of seat belts

The concept of graduated driver licensing (GDL) involves the staged entry of young people into the driving population, with increasing responsibility and reducing supervision at each succeeding stage, coupled with elimination of the major factors which lead to crashes. The concept has been associated with the lowering of the age of first driving, i.e. the first licensing step or the minimum age for a learner's permit.

The main purpose of this research project is to develop workable proposals for the implementation of graduated licensing, supported by an investigation of the implementation environment, from the viewpoints of government officials, and of the youth and their parents who would be affected by graduated licensing.

This report provides background on GDL and its rationale from Australia and overseas (Chapters 2-4).

The existing young and novice driver licensing situation in each State and Territory is described in Chapter 5.

Any graduated licensing proposals and the attitudes of officials to the FORS proposals are also covered in Chapter 5 for each State and Territory.

Community views were sought on how young people and others would be affected by graduated licensing and their reaction to it (Chapter 6); more details are provided in Appendix C).

Chapter 7 provides information on current and projected young driver licensing rates and on young driver crash involvement rates.

The possibilities for graduated licensing are examined in Chapter 8 in terms of objectives, the various viewpoints and the options available. A suggested course of action is proposed, including research and other actions which could facilitate implementation of graduated licensing.

Among the recommendations was:

"a pilot study of graduated licensing be undertaken in one State, in co-operation with the Office of Road Safety."

In support of this recommendation, the Committee said: "The concept of a more structured form of graduated entry of young people into the driving population than that operating under the present system, is consistent with the basic philosophy of progressive development of attitudes and knowledge needed for safe driving."

2.5 POLICY ENDORSEMENT

The Motor Transport Group of ATAC in May 1984 recommended that the graduated licensing package should contain the following elements:

- an extended period of supervision
- consideration of a zero blood alcohol content for learners
- possible restriction on passengers
- possible restriction on the use and power of vehicles.

ATAC endorsed graduated licensing, in principle, in July 1984.

2.6 STATES' CONSIDERATION OF GRADUATED LICENSING

All States and Territories have been considering the implications of introducing graduated licensing (Chapter 5). The proposals are being pursued to varying degrees. Most progress so far has been made in Victoria where draft proposals were published in June 1986 for a Road Safety Bill which includes some elements of graduated licensing.

2.7 FORS IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

In February 1986 a contract was let by Federal Office of Road Safety to Neilson Associates Pty Ltd for research into implementation of graduated licensing. The objective of the project is

"To assess any difficulties that could be associated with the implementation and administration of the graduated licensing concept, and to recommend ways in which these could be overcome. The project should seek to:

1. Develop guidelines for the administration of the scheme by driver licence authorities in each State or Territory
 - identify specific problems which can be expected and suggest ways of overcoming these
2. Advise on the most appropriate public education activities that would be effective in gaining community acceptance for the scheme.
3. Recommend measures to ensure the scheme can be effectively and fairly implemented in rural areas.

4. Advise on the impact on the community of an earlier learner age
5. Recommend measures for enhancing the community's acceptance of curfew times, addressing issues such as
 - the need for exemptions for employment
 - the attitudes of parents to the restricted mobility of their children during these times.
6. Determine the significance of the measures recommended for over-age entry"

Information for the study has been compiled from four main sources:

- a) Literature review;
- b) Interviews with State and Territory officials in the licensing, road safety policy, research and education, and enforcement fields
- c) Community consultations with young people and adults in urban and rural locations (Melbourne, Adelaide, Mildura and Wollongong).
- d) Crash statistics and demographic statistics.

3.0 LITERATURE CONCERNING YOUNG NOVICE DRIVERS

Searching through the road safety literature, only one reference has been found to actual **implementation** of a graduated licensing scheme of the type proposed by FORS. This is a program instituted in Maryland in 1979 (McKnight et al 1983, Tannahill 1985).

Otherwise, the nearest the literature comes to this is a paper (Croke et al 1977) for the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on a model for graduated licensing. Within this paper a work statement for a demonstration project was developed. Some papers discuss graduated licensing as an **idea** or **concept**. Other papers cover curfews, driver education, young driver accidents and the young driver problem generally. Much of the literature on young drivers is directed at other solutions such as high school driver education.

This chapter deals with past coverage of graduated licensing, together with probationary licensing, curfews and other responses to the young driver problem.

3.1 THE WALLER GRADUATED LICENSING MODEL

The source documents for the graduated licensing concept are 1975 and 1976 papers by Patricia F. Waller of the Highway Safety Research Centre of University of North Carolina, the first entitled "Education for Driving: An Exercise in Self Delusion?" and the second "Driver Education: Where Does it Belong?".

The first paper discusses driver licensing, driver improvement and driver education. In discussing the part driver education could play in reducing the crash involvement rate of young drivers, it is suggested that short length driver education instruction does not give enough behind-the-wheel training. But the cost of expanding such training would be prohibitive and there would be diminishing returns with each additional hour.

Waller saw driver education being developed as a cooperative effort involving driver licensing personnel and parents or other responsible adults. Driver education would continue, and after passing of the examination the licensing authority would award a restricted licence with time of day restrictions allied to supervision requirements.

Increasing the age of licensing was seen as being unrealistic, and the suggestion was made that the process start at 14 or 14 1/2 years under parental supervision.

"Young people will always do foolish things, but such a **graduated system of licensing** would increase the probability that by the time they are out with their teenage friends they would have their driving under better control and hence be more likely to survive these high risk years."

The other relevant points made in this paper are:

- There are extensive formal programs for driver licensing, driver improvement and driver education in every American State with fairly detailed federal highway safety standards guidelines. The standards were not generally based on solid data demonstrating the value of the program elements.

- The functions of a driver's licence are identification, enforcement, revenue raising and screening.
- Administrators and the general public consider the screening function to be most important. But screening involves an arbitrary cut-off as to who passes or fails.
- Rehabilitation efforts for high risk individuals, even if successful, would not make a large effect in the total crash picture.
- Certain groups of drivers are known to run a higher risk than the general driving population - including young drivers, older drivers and those with certain medical conditions.
- Driver licence programs cannot realistically be expected to screen out bad drivers. "In driver licensing we are not about to reject many who would qualify if given the chance. Indeed, although the States persist in the position that a driver license is a privilege rather than a right, the courts are moving in the opposite direction. In our society, rightly or wrongly, in many places a driver license is essential to maintaining an acceptable lifestyle."
- Most driver improvement programs cannot be considered effective. They are based on traffic violations rather than crashes. The correlation between violations and crashes is low and not of practical significance.
- Driver improvement programs are based on the number of "infractions" irrespective of the total distance travelled annually but the rate of crashes per 100,000 miles is highest for low mileage drivers.
- The author believes that driver education should be closely related to driver licensing but is not. Driver education usually refers to high school programs, but their effectiveness is in doubt. (The programs usually involve 30 hours classroom experience and six hours behind the wheel.) Some research shows that students learn much of their driving from their parents. The high school programs might be more effective if the teachers were better trained.
- Periodic re-examination (say every four years) including knowledge testing is an attempt to refresh knowledge particularly of changes in traffic laws.
- The effectiveness of driver improvement, driver education and driver licensing programs can be seriously questioned.
- There is an accumulated body of evaluation research but this has little impact on implementation. If the systems proposed by researchers are implemented, they hope to be able to evaluate them. Researchers have a responsibility to be sure of their findings, particularly when they say that a given factor has no effect.

In the second paper, the graduated licensing concept is briefly discussed with the main theme the weaving of driver-related matters through various subjects in the school curriculum.

The idea was expanded of developing a program in which schools collaborate with the home, and involving a more gradual introduction into the driving population. This was based on the premise that much of the young driver

crash record arises from inexperience. The proposed steps in a graduated licensing program were:

1. Successful completion of driver education and licence examination;
2. Awarding of a limited licence for driving only during certain low-risk daylight hours (e.g. 9 am to 4 pm), with a responsible adult (parent or guardian) (perhaps 6 months);
3. Daylight hours extended to early morning (6am to 9 am) and evening (4 pm to 6 pm), a responsible adult required during these periods, but not during the middle of the day (6 months);
4. Period extended to 6 pm to 10 pm with the adult present, adult eliminated in other hours (6 months);
5. Rest of the night hours added but only with the adult present (6 months?);
6. Desirably, bring the young driver back to the driver education class for review and information refresher just before full licensing.

It would be possible to base graduation from level to level on experience and demonstrated skill. Parents were to keep a log book recording hours of monitored experience under different types of conditions. There would possibly be some display indicating driver status.

The problems of extending the period of restrictions is acknowledged in the paper from the viewpoint of parents (tired of chauffeuring) and young people (eager to be released from parental control). First behind-the-wheel experience at perhaps 13-1/2 or 14 instead of 15 or 16 was suggested. Parental communication of their own perceptions of hazards in the driving of others on the road as well as in the driving of their own children was seen as important by Waller.

Young people embarking upon night driving with other young people, immediately after licensure was seen as a particular problem, and few driver education courses include instruction in night driving.

Waller recognised potential problems in the availability of supervising parents and of a vehicle to drive.

Waller suggested that graduated licensing was likely to be more cost effective than possible alternatives, such as elaborate expansion of driver education programs to provide increased behind-the-wheel training. She considered that too much was expected from 30 hours of classroom experience and 6 hours behind the wheel.

She felt that young people will learn to drive whether in supervised programs or otherwise, and that the acquisition of driving skill is associated with high death and injury rates. She also felt that simply doing more of the same is probably no solution, and that appropriate funding and trained personnel are needed for the task of developing and evaluating new techniques and new approaches to this most urgent health and safety problem.

3.2 "MODEL FOR PROVISIONAL (GRADUATED) LICENSING FOR YOUNG NOVICE DRIVERS"

This consultant study was undertaken in 1977 (Croke and Wilson, 1977) for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of the US Federal Department of Transportation. The aim of the study was to develop a model process and incorporate it into a work statement for a demonstration project. The study was developed with the assistance of a panel of traffic safety experts and subjected to a "community" acceptance test to determine its operational feasibility and to eliminate potential problems.

The model incorporated a number of countermeasures to reduce young driver crash involvement:

- a parent-supervised driving practice program;
- a program of licence testing and certification geared to young novice drivers;
- a night time driving restriction (at least for young problem drivers);
- a youth-oriented driver improvement program.

It was decided that the demonstration project should be for state-wide implementation in one State.

The preferred model had the following format:

- young (less than 18 years) beginning drivers;
- three stages over a 24 month period before obtaining an unrestricted licence
 - . learner's phase - 6 months
 - . restricted phase - 6 months
 - . provisional license - 12 months;

The primary objective of the demonstration project was to "determine whether a comprehensive countermeasure program incorporating existing driver regulation procedures and certain new innovative techniques in a provisional (graduated) licensing system can reduce the incidence of automobile accidents and traffic violations among youthful novice drivers."

The secondary objectives involved:

- increasing the amount of supervised driving practice received by beginning young drivers;
- implementing more demanding testing and licensing procedures for young novice drivers;
- restricting novice driving exposure during high risk night-time hours for either all drivers (Model I) or **problem** novice drivers (Model II);
- provide for increased monitoring of novice driving records and speedy effective driver improvement actions for problem novice drivers.

The purposes of the parent-supervised novice driving practice program were to:

- increase the amount of on-road driving practice received
- structure the existing parental role in driver training by providing parents with training and instruction materials.

The program was to consist of two parts: Part I - a joint venture between the licensing agency and the State's high school driver education program; and Part II - a parent-supervised driving practice program to take place during the Restricted phase, with less emphasis on skill development and more on introducing the beginning driver to more hazardous conditions.

3.3 MARYLAND PROVISIONAL LICENSE PROGRAM

The Maryland Provisional License Program was instituted in January 1979. It required all newly-licensed drivers under age 18 to receive a provisional licence. Elements of the provisional licence were: a 1 am to 6 am driving restriction; a parent-supervised driving program; a special driver improvement program; and a requirement for six months conviction-free driving for issuance of a regular licence.

McKnight, Hyle and Albrecht, of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (1983) analysed accidents and convictions over the period 1975-1982 and reached the following conclusions:

- The Provisional Licensing Program as implemented in Maryland is administratively and financially feasible.
- The parent-supervised instruction and driver improvement programs were not fully implemented and their effect could not be assessed.
- The nighttime driving restriction failed to reduce accidents during the hours of restriction.
- The Provisional Licensing Program produced an estimated 10% reduction in convictions and a possible 5% reduction in daytime accidents among drivers operating on provisional licences.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration developed the abovementioned system, which is designed to ease novice drivers into the driving environment through more controlled exposure to progressively more difficult driving experience prior to full licensure.

Further analysis of the Maryland experience (Tannahill, 1985) concludes that "the components that appear to be appropriate and necessary for an effective provisional licensing system are nighttime driving restrictions, parent supervised driving practice, appropriate knowledge and skill testing with at least six months conviction and crash free driving, youth-oriented driver improvement actions, mandatory safety belt use, and use of lower BAC levels for impaired driving."

3.4 YOUNG DRIVER RESTRICTIONS

A 1982 American study "Effect of Curfew Laws on Motor Vehicle Crashes" (Preusser, Williams, Zador and Blomberg, 1982), examined the situation in four of the twelve States which have curfews.

The study compared young driver crash involvement in States with and without curfews, but otherwise having the same or similar young driver laws. The data on curfew affected drivers was limited to 16 year olds, because in two States 17 year olds who had completed driver education were not subject to curfews. The findings were that:

- the 16 year old driver crash involvement rates during curfew hours were reduced by 25 to 69 percent in the four States;
- in three of the four curfew States the 16 year old licensure rate was lower than in the comparison States;
- New York, with the strongest curfew law, had the lowest 16 year old licensure rate of any State;
- it is possible that curfew laws reduce early licensure, which would mean greater reduction in crash involvements than quoted above.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has supported a number of other research projects on young driver restrictions and the effects that restrictions have on licensure rates.

The report "Restricted Driving Reduces Crash Deaths; Majority of Teenagers Do Not Oppose Restrictions" (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 1984) covers the initial findings of a nationwide survey of high school students' views on driving topics including the effect of curfew laws and delayed licensure age on decision to obtain a licence, driving amounts and times, and ability to hold jobs and attend social activities. The main findings of this study were:

- teenage driver licensure rates vary greatly by age, sex and location;
- the minimum allowable licensure age has the greatest effect on crash involvement rates, as demonstrated by comparisons between States where the minimum age is 15 or 16 years compared with those where it is 17 years;
- the minimum age for obtaining a permit has a much smaller effect, but patterns vary considerably by age and State;
- most teenagers surveyed want to drive and they want to drive at night; in two areas with curfew restrictions licensure rates are lower than in five other survey areas, possibly because a licence which is invalid at night is less desirable than an unrestricted one;
- the degree to which curfews are enforced by parents varies between States;
- in States where there is a curfew 90 percent of surveyed students indicated that they favour a curfew (rather than none); and in States without a curfew, more than half of the students indicated that they do not oppose a curfew;
- in four States with curfew laws, the crash involvement rate of 16 year old drivers during curfew hours was reduced 25 to 69 percent;
- "when driving by teenagers is reduced - whether by curfews, delayed licensure, or other means - teenagers' crash involvement and crash-related deaths and injuries also decrease significantly; raising the minimum licensure age from 16 to 17, for example, reduces fatal crashes involving

16 year old drivers by an estimated 65-85 percent without increasing fatal crash rates at older ages".

Another study by Williams, Lund and Preusser (1985) examined the relationship between licensing laws and the timing of obtaining driver licences in seven States. The results indicated that the minimum age of licensure had strong effects in delaying licensure. An early night driving curfew (9 pm - 5 am) was seen by students as a factor in delaying licensure, whereas a later curfew (11 pm - 5 am) had a much smaller effect.

4.0 FORS MODEL

4.1 THE PROPOSED SCHEME

After consideration of a number of alternatives, FORS proposed the following four stage by six months graduated licensing scheme in August 1983:

Stage 1 Learner licence

- licensed adult supervision at all times
- no other passengers
- daytime driving only
- zero BAC

Stage 2 Learner licence

- licensed adult supervision at all times
- only family as passengers
- night-time driving allowed
- zero BAC

Stage 3 Learner licence

- may drive solo or under licensed adult supervision
- zero BAC

if solo

- daytime driving only
- no passengers
- zero BAC

Stage 4 Learner licence

- may drive solo or under licensed adult supervision
- zero BAC

if solo

- night-time driving allowed but not with passengers
- zero BAC

Driver licence

- zero BAC in first year

The elements of a graduated licence scheme as envisaged by FORS are:

Essential elements

- initially to be supervised by a fully licensed driver
- initially restricted to daylight hours or early curfew
- zero alcohol
- progressive removal of limitations

Desirable elements

- all learners to be subject to the process
- preferred commencement at minimum age 15, because at that age they are:
 - more receptive to parental supervision
 - less susceptible to peer pressures
 - full licence could be earned by age 17
- must complete one stage free of offences before progressing to next stage
- limitations on carriage of passengers
- exposure to associated educational programs

Earlier proposals by FORS had other desirable elements which have since been deleted, viz. maintenance of a logbook, minimum practice times to be completed; maximum power to weight ratio set for vehicles; and no towing of trailers or caravans.

4.2 CONCEPT

The concept of graduated licensing on which the proposed scheme is based involves obtaining more road experience under low risk conditions, together with **graduation** through stages of increased responsibility with correspondingly reduced supervision and restrictions.

This is achieved by:

- licensed adult supervision;
- passenger restrictions;
- time of day restrictions;
- alcohol restrictions;

4.3 RATIONALE

The rationale for a graduated driver licence scheme has been developed by the Federal Office of Road Safety taking into account factors such as driver behaviour, incidence of young driver crashes and the effects of licensing age.

Driver Behaviour

Research into the reasons for young driver over-involvement in crashes has indicated that novice drivers have three general areas of skills to acquire before they become safe drivers. The most readily acquired are the manipulative skills, which involve steering, control of speed, gear changing, braking and so on; which are usually achieved with a few months of practice. Perceptual skills such as recognition of potential hazards, and attention-switching take a longer period of practice, up to two years, before reaching a plateau level. Decision-making skills, such as when to drive, judgement of safe manoeuvres, attitudes to driving, and expectations and safe judgment of own and others ability are the most difficult to acquire and may involve an element of maturity which is independent of the driving task.

Spolander (1983a) in a study of subjective driving ability measured drivers' assessment of their own driving skills. It was suggested that newly qualified drivers suffer from an excessive estimation of their own skills and would be less dangerous if they realised their own limitations.

He considered that training methods could include demonstrations of how difficult various traffic situations can be.

Another study by Spolander (1983b) explored the relation between self assessment of driving skills and driver behaviour. Drivers consider themselves more skilful and less risky than the average, an attitude which begins soon after receiving a licence in the case of male drivers. After a year, they consider they are better able to handle abnormal and emergency conditions than an average driver. It was also found that drivers who rate themselves highly in driving skills seem to have a propensity for higher speed and more frequent overtakings than drivers who rate themselves low.

Crashes and Young People

Figures published by the Federal Office of Road Safety highlight the incidence of fatal crashes involving young people (FORS 1985 b).

"Young road users (17-25 years) are over represented in road crashes. In 1984, 35% of all road crash fatalities were 17 to 25 year olds yet they represent only 15% of the total population. There were 974 young road users killed in road crashes in 1984, and a further 11,018 admitted to hospital.

- Drivers represented:	38% of fatalities (372) 35% of serious injuries (4,293)
- Motorcycle riders and passengers represented:	28% of fatalities (271) 29% of serious injuries (3,233)
- Passengers represented:	25% of fatalities (247) 25% of serious injuries (2,787)
- Pedestrians represented:	8% of fatalities (75) 5% of serious injuries (548)
- Bicyclists represented:	1% of fatalities (9) 2% of serious injuries (219)

Over 80% of all young road users killed in road crashes are male and this increases to 97% for motorcycle riders.

From 1981 to 1983, of the drivers killed with BAC levels above 0.05g/100ml, more than half were aged between 17 and 25. Of the motorcycle riders with positive BAC involved in fatal crashes, 70% were aged between 17 and 25.

Licensing Age

The optimum age for learning to drive and for obtaining a licence has been debated for some time. In Australia the minimum age ranges in the States and Territories are: learner permit 16 to 17 years; probationary licence 16 to 18 years; and full licence 17 to 20 years.

In New Zealand, the minimum licensing age was 15 years and in most States of USA 16 years, and these two countries had lower crash involvement rates than Australia. This led some people in the road safety research field to believe that reducing the driving licence age in Australia may lead to road safety benefits. The idea appears to have emanated from Colin Cameron (1972) at the 1972 National Road Safety Symposium. He argued that 16 or 17 year olds should not be denied licences if they are no more dangerous than

18 year olds. This argument was also linked with the idea that the minimum driving age would thereby be separated from the minimum legal age for purchasing alcohol.

The Waller proposals (Section 3.1) which provided the preliminary ideas for the FORS proposed scheme, even suggested that supervised learning with restrictions might start as young as 14 years. The basis of this idea seems to be that, at a younger age, people are subject to parental influence rather than peer group influence increases.

It should be noted that, in the course of the current study, the idea of reduced learner-age or reduced licensing-age found little favour, either from officials or from consulted community groups. States with youngest solo driving ages seek ways to increase it. In Victoria, which has the highest minimum solo driving age of 18 years, any reduction is strongly opposed by officials and researchers. However, the community groups consulted in Victoria generally considered that 18 years is too high a minimum age for obtaining a licence, and that this is unfair when a licence can be obtained at 17 years or less in the rest of Australia. The Victorian research findings which cumulate crash involvement rates from start to age 20 years provide a case for not reducing the age for solo driving (Section 5.2B). South Australian statistics indicate that crash risks for 16 year olds are 15 times those for mature drivers, and for 16-19 year olds four times.

Licensing age and appropriate staging of the licensing process were repeatedly raised in community consultations and in discussions with road safety and licensing officials in the States and Territories. Age is therefore an important issue in the public mind.

5.0 STATES AND TERRITORIES GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS

The information provided in this chapter is based on discussions with officials in the State and Territory capitals covering the fields of licensing, road safety research, driver education and enforcement. The main purpose of these discussions was to identify ways and means of implementing graduated licensing. Background was obtained on the existing licensing situation, and on any proposals for introducing graduated licensing or any of its components.

No State or Territory has yet decided to implement graduated licensing in the form envisaged by the FORS model. Therefore, the discussions were, of necessity, re-directed towards establishing what components of graduated licensing are being considered, and the attitudes of the officials interviewed towards graduated licensing.

The information in this chapter is arranged by State and Territory. In each case, information on the existing young driver licensing situation is presented first (5.1A, 5.2A etc). This is followed by a summary of the State or Territory's graduated licensing proposals and officials' attitudes (5.1B, 5.2B etc).

5.1A NEW SOUTH WALES EXISTING SITUATION

Information is based on discussions with representatives of the Licensing Branch and the Traffic Authority Policy and Research Branch of the Department of Transport.

5.1A.1 Licensing and Road Safety Responsibilities

Licensing: Licensing Branch) Department of Motor
Road safety: Traffic Authority Policy and) Transport
Research Branch
Enforcement: Police Department

Some road safety education activity is also undertaken by National Safety Council of Australia.

5.1A.2 Licence Tests

Learner Permit Test: Forty percent fail the first attempt. This is a written multi-choice test relating mainly to road rules, 17 correct out of 20 being required to pass.

Provisional Licence Test: There is a practical test but no written test. Sixty per cent pass at the first attempt. Of those submitting for a second test, 80 per cent pass.

For driving instructors, a special instructor's licence is required. It is not known what percentage of licence candidates are trained by driving schools.

5.1A.3 Licensing Stages

Learner L Permit

- * minimum age - 16 years (since April 1985)
- * minimum period - 3 months
- * validity - 12 months
- * L plates must be displayed
- * supervision - any licence holder except 1st year provisional driver
- * alcohol - 0.02 BAC
- * speed limit - 70 km/h

Provisional P Licence:

- * minimum age - 17 years
- * minimum period - 1 year
- * P plates must be displayed
- * alcohol - 0.02 BAC
- * speed limit - 80 km/h

There are currently proposed changes to the licence arrangements for a full licence covering:

- * Term licence - valid five years: subject to points system with 12 points over two years leading to loss of licence; 0.05 BAC limit.

5.1A NEW SOUTH WALES EXISTING SITUATION

* Lifetime licence - issued free of charge after a term licence held five years; 12 penalty points over two years lead to loss of licence and a restart of five year term licence: and 0.05 BAC limit.

* Photographic licences are under consideration.

5.1A.4 Young Driver Crash Statistics

The following are fatal crash statistics per 100,000 population for young drivers for 1981-1983, with national figures given for comparison:

Table 5.1

Driver and Rider Fatalities Per 100,000 Population (of Given Age)

1981-83

Age	New South Wales			Australia		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
15	1.2	6.0	7.2	1.6	3.3	2.8
16	9.6	7.3	9.6	8.5	7.8	7.3
17	28.9	32.5	31.6	24.1	19.5	23.1
18	32.8	45.1	44.6	38.7	42.6	31.7
19	49.9	57.8	39.3	41.1	42.2	39.9
20	44.0	45.5	26.0	40.0	38.6	33.3
15-20	166.4	194.2	158.3	154.0	154.0	138.1

Source: FORS Fatal File

5.1B NEW SOUTH WALES GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

5.1B.1 Concept and Rationale

There are no proposals to implement a FORS form of graduated licensing scheme.

Through the Minister for Transport's membership of Australian Transport Advisory Council, New South Wales implicitly supports the concept of graduated licensing. However, there does not appear to be an active interest in the proposal.

NSW road safety researchers require more evidence that graduated licensing and its component parts would be effective, particularly the curfew.

Officers from the licence administration area want research to provide information on what measures are needed or justified; for example, crash rates by driver age and time of day. Any proposal should be one that gains public support.

To New South Wales officials, graduated licensing appears to mean measures already in place, together with five year term and life licences rather than the FORS model.

5.1B.2 Age and Experience Factors

NSW researchers consider that results from the USA may be attributed to an age effect, in that people do not bother to obtain a licence until they are old enough to get one without restrictions. In NSW, where the licence age is 17 years, it would be difficult to achieve such a result.

They see a need to resolve the question about the relative effects of age maturity, and experience. The aim of graduated licensing should be either: to keep young people off the road by reducing mobility; or to provide more experience in a reduced risk environment.

They see some inconsistencies or illogical aspects of the approach favoured by a number of States in the USA. For example, if it is thought worthwhile to allow experience to be gained under safe conditions, there should be restrictions on driving in wet weather. The risk factors to be reduced under the FORS model seem to be incomplete.

Also it is thought that the USA experience is based on schemes which are not fully enforced. It is left to parents to exercise control and a high level of parental support is required, together with a high level of acceptance by participating young drivers. In the USA, where driver ages are lower, it is thought that curfews relate to age rather than experience.

5.1B.3 Accompanying Driver

A number of objections were raised on the proposed requirement to have an accompanying driver. This restriction is not considered to be credible if it could not be enforced by the police. They also consider that it would be difficult to attract public support for a curfew.

5.1B NEW SOUTH WALES GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

5.1B.4 Curfew and Passengers

NSW road safety researchers consider that the curfew proposal is based on a middle class view, which assumes young drivers are close to their parents. They suspected that many young drivers would have left home, and may be working. These people should be treated as adults. Shiftworkers are seen as a specific problem. For example, a seventeen year old female nurse working late night starts. This would create administrative problems for a curfew scheme.

Selection of curfew times may be an important factor affecting the level of support or acceptance by both young people and their parents.

NSW is currently reviewing USA literature relating to curfews. There are limits to the extent to which USA research results can be transferred to Sydney or NSW. Sydney is a large city with limited public transport. There could be special problems of mobility whereas a city like New York has a more comprehensive public transport system.

More data or research results are being sought from USA studies relating to curfews, particularly as to whether there is a drop in fatalities resulting from curfews, and where curfews reduce crash rates for later age groups.

Administrative problems include, for example, the case of young people not living with parents. There would probably be an increased incentive to remove P plates. At present there is no evidence which would show the potential benefits from introducing a curfew. An indication of possible problems is that there are about 1000 special licences (with age exemptions) on issue to young people at any one time.

Officials questioned what would be achieved by a curfew and what problems would be solved, and would like to know the crashes by age by time-of-day. (N.B. This information is available, for Victoria, see Drummond, 1986).

The lack of supporting evidence contributed to the earlier decision to drop curfew and passenger limits from NSW consideration of graduated licensing proposals. They would like to see some research done by others into attitudes towards curfews.

5.2A VICTORIA EXISTING SITUATION

Information is based on discussions with representatives of the Road Safety and Driver Licensing Divisions of the Road Traffic Authority.

5.2A.1 Licencing and Road Safety Responsibilities

Licensing is the responsibility of the Road Traffic Authority, Driver Licensing Division. Within this division there are Licensing Requirements, and Training and Licensing Sections. Investigation of road safety measures including graduated licensing is the responsibility of the Road Safety Division.

5.2A.2 Licence Tests

A knowledge test must be passed before the learner permit stage. The test is based on the Victorian Traffic Handbook which addresses carcraft and roadcraft skills.

Following the passing of the driving test for a probationary licence there is another, shorter knowledge test.

Two-thirds of licence applicants appear with a professional driving instructor. However, it is not known whether the applicants were trained by an instructor or whether the instructor was only used for the test or for final lessons as well.

5.2A.3 Licensing Stages

The following are the current arrangements, but these are subject to change through the draft Road Safety Bill of June 1986 (Section 5.2B.1 of this report).

Learner L Permit:

- * minimum age - 17 years for car
- * minimum period - three months before test
- * subject to passing knowledge test
- * validity - two years
- * L plates must be displayed
- * supervision - with a driver licensed for at least three years
- * zero blood alcohol content
- * open road speed limit 80 km/h
- * no towing

Probationary P Licence:

- * minimum age - 18 years
- * validity - three years
- * subject to passing practical test, and a knowledge test with more emphasis on roadcraft
- * P plates must be displayed for first year
- * zero blood alcohol content
- * open road speed limit 80 km/h for first year
- * any violation in motion within the three-year period leads to cancellation for three months; the practical test must be re-done and the three-year probationary period recommences.

5.2A VICTORIA EXISTING SITUATION

5.2A.4 Enforcement

The Victorian view is that the objective of enforcement is to deter offenders rather than to apprehend and punish. They believe that probationary drivers perceive that they have a higher risk of detection.

5.2A.5 Driver Education and Training

Pre-driver education is conducted in some schools. About one-third of post-primary schools have a teacher trained in traffic safety education, but only a few have access to a car for driver training. Victorian researchers have some doubts as to the benefits of driver education undertaken before the licensing process.

The idea that drivers should learn from their parents is thought by officials to represent middle class values. The argument is that market research has shown that parents have little control over their children, making it unlikely that they could exercise much control over driver training.

5.2A.6 Young Driver Crash Statistics

The following are fatal crash statistics per 100,000 population for young drivers for 1981-1983, with national figures given for comparison:

Table 5.2.1

**Driver and Rider Fatalities
Per 100,000 Population (of Given Age)**

1981-83

Age	Victoria			Australia		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
15	-	-	-	1.6	3.3	2.8
16	3.0	1.5	6.0	8.5	7.8	7.3
17	4.4	7.7	1.5	24.1	19.5	23.1
18	39.9	33.0	21.0	38.7	42.6	31.7
19	36.6	26.5	35.3	41.3	42.2	39.9
20	38.0	29.0	36.3	40.0	38.6	33.3
15-20	121	97	100	154	154	138

Source: FORS Fatal File

5.2B VICTORIAN GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

5.2B.1 Reactions of Officials to the FORS Model for Graduated Licencing

Victorian officials consider that more research work is needed on young drivers. The Victorian discussion paper (Section 5.2B.2) represents progress in this direction, but the matter is still under investigation by the State Government.

The greatest concern is about reducing driving age below the present 18 years for a probationary licence (solo driving).

Concept and Rationale

The concept of graduated licensing, but not the detail, was endorsed by Ministers at the July 1984 meeting of Australian Transport Advisory Council (ATAC). The October 1984 report of the Victorian Parliament's Social Development Committee also recommended the introduction of a graduated licensing scheme with the details dependent on research. The Committee report said that the scheme would have a lower priority if it allowed any solo driving below the age of 18 years.

Victorian officials appear to accept the concept of graduated licensing (acquiring structured experience), but they consider that it may be difficult to translate into practice and make it acceptable to the community.

The FORS proposal is seen by Victorian road safety researchers as having been developed from "first principles", whereas the Victorian RTA approach (Section 5.2B.2) has been to undertake a major study of young driver crashes which they believe will provide an empirical basis for decision-making.

It was estimated that by allowing solo driving at age 17 years there would be 46,000 extra drivers 20 years of age and under, of whom 30,000 would be 17 year olds.

The decision on whether to reduce the solo driving age by one year to 17 years, is seen as a trade-off between the mobility gains of 30,000 Victorian 17 year olds and an additional 240-580 crashes (including 16-38 fatalities).

The following main conclusions were drawn from this study:

- the only options with a clear safety benefit are those with a minimum learner starting age of 17 years and a minimum solo driving age of 18 years.
- "even with quite severe restrictions on the driving of those below the existing licensing age there is a nett increase in accidents".
- "It has been demonstrated that the additional accidents generated by allowing solo driving at ages earlier than 18 years cannot be compensated for through the imposition of reasonably severe counter measures, even if these measures extend into the current probationary licence".

5.2B VICTORIAN GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

- "The only method of guaranteeing a safety benefit is for a graduated licensing system to be based around solo driving commenced at the current probationary licensing age of 18 years".

They lack much relevant data and believe that decisions should be taken on the grounds of logic and consistency of policy. For example, it will be necessary to avoid a situation where the outcome is to make motorcycles more attractive.

Licensing Stages

The FORS model is seen by officers and researchers as being unduly complex in terms of testing needs and enforcement requirements.

Three of the options examined involve the five stage process (four learner licence stages of six months each and a one year post-licence stage with zero BAC the only restriction) proposed by FORS, while a further three options are simplified into three stages of one year each. There seems to be a strong desire to reduce the complexity of the FORS proposals by reducing the number of stages, but a willingness to increase the length of each stage to retain a long probationary period.

The restrictions in the three stage options examined are zero BAC, speed and curfews rather than occupancy and vehicle power. The Victorian research showed that those restrictions could produce the greatest effect and would be the easiest to implement.

Age and Experience Factors

The 18 year age solo minimum in Victoria is seen as limiting the scope for a graduated licence system. If the age were lowered, more young drivers would be exposed to risks. Any potential for lower accident rates of 18 and 19 year olds is seen as unlikely to compensate for crashes caused by the greater exposure of the under 18 year old group. The only options assessed as achieving a net benefit are those which retain a licence age of 18 years.

Data studied by the RTA Road Safety Division suggests that experience does not significantly affect crash rates above 21 years of age.

Accompanying Driver

The Victorian view is that supervised driving up to the age of 18 years, or for at least three months, is adequate, particularly as it relates to an older probationary licensing age.

Curfew and Passengers

The Victorian research indicates that young driver crashes linked to the carrying of passengers are a late night phenomenon. A 10 pm to 5 am curfew in itself would be a sufficient measure without introducing a passenger-carrying limitation.

5.2B VICTORIAN GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

Driver Education and Training

There is uncertainty about the relative values of training and experience. It is not known which specific manipulative skills contribute to crashes in Victoria. The reduction of risk factors rates the highest priority.

5.2B.2 Victorian Proposals

There are no proposals to implement a FORS form of graduated licensing scheme.

On 11 June 1986, the Victorian Government announced (1986b) a number of wide-ranging reforms introduced in the draft Road Safety Bill (1986a). These reforms include the licensing of drivers and the conditions of driver licences and learner permits. Some aspects of graduated licensing are involved:

- * Probationary licence duration will reduce from three to two years, but P plates are to be displayed for the full two years (one year currently).

- * The zero BAC requirement will apply to the whole probationary period (first year only at present).

- * Mandatory licence cancellation for probationary drivers convicted of safety-related offences will be reduced to one month (now three months), but the probationary period and associated conditions will be extended for six months; and the range of safety-related offences resulting in suspension will be extended.

- * The present 80 km/h speed limit for learner and first year probationary drivers will be abolished.

A 10 pm to 5 am night driving curfew was recommended by the Road Traffic Authority (RTA) for learner and first year drivers under the age of 25 years (at time of obtaining probationary licence). The Authority also recommended exemptions for employment or educational reasons. The Government remains concerned about the effects on mobility of young people, and difficulties in administration and enforcement. Therefore it has not adopted this component of the graduated licensing package, but has referred the issues to Parliament's Social Development Committee for consideration after the Bill is passed.

Minimum ages for a learner permit and a probationary licence will remain at 17 years and 18 years respectively.

Apart from the existing learner driver supervision requirement there will be no additional supervision in the probationary period. There will be no limitations on carrying passengers in the learner or probationary periods.

Increased penalties will be introduced for unlicensed driving and for driving while disqualified.

5.2B VICTORIAN GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

"Drivers Licensing Age and Accident Involvement Rates of Young Drivers"

The above report by Drummond of RTA (1985) examines age-specific crash rates for each Australian State in terms of fatal accidents and of injury crashes and, where possible provides these as rates per 10,000 licence holders or per 10,000 population.

One of the main purposes was to investigate the relationship between the minimum driver licensing age and the casualty rates of young drivers. This was done to see what the effects would be, in crash involvement terms, of reducing driver licensing age.

The most significant aspect of the approach was to make comparisons on the basis of **cumulated** crash involvement rates from first licensing age to 20 years. This approach overcomes the difficulty in comparing involvement rates for the first year's experience in different States with different starting ages. The approach is also justified by the fact that accident risk drops to a minimum at around age 25 years, and the effect of experience also disappears in the 21-25 year group as demonstrated by probationary licence holders in this group having the same risk of accident involvement as their peers with a standard licence. The question remains as to whether Victorian crash involvement rates would be lower if solo driving age were reduced, to separate it from the legal drinking age.

The crash rate per 10,000 population basis was used to account for the crash involvement rate of licence holders and the licensing rate.

It is noted that these results are "standardised" to the age 26-59 rates for Victoria, i.e. an attempt to eliminate the differences between States in long run (mature driver) crash rates.

Tables 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 extracted from the report provide the cumulative fatality and injury accident involvement rates per 10,000 population and per 10,000 licence holders.

Table 5.2.2

**Cumulative Fatal Accident Involvement Rates
(per 10⁴ Population or 10⁴ Licences Held)(1)
From Minimum Licensing Age to Age 20 by State**

Cumulative Fatal Accident Involvement Rate				
State	Per 10 ⁴ Population	Relative Rate (2)	Per 10 ⁴ Licences Held	Relative Rate (2)
VSW	21.10	1.36	30.85	1.22
SA	28.82	1.85	51.66	2.03
WA	19.19	1.23	30.34	1.19
QLD	21.34	1.37	-	-
TAS	24.06	1.55	43.32	1.71
VIC	15.54	1.00	25.39	1.00

Source: Road Traffic Authority

5.2B VICTORIAN GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

The report stated that:

- the higher Victorian driver licensing age results in a nett road safety benefit "even though the accident involvement rate of 18 and 19 year old drivers in Victoria is generally higher than that of first and second year drivers in other States";
- "an absolute reduction in the Victorian driver licensing age to 16 years would result in an (estimated) additional 80-100 fatal and 1275-1325 injury accidents annually; similarly a reduction to 17 years would result in an additional 30-50 fatal and 650-700 injury accidents annually".

Table 6.2.3

**Cumulative Injury Accident Involvement Rates
(per 10⁴ Population or 10⁴ Licences Held)(1)
From Minimum Licensing Age to Age 20 by State**

Cumulative Injury Accident Involvement Rate

State	Per 10 ⁴ Population	Relative Rate (2)	Per 10 ⁴ Licences Held	Relative Rate (2)
NSW	523.15	1.14	762.53	1.00
SA	656.50	1.42	1186.7	1.56
WA	610.27	1.32	999.09	1.32
QLD	637.33	1.38	-	-
TAS	768.40	1.67	1478.69	1.95
VIC	461.22	1.00	759.01	1.00

Source: Road Traffic Authority

Notes:

1. Crash involvement rates elsewhere in this report are on a per 100,000 basis
2. Relative to Victoria

"Options for a Victorian Graduated Licensing system. A Discussion Paper"

This paper by Drummond of RTA (1986) examines six options for graduated licensing in terms of increases or decreases in the number of crashes estimated to occur through the introduction of different sets of countermeasures. Zero BAC would prevail in all stages of each option.

Three of the options are the five stage/three year FORS model (minimum learner starting age 16 years) and variations with starting ages of 16.5 and 17 years. In each of these options there are four learner permit stages of six months each followed by a one year post-licence stage with zero BAC the only restriction. The four learner permit stages progress from licenced adult supervision at all times and day time driving only through to night driving allowed but no passengers.

5.2B VICTORIAN GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

The other three options cover three stage/three year models with zero BAC licenced adult supervision at all times in the first year, and solo driving plus a range of curfew times in the second and third years. These options covered minimum learner starting ages of 16, 16.5 and 17 respectively.

The report concluded that the only options to give a clear safety benefit are those which retain the existing licensing age and impose further restrictions on novice drivers.

5.2B.3 Conclusions

Victoria has the highest minimum solo driving age of any State (18 years). There appears to be a strong political commitment not to reduce the solo driving age. The Road Traffic Authority has undertaken research which indicates that a lowering of the age would lead to a higher crash involvement rate (cumulated from starting age to age 20 years). It also indicates that if the FORS model (or a variant) were adopted with reduction of the solo driving age, there would be a higher crash involvement rate.

5.3A QUEENSLAND EXISTING SITUATION

5.3A QUEENSLAND

Information is based on discussions with representatives of the Department of Transport (Traffic, and Policy and Planning), and the Road Safety Council.

5.3A.1 Licencing Responsibilities

Licencing:	Licencing Branch) Department of Transport
Road safety:	Traffic Authority Policy and Research Branch	
Enforcement:	Police Department	

The Police are responsible for licence documentation in more remote areas, but the licensing function is being transferred progressively to the Department of Transport.

There is a Traffic Advisory Committee which would be the means of obtaining Police views on any proposed changes to the licensing system.

5.3A.2 Licence Tests

For a learner's permit, applicants must score 10 out of 10 in a multiple choice test, mainly on traffic regulations and on some aspects of roadcraft. All test questions are disclosed in the driver handbook. There are also health and eyesight tests. Current thinking is to place more emphasis on roadcraft elements in the test.

For a motor vehicle, 25 out of 30 questions must be answered correctly. In the driving test 36 per cent fail. Two of the reasons for failure are: the person who has been disqualified and presents again but is over-confident; and the driving school client who insists on being tested even though the school says he is not ready. The officials' opinion on the licence test is that the examiner can only judge the applicant's performance at the time of the test.

Sixty per cent of first licence applicants submit through a driving school. Driving schools are licensed and there is a formal test for instructors. There has been some lobbying for compulsory use of a driving school as part of driver training but this is unlikely to gain political acceptance.

5.3A.2 Licencing Stages

Learner L Permit:

- * minimum age - 17 years
- * minimum period - 6 weeks
- * validity - 12 months
- * L plates must be displayed
- * supervision - must be accompanied by a private instructor who has held a driver's licence of same class for at least 12 months; or 3 years experience in case of a professional instructor
- * alcohol - zero BAC until 18 years
- * speed limit - no special restrictions

5.3A QUEENSLAND EXISTING SITUATION

Probationary P Licence:

- * minimum age - 17 years 6 weeks
- * minimum period - 12 months
- * P plates - no
- * alcohol - zero BAC until 18 years
- * speed limit - no special restrictions

There are 30,000 new provisional licences issued each year.

Licence renewal is at five year intervals until age 67 years after which renewal is every 12 months.

5.3A.4 Enforcement

There is a demerit scheme.

Photographic licences are in the process of being introduced.

5.3A.5 Driver Education and Training

It is believed by officials that attitudes and roadcraft can be taught from an early age, starting at kindergarten and following right through schooling. Road safety is integrated into the curriculum. The aim is to develop a correct perspective about the place of the motor vehicle in society, and to impart as much knowledge as possible to provide a background to support young people when they become drivers.

In secondary school years 11-12 (age range 16-17 years) there is a high school driver education program, an elective subject. This is aimed at developing skills, knowledge of mechanical aspects, process for obtaining licences, benefits of insurance and dangers of alcohol.

5.3A.6 Young Driver Crash Statistics

The following are fatal crash statistics per 100,000 population for young drivers for 1981-1983, with national figures given for comparison:

Table 5.3

Driver and Rider Fatalities Per 100,000 Population (of Given Age)

1981-1983

Age	Queensland			Australia		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
15	7.9	2.6	0	1.6	3.3	2.8
16	10.4	10.6	5.2	8.5	7.8	7.3
17	42.6	20.9	39.7	24.1	19.5	23.1
18	51.9	75.2	33.9	38.7	42.6	31.7
19	33.7	48.9	52.6	41.3	42.2	39.9
20	54.	33.7	41.6	40.	38.6	33.3
15-20	200.	192	173	154	154	138

Source: FORS Fatal File

5.3B QUEENSLAND GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

There are no proposals to implement an FORS form of graduated licensing scheme.

5.3B.1 Concept and Rationale

The FORS GDLS concept is thought by officials to be reasonable, with some reservations as described below.

Queensland is making some progress in the general direction envisaged by the FORS proposals. For example, for heavy vehicles, there is a 12 month experience requirement to advance from car to truck, and 12 months from truck to semi-trailer. These restrictions apply to vehicles driven for reward but not for in-house use. The measures were developed in response to crashes in 1982 particularly, and relate to heavy vehicles.

The car driver licence system is also considered to be a form of graduated system in that the driver progresses through learner permit, provisional and, finally, full licence stages.

It would be seen as preferable for one State to implement first and for other States to observe and copy. It is considered undesirable for FORS to prescribe the system and co-ordinate implementation centrally.

5.3B.2 Age and Experience Factors

One concern is that reduced driver age would tend to increase the driver population. However, they believe that work by FORS and in USA suggests that there are benefits in an earlier starting age. There may be more parental influence on the learner driver, and the learner driver age is separated from the start of drinking alcohol, hopefully. Politically there would be strong reservations about allowing more younger people to drive. In any event, officials feel that if there is a benefit to be gained from graduated licensing there is no need to trade off restrictions with a lower licence age. Perhaps the FORS concept could be implemented within the existing driver age structure as is proposed by Victoria.

Queensland officials interpret Victorian research to suggest that crash rates are not related to experience, but reflect maturity of drivers. Lower licence ages and restrictions might not affect driver performance.

Also, there is no way to ensure that participants in a graduated licence scheme would actually be exposed to driving experience under the conditions envisaged. Perhaps they would drive very little and thus gain little from the scheme.

The approach should be to delay exposure to risk situations until maturity is acquired. This approach may lead to a case for restriction of night time driving, without depending on FORS concept.

5.3B.3 Curfew and Passengers

There is a range of possibilities. For Brisbane, officials would examine implications of arranging curfew times to fit in with Queensland Institute of Technology and University night class finishing times (an 11 pm curfew could be feasible). Some workers such as carpenters, labourers, factory

5.3B QUEENSLAND GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

workers, may have to be on the road very early in the morning, necessitating an early finish to curfew hours.

Queensland is highly decentralised. Sometimes a trip can last more than one day. Officials consider the policy would need to allow for that.

A curfew might be feasible at late hours and early morning. However, there would be a need to consider social aspects, including age group mixing. One result of curfew may be to defer obtaining a licence. At present it is thought that about 80 percent obtain licence by age 20. (See Chapter 7). The peer group restriction appears to have merit, but there is need for evidence to support the suggested peer group factor in creating risk situations.

The licensing authority has to be careful to avoid forcing people outside the system. If there are too many restrictions or if it becomes too hard to get a licence, certain types may not get a licence but may still drive. These types may be more likely to be involved in crashes.

Officials consider that the parents' role in sex education is not good, so they cannot be expected to influence driving, curfews and passenger restrictions. They appear to have little success in teaching children how to cross the road.

5.3B.4 Enforcement

Enforcement would be minimised by a self-regulation approach. Action would be taken for breach of graduated licence conditions only when people are apprehended for some other offence. The role of insurance companies is significant in encouraging adherence to licence conditions.

Officials consider that graduated licensing potentially could impose excessive administrative workloads and this is a matter for concern.

Police would be consulted through the Traffic Advisory Committee. Generally they would accept that policy formulation is a matter for the Transport Department.

Some practical problems could arise in relation to curfews, and status of accompanying drivers. There may be scope for some self regulation, for example insurance premiums may be affected if a driver is apprehended for another reason and found to be in breach of graduated licence restrictions. The potential impact of curfews on students and night workers should be considered, with some process to arrange and police any exemptions.

There are seen to be technical or conceptual problems with zero blood alcohol. Some cough mixtures will produce 0.01/0.02 content. Also, measuring devices have problems reading levels below around 0.02, so there is a preference for setting the level at 0.02.

5.3B.5 Driver Education and Training

The development of a responsible attitude towards driving is considered to be the most important factor affecting driver behaviour, and to be the basis of education and training.

5.3B QUEENSLAND GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

It is not possible to isolate attitude from the physical context in which it is applied. Practical skill is necessary as a basis for application of correct attitudes.

There are many elements of the practical driving test which provide indications about driver attitude. For example, the test is not purely manipulative in nature. Attitudes are expressed and observed through actions, so a practical test is an appropriate means of testing for correct attitude. However, officials note that actions may vary from stated attitudes.

They consider it would be worthwhile to encourage parents to do a defensive driving course before teaching their child to drive. If there is to be an emphasis on parental guidance, this would need to be supported by production of national publications.

5.3B.6 Testing

Possibly greater emphasis on roadcraft in written tests was discussed. New Zealand and Victorian ideas are noted. Politically it may be difficult to introduce changes but the Department would be happy to review test procedures if it can be shown that this would be beneficial and practicable.

Because Victoria is known to be researching this issue, Queensland is waiting to see the results.

More complex written tests may discriminate against illiterate people or those with learning difficulties. However it is suspected by officials that these people may be subject to increased crash risks.

5.3B.7 Licensing Administration

A number of changes are under consideration by officers, but no major changes are proposed for government decision at present.

The demerit scheme could be changed to make it more like the Victorian scheme - ie, more automatic demerits for specified offences.

An on-line computer and database system for recording licence details and offences is being introduced.

If benefits can be obtained from graduated licensing, the Queensland approach would be to try to absorb any extra workload. There are approximately 30,000 new provisional licences yearly.

The transfer to the Department of Transport of police responsibilities for licence documentation (in more remote areas) will relieve police of non-policing workload. The Queensland approach to graduated licensing would be designed to simplify the licensing system, not to add more administrative requirements.

The possibility of reducing workloads by introduction of life licences is not considered to be politically acceptable. It is considered desirable that licence holders be required to restate their medical situation periodically, and to present themselves in person so that the renewal

5.3B QUEENSLAND GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

officer can see their condition. Declining physical condition is sometimes noticed and confirming medical certificate is sought before renewal is allowed.

Licence renewal procedures may be simplified with the introduction of photographic licences.

5.3B.8 Research Requirements

The following are seen as particular research needs:

- numbers of drivers by age groups;
- exposure rates compared with accident rates;
- young inexperienced driver exposure compared with other drivers.

Another research need is to define whether the late night drivers are workers or party goers.

It is considered by officials that FORS could look at an extension of the work done by Victoria:

- compare crash rates in States by licence age, and determine best licence age;
- State by State comparisons aimed at isolating influence of age and experience as factors affecting crashes;
- evidence to support peer group restrictions;
- Victorian studies relating to night time driving and crashes;
- country compared with city;
- separate justification of each of the proposed restrictions.

There is a need for a good research paper which provides in-depth arguments which would sharpen the desire of bureaucrats to promote the proposals. Proposals which take a hard line are difficult for governments to adopt. Random breath testing in Queensland is an example.

5.3B.9 Pilot Project

Queensland officials see a need for a pilot project which would produce credible and consistent evidence. Such a project should identify the method for introducing a scheme. It should produce valid high quality data and others should avoid following until a proven procedure is available. There have been examples where methodology was poor and results were not clear. The study should be independently assessed, and should cover advantages and disadvantages. There should be clear results, and the study should be conducted over a year or 18 months.

5.3B QUEENSLAND GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

5.3B.1 Conclusions

The minimum learner age in Queensland is 17 years, and the minimum solo driving age (probationary licence) is 17 years six weeks. This is comparable with the average situation in other States and Territories.

Queensland officials consider the graduated licensing concept to be reasonable, but would like more evidence of the potential benefits. They would like to see the outcome of a pilot scheme in one State first as a basis for implementation in other States.

There are strong political reservations about allowing more younger people to drive. It is possible that the FORS concept could be implemented within the existing age structure as in Victoria. The approach is appreciated of delaying exposure to risk situations until maturity is acquired.

They desire enforcement measures to be minimised by a self-regulation approach whereby a breach of graduated licensing conditions would only be enforced when another offence occurred. There is a concern that too many restrictions or difficulties in obtaining a licence would force people outside the system, particularly those with a greater likelihood of being involved in a crash. There would be a concern if graduated licensing produced a greater workload.

Difficulties are seen in curfews and any suggestion of vehicle power limitation.

5.4A SOUTH AUSTRALIA EXISTING SITUATION

Information is based on discussions with representatives of: Division of Road Safety and Motor Vehicles Registry of Department of Transport Department; Traffic Division of Police Department; Royal Automobile Association; and Australian Hotels Association.

5.4A.1 Licensing and Road Safety Responsibilities

Licensing is the responsibility of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles within the Department of Transport.

The Division of Road Safety, Department of Transport undertakes research into road safety and has been investigating the introduction of a graduated driver licensing scheme (GDLS).

The Road Traffic Board is the co-ordinating body for traffic control matters and its membership includes the abovementioned agencies, Police Department, Highways Department and local government representatives.

There is also a Road Safety Advisory Committee comprising representatives of government and community agencies.

5.4A.2 Licence Tests

For the learner permit there is a written test of 40 questions, taking half an hour, and 49 per cent of candidates pass the test the first time.

For the probationary licence, there is a 20 minute practical test which 57 per cent of candidates pass the first time.

5.4A.3 Licensing Stages

Learner L Permit:

- * minimum age - 16 years
- * minimum period - nominal, could be as short as one day
- * validity as shown on permit
- * conditions as on permit which are set by the Registrar and can be amended as required

Probationary P Licence:

- * minimum age - 16 years
- * duration - 12 months minimum
- * must display specified plates
- * speed limit - 80 km/h
- * not to attempt to put a vehicle in motion with BAC exceeding 0.05

There are currently 28,000 probationary licences per year, about 3500 disqualifications per year, and 116 appeals per month of which 110 are upheld on the grounds of hardship. Disqualification is through the courts or by infringement advice under the Act. Only one right of appeal in 12 months is permitted.

5.4A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EXISTING SITUATION

Five year licences are about to be introduced, with the first year being the probationary year for new drivers. This will cut the workload for transactions by the Registry, and will provide an incentive to conform; disqualification under probation could mean a loss of up to 4-5 years licence fee.

5.4A.4 Enforcement

Those who choose not to display L and P plates can (and do) avoid all restrictions and conditions unless they draw attention to themselves by their driving behaviour. Photographic licences are regarded by the Police as essential for effective enforcement, as well as the requirement to produce the licence on demand. Learner or probationary drivers can now borrow other people's licences, and it is difficult for the Police to tell or to do anything about it.

5.4A.5 Young Driver Crash Records

The following are fatal crash statistics per 100,000 population for young drivers for 1981-1983, with national figures given for comparison:

Table 5.4

Driver and Rider Fatalities Per 100,000 Population (of Given Age)

1981-83

Age	South Australia			Australia		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
15	0	4.6	0	1.6	3.3	2.8
16	27.0	22.5	18.5	8.5	7.8	7.3
17	31.0	22.1	36.0	24.1	19.5	23.1
18	30.5	26.1	35.4	38.7	42.6	31.7
19	34.2	30.2	34.8	41.3	42.2	39.9
20	9.0	34.8	38.8	40.0	38.6	33.3
15-20	132.7	140.3	163.5	154.2	154.0	138.1

Source: FORS Fatal File

5.4B SOUTH AUSTRALIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

There are no proposals to implement a FORS form of graduated licensing scheme.

Probationary licensing was introduced in SA in 1980, and a report on the operation of the scheme was prepared in 1982 (SA Department of Transport, 1982).

Following the 1984 endorsement of graduated licensing at ATAC, South Australia established a working group which reported in February 1985 (SA Department of Transport, 1985). The proposals in the report followed the FORS scheme with some variations and additions.

A public announcement was made, and 20-30 adverse letters were received in the following months. The proposals were then sent back to the SA Department of Transport for further study and review.

The Division of Road Safety (DRS) of the SA Department of Transport is now examining graduated drivers licensing in conjunction with pre-licence training for motorcyclists.

The South Australian Minister of Transport is seeking assurance that the scheme can be shown to be effective, that it will be acceptable to the public, and can feasibly be administered and enforced.

5.4B.1 Concept and rationale

The **concept** as seen by the SA Division of Road Safety has the following key principles:

- encouragement to delay licensing from 16 years to later ages because accident rates decrease (curfews may also effect a delay in licensure because obtaining a licence would be less attractive);
- restriction of mobility in high risk situations.

They see the need to change attitudes and behaviour through a higher level of supervision (but changing behaviour is difficult) as a secondary reason for graduated licensing.

The gaining of more, supervised experience is not seen by SA researchers as the reason for GDLS. Nor are distinctions between the learning of roadcraft and carcraft. The attitudes of SA researchers are strongly conditioned by the low minimum ages for a learner permit and a probationary licence.

They consider that the licensing process should be directed at young drivers rather than at learners of all ages. The rationale is the substantially increased crash risk for the youngest drivers compared with mature drivers; 16-19 year olds have four times greater crash risk and 16 year olds have fifteen times greater crash risk.

The DRS is strongly influenced by an American paper by Williams and Lund (1985) which investigated licensing rates against factors such as learner age, first licence age and curfews.

5.4B SOUTH AUSTRALIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

The DRS considers that raising the starting age to 17 years is unlikely to be politically acceptable in SA. Starting to learn at a younger age, albeit with supervision is not considered acceptable. SA is totally opposed to lowering the driving age and they believe that lower driving age would be unacceptable in all States. The idea of reducing the starting age to 15 or 15.5 years as a "bargaining point" for the introduction of a graduated licensing scheme is totally unacceptable.

One advantage of GDLS seen by DRS is that some experience is gained in low risk situations.

The DRS considers that more policy research and analysis is necessary before a graduated licensing scheme could be implemented.

Graduated licensing must be effective and acceptable. The South Australian viewpoint is: "is it worthwhile; what are the problems; how would it be implemented". They do not think that the broad policy has been determined. The FORS papers talk about the mechanisms of - "through **experience** in low risk situations. South Australia thinks in terms of restrictions in exposure through encouragement of later licensing through an **age-related** entry point. The SA Minister wants the evidence before anything can be implemented.

5.4B.2 Curfews

The DRS considers that longer curfews tend to be more effective. A dusk to dawn curfew would be best, but is unlikely to be feasible. It is hoped that curfews will produce a delaying effect in seeking a licence. However, restrictions on car driving should not force young people to motorcycles.

The DRS opinion is that curfews should not lead to a rush to get home in time, to beat the curfew or rush drinking at pub closing time, nor lead to breaking of the law.

5.4B.3 Enforcement

The Police consider that photographic licences would be essential for enforcement of graduated licensing - together with a requirement to produce the licence. Novice drivers can now borrow other people's licences, and it is difficult for the Police to know or to do anything about it.

Officials consider that legislation is needed for higher penalties for driving contrary to the conditions on a learner's permit or a probationary licence. They believe that people are prepared to gamble on being caught, with limited Police resources to police the situation.

5.4B.4 Licence Administration

The Motor Registry considers that there is no need to extend the probationary period from one to two years; they feel that the probationary conditions can generally be made effective.

They are about to introduce five-year licences with the first year being the probationary year for new drivers. This will reduce the transactions workload for the Registry and should provide a form of incentive to drive

within the law as disqualification or suspension could be costly if a large part of the licence period were remaining.

5.5A WESTERN AUSTRALIA EXISTING SITUATION

Information is based on discussions with the Commissioner's Office, Licensing and Services Section, and Traffic and Research Section of the Police Department, National Safety Council of Western Australia, and the Royal Automobile Club of Western Australia.

5.5A.1 Licensing and Road Safety Responsibilities

The Licensing and Services Section of the Western Australian Police Department is responsible for the administration of drivers' licensing.

The Traffic Research and Statistics Section of the Police Department has been involved in the investigation of graduated licensing and in the development of proposals on behalf of the Road Traffic Board.

The Road Traffic Board functions include:

- * research into the causes and prevention of road crashes;
- * investigations and reporting to the Police Minister upon proposals for alterations to traffic laws;
- * investigation of any matters relating to road safety.
- * administration of suspensions and any exemptions in regard to aspects of licensing.

The membership of the Board represents Government and community organisations involved in road traffic and road safety.

Licensing and traffic enforcement are the responsibility of the Police Department under the Minister for Police. The Commissioner for Police is the chairman of the Traffic Board. This is different to the situation in other States where licensing and related road safety considerations are under the Transport Department. In Western Australia, the Minister for Transport is the State's representative on the Australian Transport Advisory Council.

The National Safety Council of Western Australia covers road, home and water safety, and is State Government funded. The Council's Road Safety Executive membership includes Police, Main Roads, Education, Transport and Public Health Departments.

5.5A.2 Licence Tests

There is a theoretical test before issue of the learners permit; 26 of 30 questions must be answered correctly; and 40 per cent of those submitting for the test fail the first time.

The practical test must be taken and passed before issue of the probationary licence. A licence costs \$32 which covers the theory test and two attempts at the practical test. An additional test costs \$14.

5.5A WESTERN AUSTRALIA EXISTING SITUATION

5.5A.3 Licensing Stages

L Permit:

- * minimum age - 16 years under the Youth Driver Education Scheme
 - 16 years 9 months when accompanied by a professional instructor
 - 17 years otherwise
- * validity period - 12 months
- * supervision - learner must be accompanied by a professional instructor or a person who has held that type of licence for at least four years.

P Plate Probationary Licence:

- * minimum age 17 years
- * minimum 12 months
- * must display P plates
- * subject to suspension for a comprehensive list of offences
- * for offences leading to suspension, must start again from the beginning (ie tests and L plates)
- * restricted to 80 km/h maximum
- * maximum allowable blood alcohol content reading 0.02.

The Western Australian officials believe that they have elements of graduated licensing already with motorcycles and with truck driving licences.

After 12 months with a Class L motorcycle licence (up to 250 cc), the rider may graduate to Class K (greater than 250 cc). Moped licences are issued at age 16 years and this is seen as a measure which aids mobility for those in need.

There are age barriers in truck licences:

- * Class B (rigid) > 18 years
- * Class C (articulated) > 20 years
- * May progress directly from Class A (car driving) to Class C at age 21

5.5A.4 Enforcement

Enforcement is not seen as being as difficult as it appears in some other States. If the police think a driver has committed an offence they can ask the driver to pull over and request to know the driver's age. If a false name or age is given, this can often be detected in the follow up process by checking with the registered owner of the vehicle. The process is facilitated by drivers' licence and vehicle registration records being computerised in one department under the police.

5.5A WESTERN AUSTRALIA EXISTING SITUATION

5.5A.5 Convictions and Suspensions

For certain offences there are prescribed penalties, for some there is mandatory suspension, including exceeding 0.02 BAC, refusing breath test, driving under suspension and other offences relating to a probationary licence. Because of the need for a motor vehicle for employment, the courts are reluctant to suspend.

The special licence (or extraordinary licence) facility is open for a suspended driver to apply after a set period of time, in the manner of a parole system. In some cases the magistrate does not place conditions on an extraordinary licence. (This is considered by officials to be an important factor in covering exemptions in rural areas which will be relevant in a graduated licensing scheme).

The Road Traffic Board has power to issue licences to those under suspension when hardship is involved.

5.5A.6 Driver Education and Training

The Road Safety Division of the National Safety Council of Western Australia co-ordinates a road safety and driver education program in schools from pre-school through to senior high school level. Their concept is to maximise opportunities for covering traffic safety issues with formal school subjects. The instructional centre at Mt Lawley trains driving school instructors and high school driving instructors, and conducts defensive driving and driver improvement courses.

5.5A.7 Young Driver Crash Statistics

The following are fatal crash statistics per 100,000 population for young drivers for 1981-1983, with national figures given for comparison:

Table 5.5

**Driver and Rider Fatalities
Per 100,000 Population (of Given Age)**

1981-83

Age	Western Australia			Australia		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
15	0	0	4.3	1.6	3.3	2.8
16	4.5	0	0	8.5	7.8	7.3
17	17.9	0	13.4	24.1	19.5	23.1
18	35.5	35.5	13.4	38.7	42.6	31.7
19	30.3	34.6	31.0	41.3	42.2	39.9
20	36.0	35.4	21.6	40.0	38.6	33.3
15-20	124.2	105.5	83.7	154.2	154	138

Source: FORS Fatal File

5.5B WESTERN AUSTRALIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

There are no proposals to implement a FORS form of graduated licensing scheme.

Graduated licensing has been under discussion in Western Australia for a number of years. Some further guidance from ATAC, RUTAC and other federal groups is expected. A proposal has been under consideration by the Road Traffic Board. The term "graduated licensing" has been used in Western Australia to refer to a scheme proposed by the road freight industry involving "graduation" from ordinary sedans to rigid trucks to articulated trucks. This has caused some confusion in the political arena. An alternative of "extended probationary licence" has therefore been used in the Western Australian deliberations.

A paper on "Measures to counter the high traffic accident involvement of young adults" (Maisey, 1986) was presented to the Road Traffic Board in March 1986. A Committee is now considering the subject. It is understood that the main outcome may be a two year probationary licence period.

5.5B.1 Concept and Rationale

The concept of graduated drivers' licensing has been supported by ATAC and The Minister for Transport (rather than the Police Minister who has responsibility for licensing and road safety research) is the Western Australian representative on ATAC.

Some components of a conditional licence already exist and could be extended to young people. Officials appreciate that the effects of crashes by young drivers are not just on the young; other road users may be affected, so that the wider community should be interested in solving the problem.

Given the many implementation difficulties involved there is a temptation to sit back and wait to see what other states do.

No particular comments were made on the concept of the FORS proposals. However, the proposed "Extended Probationary Licence Scheme" contained in the abovementioned paper follows the FORS proposals in all respects apart from blood alcohol limits which are proposed as 0.02 rather than zero. In addition, two post-full licence stages are proposed in which BAC limits remain, 0.02 in the first year, and 0.05 in the succeeding two years.

The National Safety Council of WA (NSCWA) "believes that a graduated licence system for newly licenced drivers would be of benefit to such drivers by restricting their exposure to combinations of circumstances which appear to be particularly hazardous to young drivers. The graduated licence system would incorporate methods which would allow the gradual gaining of experience under some form of supervision or limitation."

The NSCWA view is that the scheme should not be too complex. If it is too complex, people will question what the scheme is going to achieve.

5.5B WESTERN AUSTRALIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

The NSCWA endorses the general concept from an educational viewpoint. Following any pilot study, they would support a measure providing it had been adequately tested against the existing situation before it were adopted. They consider that a pilot study should apply to a whole rather than a part of a State, otherwise it would be difficult to extrapolate from geographically limited conclusions. The NSCWA would like to see a strengthened safety content in the formal school curricula, particularly directed at 16 and 17 year olds as this is the last opportunity to influence them, given that a large proportion of problem youth leave school as soon as they can.

The Royal Automobile Club of WA supports the concept of graduated licensing and would like to see it introduced.

Other personal viewpoints expressed by officials: that a GDL scheme would provide parents with the authority of the law in dealing with their youngsters; and that lowering the starting age for driving would be a good idea if it separated the ages at which young people are permitted to drink and to drive a car.

5.5B.2 Licensing Stages

The licensing stages in the proposed "Extended Probationary Licence Scheme follow those in the FORS proposal exactly.

Graduated licensing could have considerable impacts on the Licensing and Services Section of WA Police, particularly in administrative procedures and in recording systems. They are aiming for simplification of classifications. If the criteria were to change, changes to the Regulations would be required.

Remoteness is a big problem in Western Australia, and any new legislation will need to be applicable to city and country licensing. In some places it is more than 80 km between towns, and many people in these places are not licensed, a factor to be taken into account in graduated licensing.

Some of the biggest problems foreseen with graduated licensing are the allowance of exemptions, the number of conditional licences, and maintaining an effective vetting system for these cases.

5.5B.3 Age and Experience Factors

WA road safety researchers consider that in the graduated licensing rationale, both age and experience factors are important.

5.5B.4 Accompanying Driver

The following represents the NSCWA views:

* Adult supervision is the basis of most concepts of graduated licensing. What is expected from the supervision is that responsibility is learned from the adult, rather than from formal instruction. Wise counsel is expected from the adult although it is realised that this may be lacking where it is most needed.

5.5B WESTERN AUSTRALIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

* These factors are already acknowledged in that a learner's permit can be obtained three months earlier (at 16 yrs 9 mo) if accompanied by a professional instructor, and under NSCWA instruction a person may become a learner at 16 years. However, the latter is of little effective value unless a driver's licence (with supervised conditions) can be obtained before 17 years of age.

* The NSCWA is exploring a scheme which would require young drivers to undergo some form of practical instruction as well as theory, to give some evidence of that fact before they are tested for a licence. Those who qualified would merit an earlier provisional licence - subject to being accompanied by an adult. It is thought that this would provide an incentive for undergoing the formal instruction, and that the instruction itself would pave the way for some form of supervision within a graduated licensing scheme.

* The NSCWA believe that there must be an earnest effort at giving formal instruction prior to licencing - from schools, the driving school industry and from others. They are not satisfied that parents and peers can give this effectively.

* To hold a licence and to supervise young drivers in itself requires a sense of responsibility from the adults, and their involvement could have a spin-off value for road safety generally.

* The need to have a four year licenced supervisor would be a constraint in work situations and in farming communities. Any exemptions would need to be well formulated, explicit, relate to local circumstances and be issued locally so that their validity could be substantiated locally.

5.5B.5 Curfew and Passengers

A young persons' curfew from 1 am to 4 am was put forward some time ago, but was rejected in spite of proposed exemption provisions.

5.5B.6 Impacts on Employment and Recreation

In Perth the public transport system is not seen to be as effective as in eastern capitals, and where it exists public transport can be very indirect. In many places there is no bus service, particularly in industrial districts. The private motor vehicle is often the only effective form of transport.

There is a general perception that the public may not be happy with the impacts of a curfew on employment and recreation. Restrictions at night are likely to be unpopular particularly in the country. Measures would need to be discriminating, exemptions would be needed and they should be enforceable.

5.5B WESTERN AUSTRALIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

5.5B.7 Enforcement

Enforcement is perceived by officials as a problem. There is a general belief that something which cannot be enforced should not be introduced. Effectiveness of enforcement is likely to weigh heavily with the Road Traffic Board. It is noted that about one third of those on suspension still drive.

It has been suggested that there is no sound rationale or deterrent value in existing penalties.

5.5B.8 National Uniformity

The National Safety Council of WA believe that a system should be able to be applied nationally. Widely different systems would be unwelcome particularly with the mobility between States.

5.6A TASMANIA EXISTING SITUATION

Information is based on discussions with representatives of the Road Safety and Transport Regulations Divisions of the Department of Transport.

5.6A.1 Licensing and Road Safety Responsibilities

Licensing: Transport Regulations Division) Department of
Road Safety: Road Safety Division) Transport
Enforcement: Police Department

Co-ordination and policy formulation on licensing is the responsibility of the Traffic Commission.

5.6A.2 Licence Tests

Those who complete a secondary school driving course will have passed a written test in road law (valid for 12 months) and, if of the correct age, can obtain a learner permit. Those who do not do the school course must do a written test (which is valid for 6 months) to obtain a learner permit. An oral theory test must be passed with the practical test to obtain the provisional licence.

5.6A.3 Licensing Stages

Learner L Permit:

- * minimum age - 16 years
- * validity - 3 months or to age 17 years, whichever is later
- * L plates must be displayed
- * supervision - person who has held a licence for over a year
- * alcohol - 0.02 BAC
- * speed limit - 80 km/h

Provisional P Licence:

- * minimum age - 16 years 11 months
- * minimum period - 12 months
- * P plates must be displayed
- * alcohol - 0.02 BAC
- * speed limit - 80 km/h

With a provisional licence, four demerit points leads to a 90 day disqualification. When a provisional licence has been held for 12 months continuously (excluding disqualifications) it converts to an unrestricted licence.

If the low BAC restriction is breached the provisional licence holder may be ordered by a court to attend a road safety indoctrination.

Officials recognise that there are some negative aspects with P plates such as the appearance of harassment of young people, and uncertainty about the benefits.

5.6A TASMANIA EXISTING SITUATION

5.6A.4 Enforcement

Requirements to carry and produce a licence are said by officials to be less stringent than in the other States. Breach of probationary restrictions is considered to be a more serious offence than a breach of traffic laws.

The low blood alcohol limit is enforced by police and officials believe there is little parental contribution to enforcement or supervision of this restriction.

5.6A.5 Driver Education and Training

Secondary school students (year 10, aged around 15.5 years) in the major centres receive instruction in theory of driving under guidance of Road Safety Officers. The school courses give instruction in roadcraft plus decision-making before driving experience. There is only a small component of practical driving and the course generally precedes driving permit age.

5.6A.6 Young Driver Crash Statistics

The following are fatal crash statistics per 100,000 population for young drivers for 1981-1983, with national figures given for comparison:

Table 5.6

Driver and Rider Fatalities
Per 100,000 Population (of Given Age)

1981-83

Age	Tasmania			Australia		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
15	0	13.4	0	1.6	3.3	2.8
16	0	40.9	0	8.5	7.8	7.3
17	25.4	13.1	13.6	24.1	19.5	23.1
18	102.4	13.0	0	38.7	42.6	31.7
19	103.1	25.6	76.2	41.3	42.2	39.9
20	27.7	51.6	38.4	40.0	38.6	33.3
15-20	258.6	157.6	128.2	154.2	154.0	138.1

Source : FORS Fatal File

5.6B TASMANIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

There are no proposals to implement a FORS form of graduated licensing scheme.

5.6B.1 Concept and Rationale

The Tasmanian Government is opposed to additional restrictions, and no changes in procedures are likely to be adopted unless these are perceived politically as a necessary or desirable response to a specific problem.

Graduated licensing is not an area where action is seen (by officials) to be needed at a political level. Officials are aware of developments in thinking about licensing at the theoretical level and this may lead to political interest in the longer term.

Officials believe that the uncertain benefits of graduated licensing are outweighed by the apparent problems of administration and enforcement, and implementation action is not planned. Measures which are in place are considered by officials to cover some of the principles of the graduated licensing concept.

While they have no conceptual objection to graduated licensing, there is some doubt about the theoretical basis for it, and research would be required to establish potential benefits before action would be taken. Nothing will be done unless a good case is made for benefits derived from perceived additional restrictions. Tasmania is not doing the research required to produce a justification, and would look to the larger States for guidance in this matter. Officials are aware of research, for example in Victoria that suggests high crash rates in early years of driving. However they are not aware of research results which show graduated licensing to be an effective response to the problem.

As a smaller State, Tasmania is very conscious of practices adopted in other States. If NSW, for example, rejects graduated licensing that would make it difficult to promote the idea in Tasmania.

If a case is made, the Traffic Commission would put a recommendation to the State Government.

5.6B.2 Licensing Stages

Tasmania now has:

- up to one year learner period (16-17 years) with a minimum of 3 months
- early training in roadcraft and decision making through secondary school driving education
- provisional licence period with zero BAC and 80 km/h speed limit (and no pillion passenger if motor cyclist)

This is considered by Tasmania to cover some elements of graduated licensing.

5.6B TASMANIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

5.6B.3 Age

It is suspected by officials that parents would not respond favourably to any proposal which entailed earlier learning or driving ages. Tasmanian community views could differ from other States on this issue.

5.6B.4 Increased Restrictions

The proposals are perceived by officials as imposing additional restrictions on young drivers. For example, at present 16 year old permit holders can carry passengers if they have a licensed driver supervising. Flow-on restrictions to 17 year olds who currently hold a provisional licence would be unlikely to be acceptable to the community unless a case is made that some specific risk is reduced by the additional restriction.

Consideration has been given to details of a GDLS for Tasmania but there is no enthusiasm on the part of officials. It appears that allowance would have to be made for individual or group differences arising from age, occupation, and locality. This has been done successfully in relation to motorcycle rider training and licensing.

5.6B.5 Testing

A second theory test (oral) to be passed at the same time as the practical test is under consideration by officials. It has been observed that the understanding of road law and other issues improves after some driving experience, and the second theory test would relate to that. Officials are considering a compulsory requirement for three or four hours tuition with a qualified commercial driving instructor, to be introduced in two or three years time.

5.6B.6 Enforcement

It is believed by officials that parents could not be relied upon to enforce curfew or passengers' restrictions. It would also be very difficult for Police to enforce these restrictions.

Officials suspect that major enforcement issues will arise when GDLS restrictions are considered in more detail.

5.6B.7 Driver education and training

Adverse impact on commercial driving schools is not anticipated by officials. Present thinking is for a minimum of three or four hours with a qualified (commercial) instructor before the driving test to reinforce specific skills and attitudes.

5.6B.8 Conclusions

The minimum age for a learner permit (16 years) is equal lowest with South Australia and Northern Territory, and for a probationary licence (16 years 11 months) equal to that in half the States and Territories.

5.6B TASMANIA GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

Officials have doubts about the theoretical basis for graduated licensing. Research results from elsewhere are needed to demonstrate the benefits, and a lead is sought from its adoption in one of the larger states.

At present the uncertain benefits are outweighed by the apparent problems of administration and enforcement, so no action is planned. But if the benefits are demonstrated, political interest could be raised in the longer term.

Graduated licensing is seen as introducing restrictions which do not presently exist. If they were to affect current provisional licence holders, the community would not accept the restrictions unless it could be shown that specific risks were reduced.

Consideration has been given to the details of graduated licensing for Tasmania but there is no enthusiasm. It is considered that allowance would have to be made for individual or group differences arising from age, occupation and locality.

They believe that parents would not enforce curfew or passenger restrictions, but it would also be difficult for police to enforce them.

5.7A NORTHERN TERRITORY EXISTING SITUATION

Information is based on discussions with representatives of Transport and Works Department (Legislation and Safety)

5.7A.1 Licence Tests

A theory test is required before a permit can be issued. The theory test covers road law, alcohol limits, speeds, and some safety issues such as when to dip headlights. The test pass is valid for 12 months.

5.7A.2 Licensing Stages

Learner L Permit:

- * minimum age - 16 or 17 years (see below)
- * minimum period - 14 days
- * validity - 3 months
- * L plates must be displayed
- * supervision - at present can learn with a probationary driver (being reviewed)
- * alcohol - 0.08 BAC
- * speed limit - 80 km/h

Probationary P Licence:

- * minimum age - 16 or 17 years (a 16 year old can be recommended for a licence, upon completion of driver education)
- * minimum period - 12 months
- * P plates must be displayed
- * alcohol - loss of licence for >0.08 BAC (zero is under consideration)
- * speed limit - 80 km/h

The licence age was reduced from 17 to 16 in 1984, but this applies only with approval of one parent. Most people apply for a licence soon after reaching age 16. Some parents have expressed reluctance but still give approval. Officials believe that the resultant increased mobility does create some problems for parental supervision of young people.

A major reason for introducing licences for 16 year olds is that a large proportion of the population does not have ready access to local public transport, and long distances are routinely travelled.

5.7A.3 Enforcement

This is generally a low profile activity. Licences normally are checked only when someone is apprehended for some other reason. Photographic licences commenced in May 1986. Drivers at present are allowed three days to produce their licence if required. Consideration is being given to mandatory carrying of licences.

The Northern Territory does not have a demerit points system. Nor can drivers who have paid infringement offences be identified. Legislation is to be changed to permit these to be recorded. There would be a need to identify driver histories on a national basis. Without proper records and a system, it would be difficult to prevent breaches.

5.7A NORTHERN TERRITORY EXISTING SITUATION

5.7A.4 Driver Education and Training

A student driver education program has been developed in the Northern Territory over a period of 14 years. There has been an accredited semester course for six weeks, the course taking four class room periods weekly, or 90 hours for a semester. The course starts with road law for the learner permit, and then there is practical instruction after school, in parallel with theory taught in school hours. All aspects of driving as part of a transport system are covered. The course is designed to link attitude development and traffic participatory skills, for example, defensive driving.

There is also an adult program at colleges which is also an educational program, but not as intensive as the school student course. These are all registered TAFE courses.

5.7A.5 Young Driver Crash Statistics

Table 5.7

**Driver and Rider Fatalities
Per 100,000 Population (of Given Age)**

1981-83

Age	Northern Territory			Australia		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
15	0	0	0	1.6	3.3	2.8
16	0	0	0	8.5	7.8	7.3
17	7.6	54.8	0	24.1	19.5	23.1
18	0	0	109.5	38.7	42.6	31.7
19	0	49.7	53.9	41.3	42.2	39.9
20	78.0	96.5	99.3	40.0	38.6	33.3
15-20	85.6	201	262.7	154.2	154	138.1

Source: FORS Fatal File

Note that these figures are based on small numbers so that the rates are not comparative.

5.7B NORTHERN TERRITORY GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

There are no specific proposals for graduated licensing in the Northern Territory. The information which follows, is the reaction of Northern Territory officials to the FORS proposal.

5.7B.1 Concept and Rationale

Officials consider that it would be useful to have a rational justification of the concept of graduated licensing supported by evidence of successful operation elsewhere.

In principle there do not seem to be any basic objections to the concept of graduated licensing as proposed by the FORS. However, there are concerns arising from mobility, general restrictiveness, and enforcement issues. .

Road Safety is an issue in the NT at present with community and official concern arising from a high number of fatalities and injuries, particularly last year.

The Road Safety Council of Northern Territory would support the graduated licence concept, however there is some concern about enforcement problems.

The highest priority at present is to obtain a zero blood alcohol limit for provisional licence holders. Government endorsement in principle for the graduated licence proposal will also be sought. This could help to open the way for more detailed implementation proposals at a later date.

A form of graduated licence concept is already operating in relation to motorcycle licensing where licence tests are required to advance to larger engine capacity categories, and for truck, taxi and bus licences where a minimum period with a car licence is a prerequisite.

The concept of graduated licensing could be implemented, but it would be necessary to identify the vehicle in a way that indicates the level of restriction applicable.

The concept of special conditions applicable to different classes of driver is well established. For example, physically handicapped persons can obtain a licence regardless of age, if they can demonstrate proficiency. They are generally assisted in their efforts to qualify, and tend not to present a problem with reckless driving etc.

The main problems in NT are alcohol, seat belts and speed. Proposals which attack these problems directly would be preferred. The question is, how to get at the problem groups of drivers, without imposing restrictions on those who are doing the right thing. Enforcement is seen as a major issue.

5.7B.2 Age and Experience Factors

The local feeling of officials consulted is that community attitudes would not favour any further lowering of the learner permit age or licence age. With the present learner permit issue after the 16th birthday (subject to approval by one parent) young people exert a strong pressure for the parent to support a permit application.

5.7B NORTHERN TERRITORY GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

It is thought that age 16 for a permit allows the young driver to gain some experience before reaching legal drinking age.

The original proposal when the licensing law was changed in 1984 was for eligibility for 16 year olds who had completed the Student Driver Education Course, or for those who could show a need (such as apprentices). The Government, however, decided to extend the lower age to all applicants. This may have had the effect of reducing the incentive to undertake the Student Driver Education program as many students now can obtain a licence before reaching the stage at which the course is conducted at school.

If drivers were allowed a permit to learn at an earlier age, they would tend to treat this as a licence to drive earlier. The end result could be more unlicensed drivers at an earlier age.

Problems arise mainly with males under 25 years; females seem not to be a driver problem, but they are involved as passengers.

5.7B.3 Restrictions

Some restrictions are seen to create negative impacts. Consideration should be given to more positive influences such as insurance premiums which would encourage compliance with a graduated licence scheme. There may be scope for a reduction in premiums if it can be shown that compliance with the schemes would reduce the incidence of crashes.

Zero blood alcohol could be a first step towards graduated licensing. Photographic licences will possibly ease enforcement problems. Random breath tests might include a licence check, so that graduated licence holders could be apprehended for non zero blood alcohol.

With a curfew, possible problems could arise when trade classes are held at night, or where young people are working at night.

A particular problem in the NT seems to rise from drivers entering unfamiliar territory: town drivers in the bush, and bush drivers in the town.

5.7B.4 Enforcement

Transport officials believe that if the various conditions attached to graduated licences (eg curfew and passenger limits) are not firmly enforced, there may be an undermining of credibility of licensing regulations and police enforcement generally. They believe it is undesirable to impose any restrictions which are not intended to be specifically enforced. The limited police resources are already heavily committed, and it would not be practicable to take on a new area of enforcement responsibility.

Zero blood alcohol presents some short term enforcement problems for NT officials. They consider screening devices currently in use unsuitable to test for zero or near zero blood alcohol content. If random checks are required to enforce graduated licence provisions, that would not be welcomed by police.

5.7B NORTHERN TERRITORY GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

The ease of access to vehicles and driving qualifications is thought by officials to be a matter which is politically sensitive. It would be difficult to impose restrictions which would reduce that access.

There is no point in introducing laws or restrictions which are not enforced. It would be better to devise a system which concentrates on likely offenders, without restricting the well behaved majority.

Any scheme which is implemented should be designed to allow for essential exemptions rather than creating a new set of additional rules to be applied.

5.7B.5 Driver Education and Training

In discussion with officials in the Northern Territory, much emphasis was placed on education and training. They consider that the correct learning process should proceed in stages from an early age.

Performance in the Student Driver Education program is measured by driving skills and attitude rather than academic results, but this is an accredited academic course within the school system and a certain academic standard is needed to gain entry. This may work against immigrants or intellectually disabled. Driving simulators would be a useful aid especially for those with disabilities or language problems.

In the Northern Territory, due to isolation of many people, it is difficult to maintain control over training and testing. Standardisation is not easily achieved in remote areas, testing officers are not available and the licence test is administered by police. People in remote areas are not tested in a metropolitan environment.

There is considered to be a need for better training materials. In spite of all the videos seen over the years, nothing is considered better (by NT road safety educators) than the "Learn to Drive" series produced in the early '70s and defensive driving addendum, despite anachronisms.

5.7B.6 National Uniformity

The national licence classification was introduced from April 1986. A suggestion was made that the traffic code and ATAC should be aiming at an Australian licence with revenue paid to the State of residence.

5.8A AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY EXISTING SITUATION

Information is based on discussions with representatives of Traffic and Transport Branch, Transport and Technical Services Division of Department of Territories.

5.8A.1 Licensing and Road Safety Responsibilities

Licensing is the responsibility of the Motor Vehicle Registry.

The Transport Co-ordination and Road Safety Section is responsible for administration and legislation matters, and for road safety related issues including driver licensing.

5.8A.2 Licence Tests

Prior to obtaining a learner permit, a written test must be passed on the ACT road rules, signs and markings.

The practical driving test is intended to demonstrate that the applicant "has the ability to:

- co-ordinate the various vehicle controls
- maintain direction and speed on the road, while observing all rules and signs
- respect the rights and safety of other road users."

5.8A.3 Licensing Stages

Learner L Permit:

- * minimum age - 16 years 9 months
- * minimum period - 3 months
- * validity - 3 months
- * L plates must be displayed
- * supervision - anyone with a current driving licence
- * alcohol - no special restrictions
- * speed limit - no special restrictions

Probationary P Licence:

- * No probationary licence; a full licence is awarded on passing the practical test

5.8.4 Driver Education and Training

Driving schools are not licensed in the ACT

5.8A.5 Young Driver Crash Statistics

The following are fatal statistics per 100,000 population for young drivers and riders for 1981-1983, with national figures for comparison:

5.8A AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY EXISTING SITUATION

Table 5.8

Driver and Rider Fatalities
Per 100,000 Population (of Given Age)

1981-83

Age	Australian Capital Territory			Australia		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
15	0	0	0	1.6	3.3	2.8
16	0	0	0	8.5	7.8	7.3
17	25.8	26.3	51.5	24.1	19.5	23.1
18	0	51.5	26.2	38.7	42.6	31.7
19	0	51.3	0	41.3	42.2	39.9
20	26.5	76.9	51.3	40	38.6	33.3
15-20	52.0	206.0	129.0	154.2	154.0	138.1

Source: FORS Fatal File

Note that these figures are based on small numbers so that the rates are not comparative.

5.88 AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

Licensing and transport policy officials in the ACT support the concept of graduated licensing but there are no moves to adopt it yet.

Generally, in driver licensing, ACT adopts the view that it is virtually an island within NSW. Also there is a lot of travel between Canberra and NSW which can create problems with different systems. Therefore, the ACT endeavours to adopt the same or similar practices to those in NSW. ACT officials are aware that NSW considers that it already has a model. ACT may now consider graduated licensing more closely, and will watch the outcome of the Victorian proposals with interest. However, there is unlikely to be any move to increase the solo driving age.

There are two aspects of licensing in other States which are not present in the ACT: provision of probationary licences; and a novice driver or young driver alcohol limitation apart from the general community BAC limit of 0.08. Apparently, the question of probationary licences has never arisen as a serious issue in the ACT. Introduction of zero BAC for young or novice drivers would take about 18 months.

5.9A SUMMARY EXISTING SITUATION

The minimum ages for a learner, a probationary licence and a full licence in each of the States and Territories is shown in Table 5.9. The minimum ages range from 16 to 18 for a learner permit, and 17 to 21 for a full licence (see Table 5.9).

Restriction on alcohol and speed are shown in Table 5.10. Alcohol is restricted to zero or 0.02 BAC in six States. In the two Territories, alcohol is limited by legal minimum drinking age or by the general limit of 0.08 BAC. The speed limit is most commonly 80 km/h. In Queensland and ACT the general limits prevail.

Learner driving must be supervised by a driver with from nought to four years experience according to the State or Territory. The minimum length of learner period varies up to three months, although in Tasmania and Victoria a person obtaining the learner permit at the minimum age would need to wait 12 months before being able to obtain the probationary licence.

The probationary licence period is 12 months except in ACT and Victoria; in ACT there is none; in Victoria it is three years.

No limits are set on the carrying of passengers in the learner or probationary periods. No State or Territory has a curfew.

5.9A SUMMARY EXISTING SITUATION

Table 5.9

Current Licensing Stages (Minimum for Each Stage)

Age	SA	NT	ACT	TAS	NSW	WA	QLD	VIC
16	===== L/P P P P	===== L/P P P P		===== L L L L	===== L L L L			
17	===== F	===== F	===== F	===== P P P P	===== P P P P	===== L/P P P P	===== L/P P P P	===== L L L L
18	.....	.....	.....	===== F	===== F	===== F	===== F	===== P P P P
19	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	..... P P P P
20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	..... P P P P
21	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	===== F

Legend

L - Learner

P - Probationary

F - Full licence

L/P - Learner to probationary immediately or
after minimum six weeks

Minimum age for:

Learner :::::

Learner/probationary ::=:=:

Probationary ===

Full =====

5.9A SUMMARY EXISTING SITUATION

Table 5.10

Current Licensing Restrictions (1) Alcohol & Speed)

RESTRICTION	SA	NT	ACT	TAS	NSW	WA	QLD	VIC
ALCOHOL (MAX. BAC)								
Learner	0.00	0.08	0.08	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00
Probationary	0.00	0.08	0.08	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00
SPEED LIMIT (KM/H)								
Learner	80	80	(2)	80	70	72	(2)	80
Probationary	80	80	(2)	80	80	80	(2)	80

Notes:

1. Speed limits are in addition to general speed limits.
2. General speed limits only.
3. Up to 18 years.

5.9B SUMMARY OF GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

All States and Territories have given some consideration to the introduction of graduated licensing, but many implementation difficulties are seen by officials. These difficulties relate to perceived political difficulties with proposed restrictions. No State or Territory has proposals to implement the FORS scheme.

Only in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia has there been active consideration of the introduction of GDLS. The stance in other States and Territories ranges from "wait and see" (the outcome of investigations or pilot schemes in other States) to a complete lack of interest or conviction that GDLS is either feasible or likely to be effective.

Victoria has introduced draft proposals in the form of a Road Safety Bill. The existing minimum learner permit and probationary licence ages are retained, but it is proposed that the probationary period be reduced from three years to two. The main feature of the Bill is that penalties and enforcement will be rationalised. However, the supervision requirements have not been strengthened. Curfews have been omitted from the proposals, but they are being given further consideration.

Many officials seek a more thorough justification of the concept and proof that it would be effective in practice. Some officials believe that they already have a form of GDLS in their jurisdiction through the learner permit/probationary licence process, supervision in the learner period and blood alcohol restrictions.

Emphasis is placed on the age factor in licensing, particularly the minimum age at which solo driving is permitted. South Australia which has the lowest solo driving age (16 years), would like to find a way of avoiding 16 year old solo drivers. They see a form of GDLS as a possible way to achieve this. Victoria, which has the highest solo driving age (18 years) would strongly resist any lowering and has produced a research analysis that suggests this would increase the number of young driver crashes.

Little interest was shown by officials in the supervisory aspects of the graduated licensing concept.

Curfews (and associated passenger-carrying restrictions) were the aspects which officials considered would cause the greatest inconvenience, particularly with regard to employment, evening education, and on sport and recreation. These aspects were regarded as politically sensitive and difficult to enforce. The Victorian research showed that a late night/early morning curfew would be beneficial in reducing crash involvement rates and that with a 10 pm to 5 am curfew, passenger-carrying restrictions would not be necessary. However, their recommendations have been deleted from the draft proposals of the new Road Safety Bill for the time being because of perceived political difficulties.

Officials generally agree that there should be a zero or near-zero BAC requirement.

Enforcement of GDLS is regarded by some as being difficult. Police generally consider that photographic licences would be an essential component for enforcing a GDLS.

5.9B SUMMARY OF GRADUATED LICENSING PROPOSALS AND ATTITUDES

While some officials raised administrative difficulties, they gave the impression that these could be overcome.

6. COMMUNITY REACTIONS

A program of consultation was undertaken to elicit general community reactions to both the graduated licensing concept and the individual elements of the scheme.

The consultation process should not be regarded as a market test of the acceptability of the proposal but rather as a means of providing qualitative data on the impacts of the scheme on the community. The process has also provided information on community reactions which will be valuable in implementing the scheme. The consultation process thus provided a substantive qualitative data input to the program and allowed a detailed evaluation of concerns about the scheme.

6.1 METHOD

The Areas Consulted

The community consultations were undertaken in May/June 1986. Four population centres were used for the consultation process to cover metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Consideration of shift-worker situations was also considered to be necessary, particularly in relation to the potential impacts of a curfew.

Melbourne and Adelaide were chosen as the metropolitan study areas based on the nominal differences of South Australia having the youngest existing driving population and Victoria the latest age of obtaining a licence.

Wollongong was chosen to represent a non-metropolitan area with substantial representation of shift-workers and an immediate rural hinterland with which it interacts as a service base. Mildura was chosen as the second non-metropolitan area because of its reliance upon the rural economy for a range of employment opportunities to its residents and its interaction with New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian residents. Mildura also represents an area where distance to metropolitan services is a regular barrier.

The Community to be Consulted

The choice of the community members to be consulted in such a process is substantially more difficult than that facing the market researcher. This consultation process was attempting to elicit issues and responses from classes of people likely to be affected by a change to the current licensing situation.

The principal 'target group' for consultation therefore was young people who did not yet have a driving licence. It was also considered that the parents of teenagers could be directly affected by the FORS scheme and would need to be another principal target group for consultation. These two groupings formed the major participants for the consultation program with 11 of the 17 group consultations being devoted to young people and parents of young people. The young people were drawn from the school system, both government and non-government. The sampling process is described in the following section. To allow for young people who are potential new drivers but are outside the formal education system, an additional three consultations were organised. They comprised representatives or nominees of organised community associations that work with or serve young people such as CYSS groups, sport and recreation

associations, information services, etc.; or had a wide community service or transport policy role such as local public transport action groups, road safety committees, co-ordinating councils, driver education organisations. In addition, representatives of private driving instructor schools were included. Another three consultations were organised for representatives of authorities or functional units which could be affected by a change in the licensing arrangements, e.g. local government, motor registries, secondary schools, TAFE colleges, bus operators, CES staff, transport planners, etc.

To facilitate active participation by those attending each consultation, a limit of twenty-five attendees was imposed. Overall some 450 persons were invited, but 40 could not attend because of other commitments. Twenty-six of these people were consulted in a private interview. Twenty-one of those scheduled to attend a consultation did not appear. Overall 415 people participated.

The Sampling Process

Participants were determined principally by two methods: those provided by the formal education system; and other community participants.

From the education system: Listings of schools in the consultation areas were obtained, including non-government schools. From these lists, using a nth number series process a sample was drawn and cross-checked for basic geographic and social status representativeness. No modifications to the listings were made after this cross-checking process. After nomination the schools were contacted and asked to participate. Two schools were unable to participate because of other commitments in their program and these were replaced through the nth numbering series process again. In Mildura and Wollongong the sample schools were asked to provide either one or two students and parents by target age. In Melbourne and Adelaide, schools were asked to invite parents through a sampling of their enrolment lists or twenty-five students by age.

From the wider community: Local community services directories were examined and peak organisations identified. These were then contacted by phone and asked to nominate up to six local people expected to be interested and able to discuss the issues relating to a change in driving licence arrangements. Where people were nominated a number of times in this process, they were invited to participate.

Procedure

It is very important in the community consultation process that participants are well briefed to ensure that their participation is effective. It is also important that the consultation is balanced and undertaken in such a way that the organisers obtain the genuine reactions of the participants without influencing them, or "putting words in their mouths".

Standard procedures were used to ensure that these requirements were satisfied.

A participatory dialogical consultation technique was utilised, the key characteristics of which were:

- presentation to the groups of the concept and the components of GDLS, including the key issues identified through earlier discussions with officials;
- the addition by the group of other issues for discussion;
- dialogue with problem solving and information exchange, including the posing of questions by the consultants and the participants;
- completion of individual questionnaires.

This process enabled the individuals within the group to clarify the issues involved and exchange relevant experiences as well as identify the range of opinion currently existing. It also provided them with a sound information base. This is important if the exercise is to elicit community input to the decision-making process rather than measure the acceptability of a finalised program. The consultations took between two and three hours each. The first 30 minutes of the consultation was devoted to an explanation of the respective elements of the GDLS proposal and the views of the government officials who had been consulted. Participants then added ancillary issues that they felt needed to be discussed and identified components of the proposal that they felt could be taken as accepted. The group discussion was then focused upon the stated purpose of the scheme, that is, to reduce the incidence of road crashes amongst new drivers during their first two years of driving. No particular focus was directed at this stage of the discussion on the actual ages of these new drivers. The components of the scheme, the learning experience, supervision, carriage of passengers, blood alcohol levels, curfews, speed limits, and age and introduction of the scheme, were then the subject of group exchange in relation to the potential of each component to reduce the crash rate. Discussion was encouraged as to whether perceived benefits were considered beneficial given the potential range of community inconvenience which may be caused.

This information exchange and dialogue was kept open-ended and the group was encouraged not to make a final statement on the component or its desirability. Extensive discussion took place amongst all groups about the implementation and administration involved, with the community members exhibiting a good working knowledge of administrative aspects.

After discussion of approximately 45 minutes, the group was asked to fill out a detailed questionnaire on the scheme as an individual effort. It was explained to participants that the questionnaires would be coded and analysed without names. All participants were aware that the process was designed to provide a substantive input to the evaluation of the scheme's potential, and the results indicate that all participants took the process extremely seriously. Most people took between 45 to 80 minutes to complete the questionnaire and a number took their forms home to complete and return after the consultation.

It should be noted that the use of questionnaires enabled a number of participants to add qualifications to sentiments that had been expressed during the group discussion stage.

In this chapter, distinction is made where relevant between young people consulted (under 18 years of age) and the viewpoint of the adults consulted. As a general rule however, there was a high degree of unanimity between the two groups.

6.2 CONCEPT

Initial reactions to the concept of graduated licensing were generally positive despite the complexity of the scheme proposed. Associated with this initial reaction was the constantly stated opinion by both young people and adults that it was about time that the high crash rate amongst young people was addressed. Many parents were quick to point out that they did not believe that young people these days are any worse than they were at that age. However, road conditions, particularly the numbers of cars on the road, made the consequences of 'being young and driving' much worse.

The current number of deaths by young drivers was perceived as a major social issue facing society today. Participants were relieved to find that research and policy consideration of this issue is being undertaken and generally felt that any initiative to address this issue needed to be encouraged and developed. Participants were concerned to find that the scheme had been under consideration for some four years without having been implemented.

The consultants concluded that the issue of road safety amongst new drivers is an issue of widespread community concern.

Interestingly, aligned with the generally supportive view of the graduated scheme was a strong condemnation of the current licensing system from adults consulted.

Adults felt that the current licensing standards were not only inappropriate, but were a contributing factor in the road toll. Few felt that the standard test of stopping at a stop sign, driving a set and well-known course and being able to undertake a reverse park equipped new drivers to exist on today's roads.

6.3 THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Almost three-quarters of both young and adult persons consulted perceived that 'professional tuition' was a mandatory requirement if the number of road deaths is to be reduced.

All groups expressed the need for driving instructors to be qualified, tested and registered. A significant number of people felt that professional tuition should be a requirement of the 'L' plate period. Current drivers readily agreed that the learning experience is more than adequate in controlling manipulative skills such as gears, braking, steering etc, but is inadequate for the gaining of perceptual and decision-making skills (roadcraft).

Groups were consulted on how these skills should be learnt, basically along State lines. In Victoria, the groups believed these should be based around the school and all discussed the Goulburn Valley Regional Driving School at Shepparton, whereas in South Australia groups basically felt that a State Transport Department regional driver education facility outside of the school system was the first preference. In New South Wales, the groups had no consistent response to this issue.

In addition to gaining practical roadcraft skills, over three-quarters of those consulted saw a compulsory theory training in driving operated through schools to be an integral part of any attempt to reduce road deaths. Most groups felt that this would need to be undertaken before the

age of 15 years was reached in order to ensure all young people were trained. This was perceived as being as important as English and Maths and therefore should be a compulsory, examinable year long course.

Many of the young people consulted had the prior conception that a licence was only granted for a short duration and that regular testing would be required to retain it, including testing of current road rules.

They could see no validity in the process of granting a licence and then waiting for the holder to perform so badly that it has to be withdrawn. They felt that four-to-five yearly skills testing (including road rules) would be a minimum requirement to ensure road safety. If as the principles of the scheme suggest driving skills and abilities are a major aspect of road crashes, then a major investment in skills development **over the first two years**, while probably extremely beneficial, is only addressing one part of the problem. They perceived that if the system was to be changed, then the total system should be changed to ensure an overall drop in road crash rates for all age groups. The bringing of the crash rates of the under 20 year olds down to the norm of other age groups, while a good first step, should not be seen as the be-all-and-end-all of the changes.

When these opinions were discussed with adults during the consultation program, there was complete agreement that the issue of road crashes should not be perceived as a "young person's" issue. Adults thought that the process of non-testing after being granted a licence must be viewed as inappropriate. Much discussion took place amongst adults as to the cost involved in regular re-testing with the consensus being reached that the cost of re-testing would probably be more than offset by the community benefit.

Adults perceived that the learning experience is not a static process: they still encounter a range of situations that they are not prepared for. Adults also believe that driving skills deteriorate over time. Many had gone back to learn advanced driving skills later in their driving life after recognising limitations in personal abilities. Accordingly, adults endorsed a four-yearly re-testing of all drivers as part of any scheme to cut the road toll.

6.4 STAGE 1: SUPERVISED DRIVING EXPERIENCE

All groups felt that a replacement of the current 'L' situation with something more structured is desirable, but did not endorse the FORS model particularly.

The extension of the initial supervision period to six months was not perceived by either adults or young people as particularly onerous. Ensuing discussion often suggested that six to twelve months was an 'acceptable' time for the learning process within the community. The major concern expressed over the supervised driving period related to the practicalities of people actually being able to access supervised driving. As a general rule for all locations, it was considered that only limited experience could be accessed between the hours of 8am and 6pm on weekdays and all of the weekend unless it was organised through a professional driving school or the formal school system. Family vehicles are generally already committed during the weekday and the sport, recreation and family commitments of parents and learner drivers make supervised driving difficult.

The community believes that the majority of experience given to learner drivers at present is through use of the family vehicle within the normal extended family network. Examples of this would be driving to school with the full family and parent continuing on to employment, driving family members to social occasions or assistance to extended family members during their daily functioning. This is considered to be an important part of the driving experience and one which any changes to the system should recognise and encourage. Parents, particularly, believe that such experience is important for attitude formation and a sense of responsibility in driving habits.

However, all of those consulted recognised that it would be rare for this experience to produce the perfect driver. Whilst some parents would be equipped to teach the complete driving story, most would neither have the time, resources or skills to do so effectively.

A composite view of what consulted parents believe to be the ideal situation is:

- School-based theory curriculum: A year long compulsory course for students under 15 year of age dealing with the principles of motor vehicles, driving skills and issues relating to road safety.
- Practical Driving Skills Course: an intensive course at a driver education facility or through use of a simulator for all young people. This course would need to be passed prior to a learners permit being obtained.
- An extended Learner period: Six months to one year of supervised driving experience. Supervisors to have held a full licence for at least three years. No restrictions on time of day or night driving experiences, nor of the number of passengers in the car. A minimum amount of time driving under supervision for different road conditions (eg country, night-time, peak-hour city etc) should have to be certified.
- A more appropriate testing of learner drivers: Designed to ensure basic competency in the full range of skills necessary to control a motor vehicle.

Not surprisingly, young people did not fully agree to the need for supervision to be longer than three to six months, citing particularly the unfair restriction this would place upon their parents.

In the final decision as to what a supervisory scheme should be, people felt that the following factors would need to be considered:

- placing sole responsibility for the learning process on parents will not be successful in teaching appropriate driving skills;
- the family interaction process must be encouraged during the learning stage;
- peer groupings do encourage irresponsible actions and a restriction on supervisors should be made to facilitate an age difference between supervisor and learner;

- the supervision stage should involve 'professional tuition';
- there must be a minimum number of hours, distance and type of driving experience undertaken during the learning process;
- all people should be taught the principles and workings of motor vehicles;
- physical and medical conditions of drivers need to be assessed before a licence is granted;
- it is better to be inconvenienced during the learner period than at later stages;
- if parents are to have adequate control over young people during the supervisory period, the learning process must be undertaken well before the age of eighteen years;
- the learning experience is not necessarily a problem for 'the young' but for all inexperienced people, and the solution should not be seen to be just targeting young people for being young.

6.5 CARRIAGE OF PASSENGERS

In general, the community groups accept that the carrying of passengers does constitute a potential driving hazard as at least a distraction, particularly when the passengers are in the peer group of young drivers.

However, the community response to the consultations clearly defined the limits within which passenger restrictions would be acceptable. Young people were more sensitive about this issue while adults perceived that too restrictive an approach in this area would negate the enforceability and adherence to the total scheme.

There was a difference in attitude to passenger restrictions between the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas consulted. Non-metropolitan areas were far more concerned about any restrictions whatsoever, reflecting the absence of alternative transport forms in country regions.

A major concern of people consulted is the general detrimental impact restrictions could have on family life and quality of life for people other than new drivers.

Young people felt that they would have difficulty complying with passenger restrictions under a full range of everyday situations such as lifts home from sporting occasions or entertainment venues, lunchtime opportunities, and social interaction.

Adults perceived that young people would fail to see the need for this restriction and therefore it would be the first breaking point of the scheme. As well they saw the restrictions adversely affecting work and educational opportunities for young people.

Interestingly, participants saw a trade-off between the curfew and passenger restrictions. They perceived that an effective curfew situation would be more beneficial (and enforceable) than undue passenger restrictions.

If restrictions were to be developed in this area, the general consensus was that exemptions would need to be introduced at all stages for family members, emergency situations, educational or vocational opportunities (particularly in non-metropolitan areas), and organised recreational situations.

6.6 BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVELS

There was strong support for a banning of alcohol and driving during the first two years of a licence.

Interestingly, one-quarter of adults and almost half of young people believed that this would have a significant impact on the liquor trade, perhaps reflecting the community's awareness of the extent of under-age drinking.

It was acknowledged in the group discussions that such a restriction would cause significant difficulties in social and recreational activities, but it was considered that the community benefit should prevail.

Most groups expressed a lack of knowledge of whether random breath testing had been successful 'from a statistical viewpoint' but believed that its introduction had been beneficial from a community awareness viewpoint.

Much discussion took place on whether a 'tolerance' factor such as 0.02 should be introduced to cover situations such as cough medicines. Overall, the perceptions of those consulted were that a simple banning with no exemptions should be introduced and enforced.

All groups perceived the breaking of the alcohol ban during the first two years of driving is a serious offence that warrants disqualification automatically.

6.7 CURFEWS

This issue caused widespread controversy. Early in the discussions, people were against the enforcement of curfews, but during the course of discussions, the majority accepted the concept with conviction.

About half of those consulted saw that such a provision would create hardship and that some exemptions would be necessary. Thirty-one percent of adults believed curfews to be unreasonable in civil liberty infringement terms.

Non-metropolitan respondents felt that the curfew would unduly affect social/recreational/educational opportunities where they often had to travel some distance to participate, and the return journeys often took up to one hour.

All groups perceived that a 'daylight to dusk' curfew would be unworkable, particularly with the introduction of daylight saving. For discussion purposes this term was nominated as 7am to 7pm. Non-metropolitan people foresaw great difficulty with the 7am restriction due to distances and the concentration of manual work (hence early start). Metropolitan residents perceived difficulty with a 7pm finish preferring 8pm. Non-metropolitan residents could not foresee any system working that finished before 8, 9 or 10 pm.

The exemption requests, both reasons and times, were extensive and were not easily grouped together. Overall however, more than seventy percent of people would support a blanket curfew from 10pm to 5am seven days a week, the rest being opposed to the introduction of any curfews.

The community groups consulted would support a reasonable curfew in favour of passenger restrictions, which they perceive as performing the same basic functions. If a 10pm curfew was enforced, with a ban on drink-driving, then passenger restrictions were seen as a low priority with too negative an impact.

6.8 THE FORS MODEL

Generally, people supported the scheme but believed that it was too complicated and therefore difficult to enforce. People were asked to nominate alternative schemes that could be considered, but no significant alternatives to the basic concept were presented.

From the consultations, it can be concluded that a two stage scheme lasting eighteen to twenty-one months would be acceptable.

Stage 1 would replace the existing learner permit, be of six to nine months duration, require theory and practical training to be undertaken prior to the granting of a permit, involve some professional teaching and the fulfilment of set experience tasks, be under constant supervision of an experienced driver, have a zero blood alcohol content and a 80 km/h speed restriction. A much more detailed test of skills, including perception skills, should be undertaken before the 'provisional' licence is granted.

Stage 2 would be for twelve months, allow unsupervised driving between the hours of 5am and 10pm, have a 100 km/h or general speed limit, zero blood alcohol level but no restriction on passengers.

The preferred model from the community consultation can be summarised as follows:

- Learner permit: 16 years 3 months minimum age, supervised driving for nine months, and compulsory driver education;
- Probationary licence: 17 years minimum age, 12 months period drive solo with up to three passengers;
- Learner and probationary periods: zero BAC, general speed limits only, curfew 10 pm to 5 am;
- Full licence: minimum 18 years age;
- Licensing and testing: more rigorous testing between graduated licensing stages, and lifetime testing every four years.

6.9 AGE

The presentation of the FORS Model was not dependent upon a lowering of the age of young drivers, and therefore the previous results should be considered as being applied to new drivers generally.

The proposal of lowering the age of entry for the scheme to 15 years was thought by both young people and adults to be highly undesirable.

Fifteen year olds, they said, are too immature to be behind the wheel of a car.

Although there was no consensus as to the appropriate age, with answers ranging from 16 to 25 years, over 75% of people felt that 16 years is the appropriate age for a learner permit.

For many parents this was perceived as the appropriate point in the 'graduated stage of becoming an adult'. For this statement they invariably went on to explain that young people go through various stages of freedom on the way to becoming adults. By the time they reach 18 years, they can drink legally, vote, incur debt and have legal recognition as an adult. At 16 years, various restrictions regarding social outings etc have been lifted but overall authority still rests with the parents (provided the young people are still living at home). If parents are to have a positive influence on issues such as curfew and drinking restrictions, then these must be before the age of full adulthood.

Parents generally felt that total restrictions on times and drinking while driving would be difficult to enforce at the same time that young people are legally able to enter licensed premises (such as late night discos). Ideally, the scheme should be over by the time 'these temptations' were fully available.

However, discussion also took place on whether such a scheme would merely encourage young people to defer obtaining a licence until the age of 'no restrictions' if the new model were introduced as an either/or system. As a general rule, participants believed that this would only happen in a limited number of cases, but that the principle of equity suggested that the scheme should apply to all new drivers.

Most groups then extrapolated the principle that the higher incidence of accidents amongst young people is partly due to inexperience (at negotiating certain conditions such as night-driving), to the principle that inexperience should also be a factor for other new drivers regardless of age. It was generally felt that there would be an element of inexperience in the crashes of drivers of all ages. At several of the community consultations there were parents who had only recently obtained a licence and all groups could cite known cases of various age ranges obtaining a first licence. Groups often divided about equally over whether the scheme should be applied only to under 25 year olds or to all new drivers. This issue tended to be determined on the over-riding desire for any new scheme not to be perceived as a 'get the young' situation. Therefore, the view was that the scheme should be applied to all new drivers regardless of age.

Overall, it is considered that community acceptance would be for a scheme that applied to all new drivers during the first eighteen months or two years of driving.

6.10 TIMING AND MANNER OF INTRODUCTION

A recurrent theme throughout the community consultations was that the time for something to be done is overdue, particularly in Victoria where some elements of the scheme were currently being introduced during the consultation period. Considerable praise was forthcoming that 'something is being done and about time'.

7.0 YOUNG DRIVER LICENSING AND CRASH STATISTICS

Before the study was started, it was anticipated that reducing the starting age could place an additional burden on licensing agencies. This chapter provides a forecast of the numbers in these age groups.

7.1 CURRENT LICENSING RATES

Information on the number of licence holders in each year of age from 16 to 24 was obtainable from only four States and Territories: New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. (The Northern Territory was unable to extract the data needed in time to be used for this project). Tasmanian, Victorian and Queensland licence records are not held in a form which allows ready retrieval of information on age of licence holders, although Queensland's are being computerised.

The data which are available are shown in Figures 7.1 to 7.3, giving licence holders as a proportion of the estimated total population of the same age in the relevant state (see Appendix B for the method of estimation of the total numbers in each year of age.)

Figure 7.1 gives details of total licence holders for the three States for which this information is available. With the exception of 16 year-olds (who are eligible for full licensing only in South Australia), the pattern is very consistent across the States. Licensing rates for 17 year-olds vary from 43 per cent for New South Wales to 59 per cent for South Australia, and the proportion increases slightly with each year from 18 to 24 years (to over 90 per cent in each case).

Figure 7.2 gives licensing rates for standard car licences for South Australia and the A.C.T., and again shows the effects of South Australia's younger starting age. However, by age 19 the A.C.T. licensing rate is slightly higher than South Australia's, and remains so throughout the age range graphed.

Figure 7.3 gives the proportions holding motorcycle licences, again for South Australia and the A.C.T. and once again shows a very uniform pattern, after the first two years.

Figures 7.4 and 7.5 show the division by sex for the total licence holders of various ages for Western Australia and New South Wales. In both States, the figures show that in the youngest age-group (under 17) male licence holders account for around 80 per cent of the total. In the age ranges 17-20 years and 20-24 years, the proportions are much more even, and the W.A. records show that this remains true until approximately the over-50s, where a substantial reduction is evident.

The licensing information from Western Australia also provided a breakdown between metropolitan and country licence holders: in the under 17 age-group, 44 per cent of licence holders were in country areas; and for all other age-groups, the proportion ranged from 27 to 28 per cent. This overall figure is very close to the total proportion of the W.A. population which is urban (see Appendix B, which gives 1981 rural-urban breakdowns for each State and Territory).

7.2 PROJECTED LICENSING RATES AND NUMBERS

Figure 7.6 shows the projected numbers in the 15-19 age-group for each State and Territory for the period 1981-1996. This age-group is likely to represent a declining proportion of the overall population in all States and Territories, and in some cases (New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, in particular), a reduction in absolute numbers is expected also. In the other States and Territories, absolute numbers will either remain stable, or increase slightly.

Since there is no reason to expect significant changes in age-specific licensing rates, numbers coming through the system should generally be similar to or less than those experienced in the past five years. The only major change which could occur would be due to alterations (either upward or downward) in minimum licensing ages.

Appendix B gives further details of the age-group projections and their derivation and tentatively allocates these 5-year totals to individual years of age. Figures B.1 to B.8 graph the results by State, and indicate the potential **ranges** of population of each age in the relevant years. These are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1
Projected Numbers in Age Group 15 to 19 Years
(Ranges in '000s)

State/Territory	1986	1991	1996
New South Wales	84.8 - 97.1	82.9 - 98.6	81.5 - 84.2
Victoria	68.8 - 76.6	62.3 - 74.9	59.9 - 62.6
Queensland	42.1 - 48.9	42.8 - 50.7	43.5 - 45.0
South Australia	21.8 - 23.8	19.6 - 23.3	19.2 - 21.1
Western Australia	23.5 - 26.5	23.2 - 27.2	23.5 - 24.8
Tasmania	7.3 - 8.1	6.8 - 8.0	6.6 - 6.9
Australian Capital T.	4.1 - 5.3	4.6 - 5.4	4.6 - 5.1
Northern Territory	2.4 - 3.1	3.1 - 3.3	3.2 - 3.4

The consultations for this project indicate that there is no support in the States and Territories for lowering the age of eligibility for first licensing below 16 years. However, even if this element of the graduated licensing concept were to be introduced at some time in the future, the additional workloads involved would in many cases be offset by the expected decline in numbers entering the general age-group for licensing.

7.3 ROAD CRASH STATISTICS – YOUNG DRIVERS AND RIDERS

Table 7.2 summarises young driver and rider fatalities for the years 1981 to 1983, by State and Territory. The information is derived from the Federal Office of Road Safety's "Fatal file" and is presented as a ratio of drivers and riders killed to the estimated total population of the same age in the State in the relevant year (see Appendix B for details of the calculations).

Table 7.2
Young Driver and Rider Fatalities, 1981–83
(Per 100,000 in each age group, 15–20 years)

1981								
Age	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.	N.T.
15	1.2	–	7.9	–	–	–	–	–
16	9.6	3.0	10.4	27.0	4.5	–	–	–
17	28.9	4.4	42.6	31.0	17.9	25.4	25.8	107.6
18	32.8	39.2	51.9	30.5	35.5	102.4	–	–
19	49.9	36.6	33.7	34.2	30.3	103.1	–	–
20	44.4	38.2	53.7	9.1	35.6	27.7	26.5	78.2

1982								
Age	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.	N.T.
15	6.0	–	2.6	4.6	–	13.4	–	–
16	7.3	1.5	10.6	22.5	–	40.9	–	–
17	32.5	7.7	20.9	22.1	–	13.1	26.3	54.8
18	45.1	33.0	75.2	26.1	35.5	13.0	51.5	–
19	57.8	26.5	48.9	30.2	34.6	25.6	51.3	49.7
20	45.5	29.0	33.7	34.8	35.4	51.6	76.9	96.5

Table 7.2 (cont.)
Young Driver and Rider Fatalities, 1981-83
(Per 100,000 in each age group, 15-20 years)

1983								
Age	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.	N.T.
15	7.2	-	-	-	4.3	-	-	-
16	9.6	6.0	5.2	18.5	-	-	-	-
17	31.6	1.5	39.7	36.0	13.4	13.6	51.5	-
18	44.6	21.0	33.9	35.4	13.4	-	26.2	109.5
19	39.3	35.3	52.6	34.8	31.0	76.2	-	53.9
20	26.0	36.3	41.6	38.8	21.6	38.4	51.3	99.3

For the youngest drivers, patterns of fatalities vary considerably from year to year, especially in the States and Territories with smaller populations. It should be noted also that these figures give fatalities as a proportion of the total population of the same age, rather than as a proportion of licence holders of that age. The apparent lower rates for very young drivers compared with 18 and 19 year-olds can be explained by the low proportion of drivers amongst these ages (even allowing for possible illegal drivers, which account for many of those young drivers and riders killed).

8.0 GRADUATED LICENSING POSSIBILITIES

This chapter considers: objectives to be achieved through graduated licensing; examines various viewpoints on the graduated licensing concept and the elements; assembles the range of options which is available including States' proposals; and weighs the advantages and disadvantages of the options to arrive at a suggested course of action.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives to be achieved through graduated licensing or similar measures for young or inexperienced drivers can be described as follows:

1. To minimise the number of crashes involving young or inexperienced drivers;
2. To introduce feasible changes to the driver licensing system which will be:
 - a) effective in reducing crashes;
 - b) acceptable to the community;
 - c) enforceable;
 - d) administratively feasible.
3. The cost of the changes is to be within reasonable community expectations (which may need to be established).

8.2 VIEWPOINTS

Possibly the most important finding of this study is that graduated licensing is viewed differently by different people e.g. a road safety **researcher**: an **official** involved in licensing, enforcement or road safety education, or a "user" - a potential young driver, a parent or a member of the general **community**; or a **politician** who must take account of the views of all of these people.

A common view held by licensing or enforcement officials, and by some researchers was that graduated licensing or components of it would not be politically acceptable. No evidence was provided for this view or why the view was held. It was not clear whether they had actually been told this by politicians, or had just perceived this to be the case.

This was in strong contrast to the findings of the community consultations which indicate that graduated licensing and most of its components would be readily accepted by the community.

The different viewpoints must be understood and reconciled as a prelude to implementation. For this reason, the different viewpoints on the concept are summarised in Table 8.1.

The potential impacts of graduated licensing are summarised in Table 8.2.

8.3 EXISTING FORMS AND PROPOSALS

The range of options for graduated licensing is assembled here in an attempt to be comprehensive, to ensure that the field has been fully covered and that a good option has not been omitted from consideration. The options are considered and a suggested course of action is proposed.

Existing Forms

Some form of graduated licensing already exists in all States and Territories in the form of:

- graduation from learner to probationary to full licence status (except ACT);
- supervised driving during the learner stage by a person having a licence in some cases with a minimum specified experience (zero to four years);
- lower speed restrictions before a full licence (most);
- lower alcohol limits before a full licence (most);
- more onerous penalties and enforcement during the learner and probationary stages;
- graduation from a car driving licence to various forms of truck licence, bus and taxi licences with higher minimum age requirements.

There seems to be good case for retaining most of these features in future licensing arrangements, with the exception of those speed limits which differ from the general limits.

States' Proposals

Only in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia is graduated licensing under active consideration in detail. Other States and Territories are either seeking a lead from research and/or a pilot scheme in a larger state, need to be convinced of the benefits of graduated licensing, see too many problems, or consider that they already have sufficient elements of graduated licensing in their current system.

Table 8.1

**Responses to Graduated Licensing Concept
From Various Viewpoints**

Viewpoint	Response
OFFICIALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The concept finds little favour in the States and Territories. 2. Most seek proof that a graduated licensing scheme would be effective in reducing young driver crash involvement. 3. Avoiding/removing youngest solo drivers is seen as the primary action to cut road toll. 4. There are widespread concerns that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the restrictions would not be politically acceptable - the scheme would be difficult to enforce - would be difficult to administer.
COMMUNITY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Groups consulted support the concept in principle. 2. Commonly agreed that enforcement will be difficult, but must be made to work.
RESEARCH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Victorian research suggests that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by age 21, crash involvement rates approach those of mature drivers - for young drivers, the most critical period is the first three years - the only real test of efficacy is the cumulative crash involvement rate (per 10,000 population) from start to age 20 - schemes which reduce the age for solo driving will lead to a significant increase in fatalities and injuries - a curfew (even from 10 pm to 5 am) will significantly reduce the crash involvement rate - such a curfew would obviate the need for passenger restrictions 2. South Australian investigations also stress importance of age of learner permit and probationary licence in reducing crash involvement rates.

Table 8.2
Potential Impacts of Graduated Licensing

Aspect	Potential Impact
RESTRICTION OF FREEDOM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This was <u>not</u> raised as a civil rights issue by officials or by community groups. 2. Community groups accepted reduced freedom aspects such as photographic licences, random licence checks and zero BAC.
LICENCE AS A RIGHT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community consultation participants expressed the view that a licence is a privilege rather than a right.
EMPLOYMENT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Numbers affected depend on whether there is a curfew and its duration. 2. Indications are that a 10 pm to 5 am curfew would be accepted. Numbers affected on employment grounds considered small and exemptions feasible.
EVENING CLASSES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 10 pm to 5 am curfew would minimise impact on evening classes. Some rescheduling may be necessary.
SPORT AND RECREATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impacts expected to be minimal. Some rescheduling may be necessary.
SOCIAL LIFE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would be affected. Suggestion that pub drinking activities would be curtailed by curfew and BAC limitations.
SUPERVISION NEEDS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extended supervision requirement likely to cause inconvenience to parents. Early evening curfew could make evening practice difficult.
ENFORCEMENT NEEDS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More traffic police would be required to make enforcement effective. 2. Police consider photographic licences essential for effective enforcement.
ADMINISTRATION NEEDS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Should not be substantial.

The main Victorian proposals in the draft Road Safety Bill are discussed in Section 5.2B.

The main South Australian proposals in the Working Party report of February 1985 are covered in Section 5.4B.

In Western Australia, proposals from researchers have been under consideration and it appears some changes may be adopted (Section 5.5B).

These proposals are summarised in Table 8.3 in terms of licence stages and minimum ages.

From the community consultations in Melbourne, Adelaide, Mildura and Wollongong, there is a widely expressed preference for a scheme which is a variant of the FORS scheme (Section 6.8).

Current Proposals For Licensing Stages and Minimum Ages

Legend

Minimum age for:

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Learner ::::: Probationary = = = Full =====
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8.4 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Concept

While officials do not place much credence on having more **graduated** steps than currently exist, the community consultations showed that people see the graduated aspects as being important, particularly supervision by qualified people, education and training integrated with the licensing process. They envisage that such a process will produce enduring benefits.

Officials see many practical difficulties in implementing the detailed elements of graduated licensing. Participants in the community consultations are very aware of the implementation difficulties but feel strongly that something must be done about the young driver problem and that the significant difficulties can be overcome.

Licensing Stages and Minimum Ages

The whole field of feasible options for licensing stages and minimum ages has been assembled (Table 8.4).

The most important variable on which there is information is the **minimum solo driving age**. This is the factor which relates most to crash involvement rates in the Victorian research. Lowest solo driving age has been taken as 16 years 3 months (allowing a 3 month learner period) and the highest as 18 years, the current maximum of any State.

Another factor which may be important is the separation of learning to drink from learning to drive and solo driving age. No evidence on this factor is available.

The lowest **minimum learner age** has been taken as 16 years and the highest 17 years. There is no demand for reducing the minimum learner age below 16 years. On the contrary, the State and the Territory which have a minimum learner age of 16 years, with immediate graduation possible to probationary licence, either have reservations or would like to see this age raised.

The shortest **learner period** option has been taken as three months and the longest 12 months. Currently in Victoria and Tasmania the minimum learner period is three months, but a person obtaining a learner permit and a probationary licence at the minimum ages, would spend 12 months on a learner permit. There seems to be little support for immediate transition from obtaining learner permit to obtaining probationary licence. However, States and Territories with a six weeks or shorter learner period might argue for retaining this.

Options for the **probationary period** length has been taken as one year and two years.

In summary, the options would allow (as shown in Table 8.4):

- minimum learner age: 16 years, 16 years 9 months or 17 years;
- minimum solo driving (probationary licence) age: 16 years 3 months, 17 years or 18 years;
- minimum full licence age: 18, 19 or 20 years.

Table 8.4
Options for Licensing Stages
(Minimum for Each Stage)

		OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C	OPTION D	OPTION E	OPTION F
Min. solo age		16y 3m		17y			18y
Min. learner age		16y	16y	16y 9m			
Probationary period		1y 9m	1y	1y	2y	1y	2y
Min. full licence		18y	18y	18y	19y	19y	20y
Age (years)	16	::::: L = = = P P P	::::: L L L L	.... ..... L	.... ..... L	.... ..... .....	.... ..... .....
	17	.... P P P P	= = = P P P P	= = = P P P P	= = = P P P P	::::: L L L L	::::: L L L L
	18	===== F	===== F	===== F	.... P P P P	= = = P P P P	= = = P P P P
	19	....	....	....	===== F	===== F	.... P P P P
	20	....	....	.....			===== F

Legend

L - Learner

P - Probationary

F - Full licence

Minimum age for:

Learner :::::

Probationary = = =

Full =====

Officials interviewed in the States and Territories are generally reluctant to change existing licensing stages and minimum ages – unless they could see a good reason for doing so – mainly because they think changes would be unacceptable to the community. The main exception is South Australia where they are greatly concerned at having solo drivers of age 16 years. However, they seem reluctant to raise the learner permit age or even the probationary licence age to 17 years.

Victoria which has the highest ages for solo driving and for a full licence, and equal highest age for a learner permit, is strongly committed to retaining the minimum solo driving age of 18 years. Officials (and politicians) consider that reducing the minimum solo driving age would increase the number of crashes and casualties. They also consider that there is not a great demand for reducing the solo driving age.

Road traffic researchers in Victoria reject any move to reduce the solo driving age on road safety grounds. They demonstrate that through cumulative fatal and injury crash involvement rates from start to age 20 years, Victoria benefits greatly in comparison with other jurisdictions. They estimate that reduction of solo driving age to 16 years would lead to an extra 30–50 fatal and 650–700 injury crashes annually in Victoria.

In community consultations, a very common response was that graduated licensing measures would be justified "even if only one life would be saved".

In Victorian community consultation, young people and their parents stated that they feel disadvantaged compared with other states because the minimum solo driving age is 18 years and the full licence age is 21 years. They are concerned that while young people have full adult status at 18 years, they do not have full driving status. They are also concerned to separate learning-to-drive from learning-to-drink. They feel that if there were a substantial learner/probationary period before age 18 years, young people would learn to drive responsibly before being allowed to drink legally. The Victorian researcher's response is that this would have little effect on those young people who will continue to drink illegally regardless.

The assessments from the Victorian Road Traffic Authority paper on licensing age and accident involvement rates were not used in the community consultations, so it is not known whether this would have changed people's opinions (in the community consultations) favouring solo driving at 17 years and a full licence at 18 years. People seemed to have a general belief that some form of graduated licensing would not only reduce young driver crash involvement rates but also have a long run effect of reducing the rate over a person's whole driving life.

This poses the question as to whether the RTA's predicted increase in crash involvement rates by reducing solo driving from 18 to 17 years, would be offset by adequate reductions through:

- a) lower rates with an earlier start, and a structured programme including education and training integrated with the licensing process; and
- b) lower long-run (age 18 to 70+) rates if young/inexperienced drivers had properly learned roadcraft and carcraft from the beginning.

The Victorian research suggests that increasing the minimum solo driving age to 17 years (in jurisdictions where it is less than 17 years) would be beneficial in reducing young driver fatalities and injuries, providing enforcement is effective.

What is uncertain is whether increased benefits would flow from an increase from 17 to 18 years or whether it is more important to separate learning to drive/solo driving from learning to drink.

In Victoria there is a difference of opinion about minimum driving age between researchers/officials/politicians and the community groups which were consulted. Whether to reduce the solo driving age to 17 (or 17.5) years is a political judgement. Two areas of inquiry are particularly important: further opinion sounding on minimum solo driving age, with specific information given to participants on young driver crash involvement statistics; and research on predicted long-run outcomes to assess whether net long-run benefits of a graduated licensing program with a reduced solo driving age could exceed those of the proposals in the draft Victorian Road Safety Bill.

Alcohol

All States already have zero or 0.02 BAC limits; in the two Territories the prevailing rate of 0.08 applies for all drivers.

Many people express concerns about separating learning-to-drive from learning-to-drink. Given the large part that alcohol plays in road casualties, young people should be started on responsible attitudes from the beginning.

If reducing young driver crash involvement is the main objective, the case for zero BAC for learner and probationary drivers is irrefutable.

There is a case for having 0.02 BAC on the grounds of accuracy of testing equipment and the use of medicines containing alcohol. If adequate safeguards are incorporated, there is a good case for setting the level to zero and to minimise legalistic challenges as is proposed in Victoria.

Supervision

Supervision plays little part in those jurisdictions where the minimum learner period is virtually nil or six weeks (and where young drivers exercise this right). However, in rural areas it is likely that there has been an extended period of instruction and supervision, as young people on farms learn to drive from an early age.

In Victoria, where the learner period is three months minimum and 12 months maximum, there is an opportunity for young drivers to benefit from the extended duration.

Even though the novice driver learns a mixture of good and bad habits (from an untrained teacher such as a parent or young friend), there appears to be a benefit in longer periods of supervision in that it defers solo driving till somewhat greater experience and maturity are achieved. While 12 months is desirable, three months should be regarded as an absolute minimum.

The greater the experience of the supervisor, the more effective the supervision is likely to be. The requirement for a supervisor to have three or four years experience seems preferable to a 0-1 year requirement.

Curfew

The sunset to sunrise curfew is unrealistic. It would cause considerable hardship to normal employment and evening education and disrupt evening sports and recreation.

The night hours casualty problem, proposed to be addressed through curfews, is a late night/early morning phenomenon. Early evening is not so much of a problem. Dawn is not a problem, but many people are driving to work at that time. The most feasible curfew solution would be 10 pm to 5 am: there would be minimal effects on return from work or early morning starts, on evening classes, evening sports or recreation; shift workers and restaurant trade workers would be affected to some extent; and late night social activity (frequently associated with drinking) would be seriously curtailed.

In the community consultations, country people resisted longer curfews more than city people did, but there was widespread assent to a 10 pm to 5 am curfew.

For city people, a practical argument against early evening curfews is that learners would be deprived of the most convenient learning periods.

Passengers

The Victorian research finding is that most casualties which might be attributed to behaviour while carrying passengers occur late at night. This behavioural problem would be curtailed through the introduction of a 10 pm to 5 am curfew. This would obviate the need for a passenger-carrying restriction.

In the community consultations, young people and adults expressed the view that carrying passengers is part of the experience of learning to drive but they acknowledge the existence of unsafe behaviour when carrying large numbers of passengers. They thought that two or three passengers is a reasonable limitation.

Enforcement

In some jurisdictions there is no requirement to carry a licence. A person apprehended for an offence is given 48 hours to produce a licence, giving plenty of opportunities to abuse the system. There, the police consider the mandatory carrying of a photographic licence to be the only way to have effective enforcement. Elsewhere, police say that graduated licensing would not work without photographic licences. In the community consultations there was almost universal support for photographic licences. A number of jurisdictions are introducing them already.

Another approach being tried (in Western Australia) is random licence checking comparable to random breath testing. This is a controversial subject, and it will be desirable to scientifically monitor the outcome. If it is favourable, helps to save lives and is cost effective, other jurisdictions might follow. In the community consultations, more than 90% favoured random licence checks, many being personally aware of a

considerable number of unlicensed drivers.

Any graduated licensing scheme should not be unduly complex in the means of differentiation between stages. The L and P plates should be adequate for this purposes. Any other necessary sub-stages could be indicated through the dates and conditions shown on the licence.

Penalties

Regression to an earlier licensing stage is to be preferred to suspension, except for the gravest of offences. It is also important that penalties for given offences are defined and well known. Participants in the community consultation considered that less discretion should be given to the courts in applying penalties.

Driver Education and Training

The conventional wisdom in road safety research, particularly from the US, is that high school driver education is of little benefit and may even be counterproductive. The young driver learns carcraft skills, but little roadcraft skills under real life conditions. Excessive confidence can be engendered and some studies have shown that those who have undertaken these courses have no significant difference in crash risk compared with other drivers.

Participants in the community consultations emphasised driver education and training as an integral part of a graduated licensing package, preferring to have an education and training program rather than none at all - in spite of what research findings may show.

It is widely appreciated that learning from a qualified driving instructor is better than learning from a parent or a friend. For most people, a full course of driving lessons is more than they can afford. The most they are likely to do is to have one or a small number of lessons before undertaking the practical test. Some way needs to be found to harness young people's concern to have formal education and training in roadcraft and carcraft, integrated with graduated licensing, but avoiding any pitfalls of excessive confidence in carcraft.

Mature Age Drivers

A decision is needed on whether graduated licensing should apply to novice drivers regardless of age or just to the young. There is a need to distinguish between those aspects of graduated licensing attributable to inexperience and those which are directed at the high crash involvement rates of young drivers.

In Victoria, for example, about 85% of the population has obtained a driving licence by the age of 25 years. Crash involvement rates have decreased to the same level as the 26-59 age group by age 21, in Victoria. The licensing rate is similar in South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT. This information was unavailable for the other States.

Young people in the community consultations to some extent saw the novice driver problem more as an inexperience problem than as a young driver problem. They thought that all graduated licensing provisions should apply universally regardless of age.

The minimum learner and probationary period requirements seem just as valid for mature learners. Similarly, supervised learning is valid, but a three months minimum period should be adequate, even within a scheme which involves a 12 months learner period for 16 and 17 year olds.

Clearly, zero BAC provisions should also apply to mature learners.

Given the purposes of a curfew, it seems valid to exempt mature learners from curfew restrictions. However, young people could well think this is unfair because a group of "mature" males could well misbehave together in a car late at night.

8.5 CONCLUSIONS

This study has been about the **implementation** of graduated licensing, which is a policy of the Australian Transport Advisory Council.

No State or Territory has proposals to implement graduated licensing in the form proposed by FORS.

There is a divergence of view between licensing officials/policy formulators and the community groups consulted. Generally speaking, licensing officials and policy formulators feel there is insufficient evidence to support the graduated licensing concept, and believe that it would not be "politically acceptable". Community groups accept the graduated licensing concept, including the idea of graduated experience under supervision. They are aware that there would be some difficulties in implementing a scheme, but feel that these difficulties must be overcome as a positive means of addressing the inexperienced young driver problem.

That is, there is a circular argument which needs to be broken. Transport Ministers, licensing and enforcement officials, road safety researchers and policy formulators need to be appraised of the findings of this study, particularly the findings from the community consultations that young people, their parents and other community members would welcome graduated licensing and be prepared to accept the restrictions involved.

Implementation

It should be beneficial to provide greater encouragement to those jurisdictions which are interested in introducing graduated licensing but seek more evidence that it is likely to be effective - by providing them with research findings and analysis of crash statistics which indicate the potential.

The modified licensing arrangements within the draft Victorian Road Safety Bill could be used as the basis of a pilot scheme (demonstration project) which is well monitored to enable establishment of those fruitful elements for subsequent replication on a wider basis. The Victorian authorities should be informed that a curfew is likely to gain community acceptance. The supervision requirements could be strengthened to make better use of the 12 month learner period for those who enter the process at minimum age.

In South Australia and Western Australia there is the potential to implement at least partial graduated licensing schemes with the emphasis on increased solo driving in South Australia (to 17 years), and in Western Australia to take advantage of the possible two year probationary licence period to extend the supervised driving component.