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MEDIA RELEASE

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Young driver fatal crashes down but still too high

Fatalities and injuries involving young drivers have declined in the last ten years.

"Fatal crashes involving young drivers have halved in the past ten years", said Mr Achterstraat. "This has coincided with an enhanced Graduated Licensing System", he added.

"The best outcomes for young driver safety have occurred in the metropolitan areas, with fatal crashes involving young drivers falling nearly 70 per cent compared to a 25 per cent fall in the country", said Mr Achterstraat.

Despite these improvements, young drivers are more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than other drivers.

"Overall, young drivers are involved in 25 per cent of fatal crashes while they make up only 16 per cent of licensed drivers" said Mr Achterstraat. "And young drivers in the country are around three times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than those in metropolitan areas" he added.

These were among the key findings of the performance audit report 'Improving Road Safety: Young Drivers' released today by the NSW Auditor-General, Peter Achterstraat.

The number of crashes involving young drivers rises sharply when a learner driver progresses to a provisional driver where they can drive unsupervised for the first time.

"Young drivers need to be better safeguarded from high-risk situations during the first year of unsupervised driving. Tighter restrictions on night driving and carrying peer passengers should be considered" said Mr Achterstraat.

The high risk behavior of some young drivers contributes to the relatively high crash rate. For example, 39 per cent of drink drivers involved in fatal crashes are under 26 years of age. And in the country speed accounts for almost half of young driver fatal crashes, compared with one-quarter for older drivers.

Enforcement needs to be enhanced, particularly in rural areas, and penalties for repeat and serious offenders should be strengthened.

"Psychological testing particularly for serious and repeat offenders should be considered", said Mr Achterstraat.

The audit also found that licence testing pass rates vary significantly between registries, from 43 per cent at Maroubra Junction to 91 per cent at Narooma.

"The RTA needs to look closely at variations in pass rates between licence testing centres", said Mr Achterstraat.

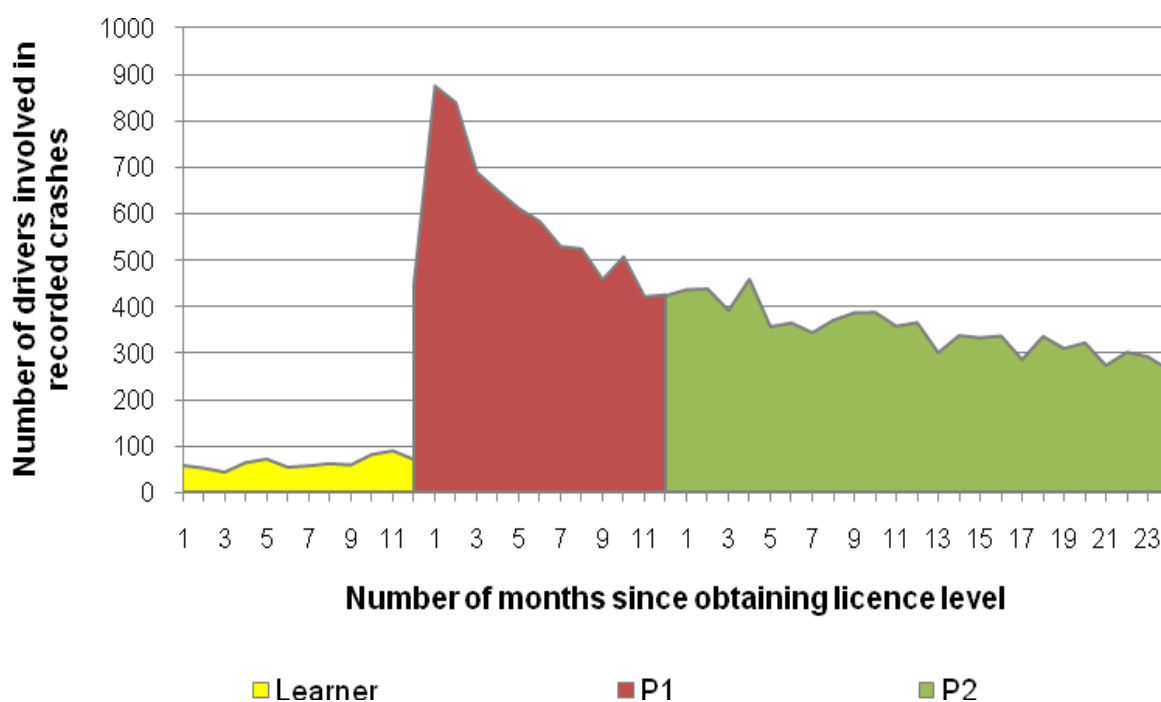
Other recommendations include more training for parental supervisors, better access to safer vehicles, and subsidised instruction in poorer and remote communities.

"There is scope to better protect and support young people, particularly in rural areas", Mr Achterstraat said. "The majority of young drivers do the right thing, those who do the wrong thing must be held accountable. We need to be tougher on those young people who show flagrant disregard for the laws and place their mates and other innocent people in danger", he added.

Further information

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Learners, P1 and P2 Driver Involvements in Recorded Crashes in NSW, 2006 to 2010



Average pass rates for top and bottom five metropolitan and country licence testing centres - 2005 to 2010

| Regional | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Testing centre | Rate | | Rate |
| NAROOMA MOTOR REGISTRY | 91% | LAKE CARGELLIGO COUNCIL AGENCY | 51% |
| BEGA MOTOR REGISTRY | 90% | WELLINGTON MOTOR REGISTRY | 55% |
| CROOKWELL COUNCIL AGENCY | 86% | MERRIWA COUNCIL AGENCY | 55% |
| BATEMANS BAY MOTOR REGISTRY | 84% | WAGGA WAGGA MOTOR REGISTRY | 56% |
| BOMBALA COUNCIL AGENCY | 84% | RAYMOND TERRACE MOTOR REGISTRY | 56% |
| Metropolitan | | | |
| Testing centre | Rate | | Rate |
| SHELLHARBOUR MOTOR REGISTRY | 76% | MAROUBRA JUNCT MOTOR REGISTRY | 43% |
| CORRIMAL MOTOR REGISTRY | 73% | WETHERILL PARK MOTOR REGISTRY | 46% |
| UNANDERRA MOTOR REGISTRY | 72% | GOSFORD MOTOR REGISTRY | 46% |
| ENGADINE MOTOR REGISTRY | 71% | LIDCOMBE MOTOR REGISTRY | 48% |
| THE ENTRANCE MOTOR REGISTRY | 70% | SILVERWATER MOTOR REGISTRY | 49% |