NSW GOVERNMENT Transport for NSW

Centre for Road Safety

# Australian graduated licensing scheme

## Policy framework

October 2014

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# 1 Executive summary

During the last five years, over 1,600 young Australians (15 to 24 years) have died on our roads. One of the most effective road safety measures to address youth road trauma is the implementation of comprehensive, evidence-based graduated licensing schemes (GLS). These are designed to reduce the extent of crash involvement among young drivers by providing a staged approach to driver licensing, minimising the impact of certain risky behaviours associated with young drivers.

All Australian jurisdictions have some form of GLS currently in place. Some jurisdictions have been able to introduce very comprehensive schemes over the last decade. These have been very effective with evaluations in two states showing very significant reductions in casualty and fatality crashes among young drivers as a result. National road trauma data shows that fatalities among the 15-24 age group have reduced by 29% over the last ten years and each Australian jurisdiction has achieved reductions, largely due to the introduction of GLS models in all jurisdictions.

Despite the reduction in fatalities, young drivers remain the most over represented group of drivers involved in crashes on our roads. Improvements to GLS models in each jurisdiction could be implemented to address this level of trauma.

Transport for New South Wales, on behalf of the Austroads Road Safety Taskforce, commissioned Whiting Moyne Pty Ltd (Eric Howard and Anne Harris) to undertake a project to develop an evidence-informed Australian GLS policy framework that can be applied in Australian jurisdictions. The project has involved the preparation of a review of current Australian young driver licensing arrangements, a discussion paper outlining research and evaluation findings, consultation and input from representatives of all jurisdictions and ultimately the development of a GLS policy framework report.

Research has shown that young drivers have higher crash risks due to:

- the nature of adolescent development which effects a young person's cognitive and perceptual skills
- lack of driving experience
- poor ability to anticipate, perceive, identify and, therefore, react to hazards
- failure to recognise and assess risk as well as a propensity to take intentional risks
- propensity to be over-confident and over-estimate their driving ability.

Based on the available research and GLS evaluations, and taking into consideration the feedback from the practitioners in each jurisdiction, the key elements of an effective GLS have been identified. These include:

- licensing age, whereby the older a young person is when they are licensed the safer they are
- having high levels of supervised driving experience in a range of conditions prior to driving solo
- effective testing procedures that can discriminate between more and less safe applicants to only licence those demonstrating safe behaviours and abilities

- risk reduction measures to try to limit the negative impact of the increased risks to newly licensed drivers that are associated with alcohol, distraction, late night driving and driving with multiple peer aged passengers
- behaviour control measures, that aim to deter provisional drivers from illegal and high risk behaviours (in particular speeding) by having lower tolerances and more penalties for those that commit offences
- licensing access support measures to ensure that all members of the community can safely become licensed.

The recommendations in this report endeavour to document a GLS policy framework. It is acknowledged that each jurisdiction has a different starting point. Given this, it is intended that this GLS policy framework will highlight key GLS areas that each jurisdiction can potentially work towards addressing over time in accordance with the circumstances in their jurisdiction. It outlines the fundamental components to guide (rather than prescribe) the implementation of increasingly effective GLS approaches across Australia.

In order to address the varying GLS starting points, and also reflect the need in many jurisdictions to make changes and improvement on a gradual basis, a three staged model is presented which outlines key elements of progressively more effective GLS models. The framework outlines a standard, an enhanced and an exemplar GLS model for consideration by each jurisdiction within a time period that may be substantial.

In addition to the elements included in the proposed framework, there are a number of elements of GLS models that may have the potential to further increase the safety benefits of a GLS, such as supervisor requirements, online logbooks or driving programs at the learner or provisional phase, but at this stage, these measures are unproven. Further research is needed to determine the effectiveness of these measures, prior to their widespread inclusion in GLS policy models.

It is intended that jurisdictions can utilise this framework to improve their GLS arrangements in the short, medium and longer term. A long period of time (perhaps ten to fifteen years or more) may be necessary for some jurisdictions to be able to move to a GLS that reflects the enhanced or exemplar model.

Engaging with the community and key opinion leaders is necessary to garner the level of support needed to improve young driver licensing policy. It is important that jurisdictions develop effective communication programs to inform the community of the need to address young driver safety and of the evidence that shows how certain elements of a GLS can lead to less young driver deaths and injuries.

It is also recommended that some processes to assist in the progress of improving GLS models around Australia be established. It is proposed that a communication and information sharing process (possibly held annually) be established by Austroads to facilitate the sharing of research, evaluations and experiences in implementing GLS improvements as well as young driver crash involvement across Australia. This review and communication process should enable this GLS policy framework to be reviewed. Future opportunities to improve GLS effectiveness could also be shared on an ongoing basis to reflect new research findings and encourage further improvement.

## 1.1 Summary of GLS policy recommendations

- The older a person is when licensed the better. Measures to encourage older age licensing should be implemented, either by increasing the minimum age or other measures which serve to delay licensing until substantial supervised driving experience is gained.
- Australian GLS models should have a minimum learner permit period of 12 months.
- Extensive supervised driving experience should be encouraged and the minimum number of hours that are to be logged by learners should be a requirement of all GLS models.
- Supervised night time driving should be encouraged during the learner phase, and requirements for a set number of hours for supervised experience at night should be established.
- Hazard perception tests should be utilised as part of the licensing process for GLS and ideally should be applied to progress from a Learner permit to a P1 licence.
- On-road driving tests that are effective in discriminating between safer and less safe drivers should be administered prior to obtaining a P licence.
- Restrictions on late night driving during the early provisional period have been shown to provide road safety benefits and need to be considered.
- Restrictions on carrying multiple peer aged passengers during the early provisional period have been shown to provide road safety benefits and should be considered by all jurisdictions.
- Consideration should be given to reducing in-vehicle distraction during the entire P period, including any use by provisional drivers of mobile phones.
- Zero BAC requirements as part of the GLS have been very effective, and jurisdictions should consider ways to extend the zero BAC requirement.
- A longer provisional period has several benefits, such as a zero BAC requirement and lower demerit point threshold. Jurisdictions should consider having a total provisional period of 3 years and ultimately aim to have a 4 year provisional period.
- Lower demerit point thresholds for novice drivers are regarded as effective. Research into the impact that penalties and enforcement levels have on deterring young drivers from offending and/or re-offending as well as on the re-licensing rates would help jurisdictions develop the optimum approach.
- The overall safety of all young people should be the key imperative in all programs to assist young people obtain a licence. Governments need to support programs to assist disadvantaged learners progress through the GLS, ideally helping them to meet the key requirements of the GLS.
- Indigenous communities require specific support to achieve licensing which go beyond (necessary) support for supervised driving.

## 1.2 Proposed Australian GLS Policy Framework

### 1.2.1 Standard GLS

- Learner permit at 16 years, solo licensing from 17 years
- 12 months min. holding of learner permit
- Requirement to undertake 50 hours supervised driving recorded in a log book
- On-road tests to achieve solo licence
- Hazard Perception Test as part of GLS
- Zero BAC and no hand held mobiles during entire Provisional period
- Lower demerit point threshold for novice drivers
- Community education about risks associated with:
    - P1 drivers and late night driving and carrying multiple passengers
    - Young drivers on a full licence and drink driving
- Support programs to assist disadvantaged to progress

### 1.2.2 Enhanced GLS

ALL of the Standard GLS measures with the following improvements:

- Requirement to undertake 80-100 hours supervised driving recorded in a log book, at least 10 hours at night
- Provisional period for 3 years in total (1 years P1+2 years P2)
- Restriction on the carriage of multiple passengers for P1 (at night or preferably full time)
- Restriction on use of hands free phones during P1 phase

### 1.2.3 Exemplar GLS

ALL of the Standard GLS measures with the following improvements:

- Learner permit at 16 years, solo licensing from 18 years (a mandatory minimum age of 18 years for a provisional licence is exemplar policy. However, jurisdictions that cannot achieve this should aim to achieve a median licensing age in real terms of 18 years or older)
- Requirement to undertake 100-120 hours supervised driving recorded in a log book, at least 15 - 20 hours at night.
- Provisional period for 4 years in total (1 year P1 + 3 years P2)
- Restriction on the carriage of multiple peer aged passengers (full time) for P1 drivers
- Restriction on late night driving for P1 drivers
- Restriction on use of hands free phones during entire P phase.
- Very low demerit point threshold during the GLS
- Educational programs where there is sound research evidence of improved safety outcomes

# 2 Introduction

Graduated licensing schemes (GLS) can help to reduce the extent of crash involvement among young drivers by providing a staged approach to driver licensing. This helps to minimize the impact of some of the risky behaviours associated with young drivers, such as inexperience and poor attentional control as well as impulsivity and sensation seeking.

Previous and current Austroads projects have reviewed the literature about the effectiveness of common GLS components as well as activities that can be implemented to enrol and engage young Aboriginal drivers in a GLS.

While all Australian states and territories have some form of GLS for young drivers, it is acknowledged that the effectiveness of a GLS can be influenced by several factors. These can include:

- the nature of young driver behaviour and crash involvement in different jurisdictional contexts;
- the nature and the mix of the GLS components;
- the sequence with which they are implemented across the GLS period;
- how GLS components are enforced; and
- how the GLS is implemented.

Each Australian jurisdiction differs on many of these factors. The Austroads Safety Taskforce believes that there is a need to use a holistic approach when developing a GLS policy framework and that by refining GLS approaches used by Australian jurisdictions some improvements in road safety could be achieved.

Transport for New South Wales, on behalf of the Austroads Road Safety Taskforce, has commissioned Whiting Moyne Pty Ltd (Eric Howard and Anne Harris) to undertake a project to develop an evidence-informed Australian GLS policy framework that can be applied in Australian jurisdictions.

In advocating to government and the community those specific measures which will deliver improved levels of novice driver safety, a clear focus by road safety authorities on the likely fatality and serious injury reduction outcomes which could be achieved will be vital. These measures could be supplemented into the future by emerging solutions, such as improved vehicle technologies which will improve active and passive safety as well as that which will support improved behavioural compliance by drivers. However, the priority in the immediate future needs to be on those existing GLS measures which are known to deliver material reductions in fatalities and serious injuries.

As each jurisdiction is different, it is intended that this GLS policy framework will highlight key GLS areas that each jurisdiction can potentially work towards addressing over time in accordance with the circumstances in their jurisdiction. It outlines the fundamental components to guide (rather than prescribe) the implementation of increasingly effective GLS approaches across Australia.

## 2.1 Involvement and input from each jurisdiction

A discussion paper was prepared and circulated to jurisdictions in June 2014 and telephone or face-to-face meetings were carried out with road safety policy staff, and where possible, licensing staff and police from all Australian jurisdictions.

All jurisdictions expressed interest in knowing what other jurisdictions were doing and in evaluations of new measures. Overall the jurisdictions saw value in the development of a GLS policy framework, as it has the potential to assist them in their work to continuously improve their novice driver licensing systems.

Differences in the conditions of licences can be a particular issue in border areas. Police in several jurisdictions raised the problem of cross-border differences. This issue is addressed to a substantial extent in consensus that conditions in the licensing home state determine conditions to be enforced. While greater consistency across jurisdictions would assist with enforcement, each jurisdiction has to respond to its own situation and find its own path.

It should be noted that the elements of good GLS policy are present to varying degrees in the graduated licensing systems currently operating in all jurisdictions. The opportunity exists to improve novice driver safety by strengthening existing arrangements and introducing some new measures rather than completely replacing existing approaches.

The ability and readiness to implement any improvements to existing GLS models varies considerably across Australia. Some jurisdictions are in the process of reviewing young driver licensing with a view to making improvements in the future. Some states are in the process of evaluating the effect of existing systems. Victoria is undertaking a full evaluation of their GLS, with outcomes expected in 2015. Queensland has recently completed an evaluation, and New South Wales and Western Australia are commencing evaluations of specific elements of their GLS.

An overview of current GLS practices across each Australian jurisdiction is shown in Appendix A and a brief summary of the outcomes of available evaluations of Australian GLS models is shown in Appendix B. A summary of the consultation findings is included in Appendix C.

## 2.2 Current young driver trauma levels

Over the past decade, most Australian jurisdictions have implemented significant improvements to young driver licensing. In Australia in the early 2000's, no jurisdiction had a comprehensive GLS in place. However, today, all jurisdictions do have some form of graduated licensing for novice drivers.

A detailed statistical analysis of young adult road trauma in Australia was recently completed by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE, 2013). Encouragingly it found that during the last five years, fatalities among the 15-24 age group have reduced by 29% and each Australian jurisdiction achieved reductions. The introduction of GLS models in all states was regarded as a key reason for the reduction in fatalities.

However, it was also reported that young people continue to be significantly over-represented in road trauma, with the highest risk period being immediately after licensing and continuing up to the age of 24 years (BITRE, 2013). Over the last five years a total of 1,480 people aged between 17-25 years have been killed on Australian roads (BITRE, 2014).

It is noted that the fatality rate for this age group remains more than 50% higher than for all age groups in 2012 (BITRE, 2014).

While all jurisdictions have experienced reductions in the involvement of young people in fatal crashes over the past five years, the average across the jurisdictions of the fatalities per 100,000 population shows significant variability.

**Table 1: Annual road deaths per 100,000 population in the 15-24 age group from 2009-2013**

| | ACT | VIC | NSW | QLD | SA | TAS | WA | NT | Australia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mean** | 3.5 | 7.8 | 8.5 | 9.7 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 11.5 | 22.3 | 9.2 |

Source: (BITRE, 2013)

While there are some significant differences, especially between the two jurisdictions with the lowest populations (Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory) it is worth noting that in each of these jurisdictions, young people (aged 17-25 years) account for approximately 20% of all road deaths.

Research has shown that there are several reasons why young drivers have higher crash risks (VicRoads, 2002; Waller, 2003). These include:

- the nature of adolescent development which effects a young person's cognitive and perceptual skills
- lack of driving experience
- poor ability to anticipate, perceive, identify and, therefore, react to hazards
- failure to recognise and assess risk as well as a propensity to take intentional risks
- propensity to be over-confident and over-estimate their driving ability.

Effective GLS models aim to address and overcome the key reasons why young drivers are over-represented in road trauma. GLS models need to take into account the nature of young drivers and to implement effective strategies for mitigating areas of increased risk.

# 3 Key elements of effective GLS models

Based on the available research and GLS evaluations, and taking into consideration the feedback from the practitioners in each jurisdiction, the key elements of an effective GLS have been identified.

These include:

- the age of licensing
- levels of knowledge and experience when initially progressing to supervised driving, and then to driving solo
- effective testing procedures for solo licensing
- risk reduction measures (especially for alcohol, distraction and speeding)
- behaviour control measures, and
- licensing access support.

Each of these elements are discussed in more detail below. These elements have informed the development of a recommended GLS policy framework that is outlined in section 3.

Some elements of the licensing system that apply across all Australian jurisdictions are not specifically discussed in this report. Such requirements as providing proof of identity, passing an eyesight test, carriage of licence, displaying L and P plates and towing restrictions are all relevant components of any licensing system and are applied by all jurisdictions. These are not areas of significant research or policy debate and as such have not been included in the proposed policy framework.

## 3.1 Age of licensing

When managing when and how a young person learns to drive, jurisdictions need to recognise the processes of adolescent development. As such, the age at which a young person starts to learn to drive and when they are permitted to drive solo needs to be considered and effective GLS models need to reflect this.

### 3.1.1 Learner age

There is consensus in developed countries using GLS for novice drivers that 16 years is the appropriate minimum age to commence driving as a learner and this is supported by empirical evidence and by research on adolescent development (Senserrick & Williams, 2013; Keating, 2008).

Almost all jurisdictions in Australia have a minimum learner age of 16 years. Ideally the minimum driving age is determined in relation to the age of provisional licensure and also the minimum time a learner permit is held for. Ultimately, the eligibility age and length of the learner period should be designed to encourage optimum supervised driving experience.

### 3.1.2 Age for a provisional licence

Australian jurisdictions, with the exception of Victoria and the Northern Territory, set the minimum age when a person can apply for a provisional licence at 17 years. Crash evaluations identify young age as a risk factor and research shows that there are safety benefits in setting the age of solo driving at higher ages. Evaluations show

increased safety benefits at higher ages, with licensing at age 17 being better than at 16 and licensing at age 18 being better than at 17. Crash modelling undertaken by CASR for the South Australian GLS review predicted that increasing the licensing age to 18 from 17 would produce a 20% reduction in crashes among 16-24 year olds (DPTI, 2011). This evidence strongly supports Victoria retaining the age of licensing at 18 years.

Despite the road safety benefits, raising the licensing age can be difficult to achieve due to political and community pressure related to mobility and access concerns, which can lead to educational and employment disadvantage, especially for those living in rural and remote areas.

Jurisdictions may need to consider measures that support increases in the actual age at which young people become licensed. Both New South Wales and Queensland reported increases in the median age young people are licensed after increasing the minimum learner period to 12 months. In New South Wales, the median age at which a young person obtains a P1 licence is now 18 years and 4 months. This change is due to the requirement for 120 hours of supervised driving experience and the increase in the minimum learner period. In Queensland, 49% of young people who obtain a P1 licence are aged 19 years or older.

### 3.1.3 Policy recommendation

- The older a person is when licensed the better. Measures to encourage older age licensing should be implemented, either by increasing the minimum age or other measures which serve to delay licensing until substantial supervised driving experience is gained.

## 3.2 Pre-licence development and experience

It generally is accepted that both age-related and experience-related factors contribute to the over-representation of young driver crash involvement. Research shows that drivers tend to learn basic car control skills relatively quickly. However, more complex cognitive abilities involving judgment, risk assessment and decision making that enables a novice driver to be safe across a wide range of potentially hazardous situations takes significantly longer (McCartt et al, 2009).

Gaining extensive driving experience that begins in very low risk situations and gradually increases in complexity as a driver becomes more experienced and acquires more skills is regarded as an optimal approach to learning to drive.

### 3.2.1 Minimum learner period

Research shows that sufficient time is needed to maximise both depth and breadth of experience as a learner before progressing to a provisional licence (Kinnear et al, 2013). This is to enable the learner to develop the ability to perceive, anticipate and identify potential hazards and to respond accordingly.

Evaluations of increases in the minimum learner period from 6 to 12 months in Queensland and Victoria indicated positive road safety outcomes. However, this measure was introduced along with other measures so it is not possible to calculate the discrete benefits of this change (Healy et al, 2012 and Newstead & Scully, 2013).

Most Australian jurisdictions have a minimum 12 month learner period and this should extend to all jurisdictions.

### 3.2.2 Minimum supervised driving hours requirements

Establishing a requirement for a minimum number of supervised driving hours has been regarded as a positive aspect of Australian GLS models as it ensures that the learner has undertaken extensive driving experience prior to driving solo (Kinnear et al, 2013). However, determining what number of driving hours is optimal is less clear. Research, predominantly from European and Australian evaluations, suggests that setting a requirement for between 80 and 120 hours will have crash reduction benefits (Senserrick & Williams, 2013). Significant crash reductions were recorded in Victoria after they introduced a GLS which included a requirement for 120 hours and in Queensland after they introduced a GLS with a requirement for 100 hours.

Victorian research has found that the nature of supervised driving changes during the latter phase of the learning period (after 80 or 90 hours). During this time, driving involving more challenging and complex situations is undertaken. This may indicate that supervisors and learners need a significant amount of time to feel comfortable before undertaking complex driving (Cavallo & Oh, 2008). It is possible that without extensive supervised pre-licence driving, some learners do not undertake this complex driving until they are driving solo

The importance of getting supervised driving experience in a range of conditions is highlighted by many jurisdictions in the advice they provide to learners and their supervisors. This often includes information about the importance of undertaking a staged approach in learning to drive, whereby more challenging driving manoeuvres and situations are introduced at appropriate times.

Some jurisdictions require a certain number of supervised hours to be undertaken at night. This is based on the significantly higher crash risk young drivers face driving at night. Having supervised experience driving at night as a learner is important and a GLS requirement for a certain number of hours to be undertaken at night does ensure that at least some supervised driving has been undertaken at night. However, there is no specific research evidence to prescribe how many hours this should be (Senserrick & Williams, 2013), although in general the more experience undertaken in a range of conditions the better.

### 3.2.3 Policy recommendations

- Australian GLS models should have a minimum learner permit period of 12 months.
- Extensive supervised driving experience should be encouraged and the minimum number of hours that are to be logged by learners should be a requirement of all GLS models.
- Supervised night time driving should be encouraged, and requirements for a set number of hours for supervised experience at night should be established.

## 3.3 Effective licence testing

Licence tests are an integral part of all licensing systems. The broad aim of licence testing is to provide an effective assessment of driving competence to determine if the novice driver is safe to progress from supervised (learner) driving to unsupervised (provisional) driving (Cavallo & Oh, 2008).

Some form of testing is part of all Australian GLS models, although the nature of the tests and when they are applied varies considerably. At the learner permit level, almost all jurisdictions require applicants to pass a road law knowledge test. While

not evaluated extensively, the system of requiring the novice to demonstrate some road law knowledge prior to obtaining a learner permit is widely regarded as appropriate.

Tests to progress to a provisional licence vary across jurisdictions. Some form of on-road driving test is applied in most states, although some jurisdictions have an option of competency based testing and assessment, and some states have testing as part of two stage learner period. There is no evidence to suggest that these approaches should be preferred over others.

Some jurisdictions have recently revised the on-road driving tests or are in the process of evaluating these tests. Trialling of the revised Victorian Drive Test found that performance on the new 30 minute test was indicative of levels of total learner experience, and particularly learner experience in challenging driving situations (Cavallo & Oh, 2008). It is important that any evaluations that measure the outcomes of driving tests are shared with each jurisdiction, so that all jurisdictions can apply the most effective tests available.

Computer based Hazard Perception Tests (HPT) are used in several states, and these tests in general show some predictive validity, although the effect size is not large (Senserrick & Williams, 2013). There is currently an Austroads project focusing on the best content of the HPT and jurisdictions are encouraged to work collectively on this.

Jurisdictions vary in when they apply the HPT. Some jurisdictions use the HPT to ensure that learners can demonstrate hazard perception skills prior to being permitted to drive solo. Other jurisdictions use passing the HPT as a requirement to move from P1 to P2. Jurisdictions which include the HPT prior to learners obtaining a P1 licence believe that this is the most valid place for this test, as it ensures that the learner has adequate hazard perception skills prior to driving solo. Given that the crash risk of provisional drivers is highest during the first 6 to 12 months of driving, the HPT offers the greatest potential to assist young driver safety if it is administered prior to a provisional licence being issued.

It is recognised that while licence testing is a very important component of an effective GLS, research and evaluations into the effectiveness of testing regimes is relatively scant, both in Australia and internationally. Australian jurisdictions may benefit from increasing their level of collaboration and shared research in relation to all forms of novice driver testing.

### 3.3.1 Policy recommendations

- Hazard perception tests should be utilised as part of the licensing process for GLS and ideally should be applied to progress from a Learner permit to a P1 licence.
- On-road driving tests that are effective in discriminating between safer and less safe drivers should be administered prior to obtaining a P licence.

## 3.4 Risk reduction measures

There is consistent evidence (Palamara et al, 2012) of an increased risk of crash involvement among young people associated with those:

- in their earliest months of licensure (e.g. less than 12 months), relative to more experienced young drivers
- who are carrying peer aged passengers

- who drive late at night
- with a history of drink driving offences
- who speed and particularly those who engage in high level speeding
- using mobile phones or texting whilst driving.

In order to minimise the negative impacts of youth risk taking, as well as their propensity to be over-confident and to over-estimate their driving ability, the environmental contexts that are associated with risky driving should be controlled (Palamara, 2012). One of the significant benefits of GLS approaches is that they provide a mechanism by which a novice driver's exposure to risky situations can be managed (Keating, 2008).

### 3.4.1 Late night driving restriction

Research shows that crash risk is greater at night for all drivers and especially so for young and inexperienced drivers. The over-representation of young and novice drivers in night-time crashes is thought to be related to a combination of low traffic volume (and more opportunity to travel at high speeds), increased social activity, inexperience and decreased perceptual capacity (Kinnear et al, 2013). Young Australians are over-represented in fatal crashes that occur at night (BITRE, 2013).

Reviews of the effectiveness of late night driving restrictions from US evaluations have found that it is associated with significant crash reductions. The longer the time period for which this restriction is applied (eg. starting earlier and finishing later) the greater the crash reductions (Senserrick & Williams, 2013). CASR estimated that if late night restrictions were introduced in South Australia there would be a reduction in serious and fatal crashes among 16 and 17 year olds of between 9 and 13 per cent (DPTI, 2012). Initial reviews of night time crash involvement among young drivers showed a decrease after a 12am-5am restriction for the first 6 months of the P1 period was introduced in Western Australia.

The lack of community support and understanding of the risks of late night driving has been cited in some jurisdictions as a reason for not introducing this condition. However, South Australia introduced a late night restriction for P1 drivers this year. This was largely achieved through a very effective community consultation and communication process. In particular, a considerable effort was made to calculate the potential crash savings of a late night restriction as well as other proposed GLS measures and this was communicated on an ongoing basis to the community and key opinion leaders.

A detailed review of novice driver licensing undertaken by the UK Transport Research Laboratory addressed the issue of barriers to implementation of GLS measures, in particular those related to late night restrictions. The authors of this report concluded that "many jurisdictions have implemented [Graduated Driver Licensing] GDL over the last quarter of a century and no evaluations have reported the employability of young people as being adversely affected" (Kinnear et al, 2013, p. 66).

In order for late night restrictions to be introduced as part of a GLS, community concerns about the potentially negative effect this may have on parents and employment opportunities for young people need to be addressed and the overall benefits clearly explained. It is also important to communicate that P1 drivers are permitted to drive late at night if they are with a supervising driver and that each jurisdiction offers exemptions for those undertaking essential activities.

### 3.4.2 Policy recommendation

- Restrictions on late night driving during the early provisional period have been shown to provide road safety benefits and need to be considered.

## 3.5 Peer passenger restriction

Research has shown that a young driver's risk of crash involvement increases incrementally with each additional peer aged passenger. Peer passenger restrictions are a common component of US based GLS models and have been associated with very significant reductions in fatal and injury crashes among young drivers (Senserrick & Williams, 2013). Passenger restrictions as part of GLS models are largely verified as an effective way of reducing crash risk among young drivers (Kinnear et al, 2013) and CASR estimated that if passenger restrictions were introduced in South Australia there would be a reduction in serious and fatal crashes among 16 and 17 year olds of between 10 and 14 per cent (DPTI, 2012).

Victoria introduced a peer passenger restriction for P1 drivers with its new GLS in 2008. The Victorian GLS interim evaluation found that a reduction in crashes with multiple passengers was recorded after this measure (which was part of a range of revisions to the GLS) was introduced (Healy et al, 2012).

Peer passenger restrictions for P1 drivers were introduced in South Australia this year, and (as with the efforts made to introduce late night driving restrictions), this followed a comprehensive community consultation and engagement process.

There has not been any research comparing the effectiveness of night-time passenger restrictions (such as those currently in place in New South Wales and Queensland) with restrictions that are applied full-time. It is likely that there would be crash reductions if the passenger restrictions applied full-time, as the risks associated with the carriage of multiple passengers is still elevated during day time hours.

As with late night restrictions, it is important that P1 drivers are permitted to with drive multiple passengers if they are with a supervising driver and that each jurisdiction offers exemptions for those undertaking essential activities.

### 3.5.1 Policy recommendation

- Restrictions on carrying multiple peer aged passengers during the early provisional period have been shown to provide road safety benefits and should be considered by all jurisdictions.

## 3.6 Mobile phone restrictions

The use of both hands-free and hand-held mobile phones has been found to increase crash risk, especially for inexperienced and young drivers who appear to have greater deficits in managing divided attention while driving. Younger drivers have been found to make more judgment errors and perform worse on secondary tasks, especially in higher risk situations, than older drivers when distracted. The rate of inattention-related crash and near-crash events decrease dramatically with age, with the rate being as much as four times higher for the 18-to-20-year-old age group relative to the older groups (i.e. 35+years) (NHTSA, 2006).

Most Australian jurisdictions have introduced restrictions on the use of hand-held phones during the learner and provisional period. While there have been no specific evaluations to determine the efficacy of this condition as part of a GLS, the broader evidence about the association between mobile phone use and increased risk among

novice drivers is quite consistent. It should also be recognised that technological advances and the take up of new devices by younger people is likely to outpace regulations. As such, the issue goes beyond the use of mobile phones to include many forms of portable or in-car devices that may cause distraction, especially for younger less experienced drivers.

### 3.6.1 Policy recommendation

- Consideration should be given to reducing in-vehicle distraction during the entire P period, including the use of mobile phones.

## 3.7 Zero BAC requirements

Even small amounts of alcohol can increase crash risk and the risk of fatal crash involvement associated with alcohol is greater for young novice drivers than older experienced drivers.

All Australian jurisdictions have zero BAC limits for learner and provisional drivers and these have been shown to be effective in significantly reducing alcohol related crashes, and a zero limit has been shown to be significantly more effective than low limits, such as 0.02 BAC (Senserrick & Williams, 2013).

The National Road Safety Strategy references the potential action of extending the zero BAC length as part of initiatives to improve driving licensing arrangements. It includes an action to:

"Develop an evidence based model of GLS for car drivers. Elements for examination include … alcohol restrictions and more effective sanctions for … alcohol offences".

Jurisdictions regarded managing introduction of a requirement for extended zero BAC beyond the P2 period as difficult. One option that could usefully be explored further is estimating the scale of the road safety benefits of extending the zero BAC requirement to at least age 21, through extending the P2 period to 4 years.

This option has been proposed by health researchers who estimate that requiring licensed drivers to maintain a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of zero until at least the age of 21 years, would have significant benefits (Hall et al, 2010).

The research from the United States generally supports requiring that all drivers have a zero BAC up until at least the age of 21 years (Shults et al, 2001), although this research may be influenced by the legal drinking laws that operate in most US states, which prohibit alcohol until age 21. Victoria increased the length of the P2 period in 2008 and one of the objectives of this was to extend the zero BAC requirement. The outcomes of this will not be fully known until the detailed evaluation of the Victorian GLS is completed in 2015.

Some recent crash data from some Australian jurisdictions suggests that there may be benefits in extending the zero BAC requirement to 25 years (see section 4 for a further discussion).

### 3.7.1 Policy recommendation

- Zero BAC requirements as part of the GLS have been very effective, and jurisdictions should consider ways to extend the zero BAC requirement.

## 3.8 Length of provisional requirements

The length of the provisional period and the minimum age at which a young person can obtain a full driving licence varies across the country. The length of the provisional period ranges from 2 to 4 years, and the minimum age a person can drive on a full licence ranges from 19 years (in Western Australia) up to 22 years in Victoria.

**Table 2: Minimum age for a full licence across Australian jurisdictions**

| State/ Territory | Length of provisional period | Min. age to obtain a full licence |
|---|---|---|
| Western Australia | 2 years | 19 years |
| Northern Territory | 2 years | 19 years (although zero BAC extends until at least 19.5 years) |
| New South Wales | 3 years | 20 years |
| Australian Capital Territory | 3 years | 20 years |
| Queensland | 3 years | 20 years |
| South Australia | 3 years | 20 years |
| Tasmania | 3 years | 20 years |
| Victoria | 4 years | 22 years |

As all jurisdictions require a zero BAC for the entire GLS period, the primary benefit of longer provisional periods is the amount of time a young driver is required to have a zero BAC limit. In addition to the benefits associated with a zero BAC, extended provisional periods mean that the young driver has a lower demerit point threshold before licence cancellation, and also faces more stringent penalties for certain high risk offences in some jurisdictions (these are discussed in section 2.5 below).

### 3.8.1 Policy recommendation

- **A longer provisional period has several benefits, such as a zero BAC requirement and lower demerit point threshold. Jurisdictions should consider having a total provisional period of 3 years and ultimately aim to have a 4 year provisional period.**

## 3.9 Behaviour control measures

In order to deter and potentially manage particularly high risk young drivers, specific and more stringent sanctions and penalties apply to young drivers in most jurisdictions under existing GLS models.

One commonly applied sanction is a lower demerit point threshold for both learner and provisional drivers. The evidence about the effectiveness of demerit point systems for all drivers is well documented (Diamantopoulou et al, 1997), although specific evidence about the effect this component of existing GLS models has on young drivers in Australia has not been evaluated.

A recent evaluation of the increased sanctions for young drivers who offend in the UK found a reduction in the incidence of offending among young drivers (Kinnear et al, 2013). An evaluation of new penalties (immediate licence suspension and vehicle impoundment) for extreme speeding offences (50km or more over the speed limit) in

Canada has found that swift, certain and severe sanctions are effective in deterring high risk behaviours, especially among male drivers (Meirambayeva et al, 2014).

In most jurisdictions, novice drivers are permitted to accrue no more than 4 or 5 demerit points in a year while under the GLS. However, some jurisdictions have stricter systems, with New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and South Australia having a limit of no more than 4 demerit points in three years. New South Wales applies a "zero tolerance" to speeding, whereby Learners and Provisional drivers receive a minimum of four demerit points and a fine for any speeding offence, consequently exceeding the demerit point limit and incurring an automatic licence suspension of 3 months. South Australia also has a requirement that any breach of licence conditions or accrual of 4 or more demerit points during the entire GLS period results in a 6 month licence disqualification. A breach in licence conditions includes driving at 10km/h over the speed limit or any drink driving offences.

Victoria introduced a requirement in 2008 that all novice drivers who are detected with a BAC of 0.07 are required to have an interlock fitted for at least 6 months as a condition of relicensing. There is extensive research that has found that alcohol interlocks are very effective in reducing drink driving while the interlock is fitted (Ferguson, 2012). However, there is no specific research that outlines what longer term impact the alcohol interlocks have for novice drivers. Similarly, there may be some future potential in other in-vehicle technologies for offenders such as Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA).

As there have been no evaluations of the effect of these measures, what specific sanctions or penalty programs should apply for novice drivers under an optimum GLS model are not known. Jurisdictions need to balance the anticipated deterrent effects of harsher penalties with the effectiveness of the sanction on offenders. While there are likely to be safety benefits resulting from increased sanctions, some jurisdictions expressed concerns that harsher penalties or additional relicensing requirements may have the unintended consequence of encouraging some offenders to drive unlicensed. Some further evaluation is needed to establish the optimum approach.

The nature and extent of additional penalties for P drivers varies considerably across jurisdictions. Some evaluation of the outcomes of penalty programs on offenders is needed to try to ascertain which novice drivers benefit from the suspension, which ones and how many fail to get relicensed, and what the overall deterrent effect of the penalty programs are.

### 3.9.1 Policy recommendation

- Lower demerit point thresholds for novice drivers are regarded as effective. Research into the impact that penalties and enforcement levels have on deterring young drivers from offending and/or re-offending as well as on the re-licensing rates would help jurisdictions develop the optimum approach.

## 3.10 Access to licensing

### 3.10.1 Issues associated with licensing and disadvantaged groups

Certain groups in the community can have difficulty meeting the GLS requirements, which can have a significant impact on their access to employment, education, training, health care, family, cultural and recreational activities.

Within Australia, certain groups have been identified as facing particular disadvantage in terms of access to licensing. These include Aboriginal people, people from CALD backgrounds (especially newly arrived immigrants) and people from low socio-

economic backgrounds. A recent New South Wales report has highlighted some of the difficulties experienced by Aboriginal people in dealing with the GLS (New South Wales Audit Report, 2013). This included:

- the shortage of supervising drivers to enable learner drivers to get 120 hours of supervised experience – stating that non-Aboriginal learners have 4.6 times more access to supervising drivers than Aboriginal learners.
- difficulty experienced by Aboriginal people in passing the learner permit knowledge test due to a reliance on English language, when English may be the second or third language for many Aboriginal people living in remote communities – citing data that 57% of Indigenous people pass the test on the first attempt, compared with 74% of non-Aboriginal people.
- lack of access to birth certificates as proof of identity to obtain driver licences.
- cost of driving instruction, fuel and licensing fees.

Similar issues have been found with people from CALD backgrounds (DOT, 2012a) and people living in remote communities in Western Australia (DOT, 2012b).

A current study called “Road safety and Aboriginal people” is currently being undertaken to investigate the barriers to licensing for Aboriginal people in remote and urban communities in a number of jurisdictions. The study, being carried out by the George Institute, will provide important further insights into issues and potential solutions.

Holding a licence and having adequate education/literacy are emerging as critical and substantial issues for young Indigenous individuals in obtaining and maintaining employment.

It is understood that barriers to licensing in these situations include debt owed by individuals to public bodies (arising from public transport fines or other misdemeanours), limited support in interacting effectively with the licensing authority, the lack of availability of information in traditional languages for those for who have limited English skills and unavailability of identification documentation. Researchers from The George Institute have found that having unpaid debt, whether related to driving offences or otherwise, contributes significantly to the ability of people to become or remain licensed.

### 3.10.2 Balancing access with safety

The need to balance the safety benefits for the majority of young people (and the wider community) with the specific needs of smaller disadvantaged groups has to be assessed and managed by each jurisdiction. It is important that safety is not downplayed, but flexibility in approaches adopted and a broader appreciation of licensing challenges, resulting in coordinated support across government agencies, is necessary.

Licensing authorities, road safety policy advisers, health agencies, education authorities and youth and employment support resources at State/Territory and Commonwealth levels need to work closely together, in conjunction with local governments and community groups to develop cultural awareness and competencies and effective local solutions to licensing. This will help to improve living standards for Indigenous communities, particularly through enabling improved employment opportunities.

### 3.10.3 Assistance Programs

While the benefits of extensive supervised driving experience as a learner are clear, the requirement to complete a given number of supervised driving hours does create barriers to licensure among Indigenous communities and some other relatively small groups of young people. When introducing new GLS requirements, several jurisdictions have implemented programs or initiatives to try to assist disadvantaged groups to meet the requirements of the GLS, especially the requirement for a minimum number of supervised driving hours.

Victoria introduced a driver mentor program, called L2P, when they introduced the GLS in 2008, as it was estimated that approximately 3,000 young drivers each year would have difficulty obtaining 120 hours of supervised driving. This program has been effectively rolled out across Victoria with over 1,900 learners currently participating. The program relies on volunteers to provide driving supervision, local area sponsorships to obtain vehicles and Government funding totalling $3M per year, to cover staffing and other program costs (Freethy, 2012).

Tasmania operates a similar system, called the Learner Driver Mentor Programs (LDMP). At present, there are 18 programs around Tasmania and a three year budget of $1.5M is available to support these programs. A detailed package to guide groups implementing these programs has been developed by the Department.

While these programs specifically address the issues associated with accruing supervised driving hours, other programs focus more on other barriers to licensing experienced by disadvantaged groups and also include a focus on road safety education.

A good example is the Northern Territory Government's Drivesafe NT Remote Driver Education and Licensing Program. This program has been specifically developed to meet the needs of people living in regional and remote communities. The program assists participants to complete the requirement to obtain a learner permit and includes a range of road safety information sessions and driving lessons for participants to assist them in obtaining a provisional licence. The program is free of charge to participants and covers the costs of a birth certificate. The program has been successful in developing partnerships with local organisations and other government agencies to enable the use of local networks and knowledge.

The New South Wales Government also funds similar programs to increase access to licensing amongst disadvantaged communities and in particular, Aboriginal communities, such as Birrang, ACE and Driving Change.

Similar programs operate in other jurisdictions, but are funded by other community groups or via grant funding and are not state-wide, government funded programs. As a result, assistance for disadvantaged young people in these jurisdictions is less comprehensive and it is likely that many disadvantaged young people live in areas where no programs are offered.

A driver licensing scheme being developed in South Australia is attempting to simultaneously address licensing system issues and disadvantaging factors that conspire to compound the over-representation of Aboriginal people in crashes, their increased likelihood of involvement in the justice system because of driving related offences, and their under-representation as licence holders compared with the non-Aboriginal population.

In December 2013 the Motor Vehicles Act (1959) was amended giving the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure the power to exempt an Aboriginal person who resides on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands or Maralinga Tjarutja (MT) Lands from certain provisions in Part 3 of the Act (driver licensing) for the purpose of

obtaining a driver's licence. This power has since been delegated to the Minister for Road Safety.

Examples of 'exemptions' that may be granted, depending on an individual's age, driving history, demonstrated road safety understanding and driving competency, current eligibility status etc. include a reduction in the number of required hours of supervised driving and less time at particular stages of the GLS.

The key method proposed to deliver the driver licensing scheme on the Lands is individual case management via Aboriginal program support officers operating on the ground. These support officers will actively engage with communities, stakeholders and individuals and liaise with service providers so that on-going education and support is available at the local level as people progress through the licensing pathway. The scheme will also provide learning resources, driver training, supervised driving, competency assessment and testing, and in some cases financial assistance with fees and charges.

The scheme is also developing a culturally appropriate methodology. The 'learning to drive' curriculum is organised into modules that can be delivered flexibly – from two hour segments to week long units.

### 3.10.4 Policy recommendation

- The overall safety of all young people should be the key imperative in all programs to assist young people obtain a licence. Governments need to support programs to assist disadvantaged learners progress through the GLS, ideally helping them to meet the key requirements of the GLS.
- Indigenous communities require specific support to achieve licensing which go beyond (necessary) support for supervised driving.

# 4 Framework for improving GLS models in Australia

While no two Australian jurisdictions have the same GLS model, the essential elements of a learner permit period, followed by a provisional period (usually in two stages), which includes a number of restrictions, before achieving full licensing, is the path followed by most states and territories.

It is acknowledged that some jurisdictions have been able to introduce a range of improvements to their GLS over recent years, while others have not been in the position to do this. As a result, each jurisdiction has a different starting point. Nevertheless, it is possible for improvements or enhancements to be made to each GLS in Australia. The overall aim of this policy framework is to encourage each jurisdiction to work to improve their GLS models.

In order to address the varying GLS starting points, and also reflect the need in many jurisdictions to make changes and improvement on a gradual basis, a three staged model is presented which outlines key elements of progressively more effective GLS models.

This policy framework is designed to be a flexible model that can be used as a "best practice" guide for jurisdictions. It is not designed to be prescriptive. It is also acknowledged that the rate at which each jurisdiction can make changes to their young driver licensing system will vary and it is up to each jurisdiction to develop their own plans and timeframes for improving their GLS.

Further evidence based GLS measures are likely to emerge over the next 10 to 15 years and beyond. Jurisdictions need to be in a position to review these, and if there are potential road safety benefits, to respond by consulting with their community with a view to introducing such measures.

The detailed GLS policy framework is outlined below.

## 4.1 Proposed Australian GLS Policy Framework

### 4.1.1 Standard GLS

- Learner permit at 16 years, solo licensing from 17 years
- 12 months min. holding of learner permit
- Requirement to undertake 50 hours supervised driving recorded in a log book
- On-road tests to achieve solo licence
- Hazard Perception Test as part of GLS
- Zero BAC and no hand held mobiles during entire Provisional period
- Lower demerit point threshold for novice drivers
- Community education about risks associated with:
    - P1 drivers and late night driving and carrying multiple passengers
    - Young drivers on a full licence and drink driving
- Support programs to assist disadvantaged to progress

### 4.1.2 Enhanced GLS

ALL of the Standard GLS measures with the following improvements:

- Requirement to undertake 80-100 hours supervised driving recorded in a log book, at least 10 hours at night
- Provisional period for 3 years in total (1 years P1+2 years P2)
- Restriction on the carriage of multiple passengers for P1 (at night or preferably full time)
- Restriction on use of hands free phones during P1 phase

### 4.1.3 Exemplar GLS

ALL of the Standard GLS measures with the following improvements:

- Learner permit at 16 years, solo licensing from 18 years (a mandatory minimum age of 18 years for a provisional licence is exemplar policy. However, jurisdictions that cannot achieve this should aim to achieve a median licensing age in real terms of 18 years or older)
- Requirement to undertake 100-120 hours supervised driving recorded in a log book, at least 15 - 20 hours at night.
- Provisional period for 4 years in total (1 year P1 + 3 years P2)
- Restriction on the carriage of multiple peer aged passengers (full time) for P1 drivers
- Restriction on late night driving for P1 drivers
- Restriction on use of hands free phones during entire P phase.
- Very low demerit point threshold during the GLS
- Educational programs where there is sound research evidence of improved safety outcomes

# 5 Areas requiring further research

There are a number of measures that may have potential but further research is needed to confirm and quantify the benefits of these measures. Subsequently these are not currently included in the GLS policy framework.

## 5.1 Level and experience of supervising drivers

In all Australian jurisdictions, a person can act as a supervising driver if they have a full licence, and in many jurisdictions they need to have some driving experience after they have received a full licence. Most Australian jurisdictions require that they have a BAC under 0.05, the Australian Capital Territory have a requirement for a zero BAC, and Northern Territory does not have a limit.

**Table 3: Requirements for supervising drivers analysed by jurisdiction**

| Jurisdiction | Min. age of supervisor | BAC requirement |
|---|---|---|
| New South Wales | 20 years | 0.05 |
| Victoria | 22 years | 0.05 |
| Queensland | 21 years | 0.05 |
| South Australia | 22 years | 0.05 |
| Western Australia | 23 years | 0.05 |
| Tasmania | 23 years | 0.05 |
| Northern Territory | 18.5 years | None |
| Australian Capital Territory | 20 years | Zero |

There is no clear evidence available to determine the benefits of such requirements for supervising drivers. However, it is recommended that the supervising driver for learners be at least older than the age specified for peer passenger restrictions for provisional licence holders, which in practice would mean being aged at least 21 years or older (Senserrick & Williams, 2013) and have a BAC of 0.05 or lower while supervising.

While setting higher standards for supervising drivers is commendable, this does need to be balanced with the need for all learners to have access to a supervising driver, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

## 5.2 Online logbooks

Some jurisdictions mentioned the potential of developing an on-line learner log book. While this is a long-term initiative and will not change the overall policy framework of the GLS, this type of technology has the potential to greatly increase the knowledge base about learner drivers which could then be matched with crash and infringement data to determine whether any particular type of learner experiences can enhance or diminish safety.

## 5.3 Licensing requirements to progress to full licences

Some jurisdictions have included requirements for good driving records prior to a driver progressing to a P2 or a full licence. New South Wales has an exit test which provisional drivers need to pass before becoming a fully licensed driver.

Evaluations in New South Wales have found that performance on exit tests can be predictive of subsequent crashes in the following years. It was also found that a clean driving record during the two year provisional period was more predictive of subsequent crash involvement than exit test performance and that having both measures had the strongest effect (Roads and Traffic Authority, 2009).

However, during consultations, most jurisdictions felt that the introduction of an exit test would not be justifiable in their jurisdiction at this stage given the time and administration costs involved. Further evaluation of the road safety benefits of a requirement for a clean driving record or an exit test need to be undertaken to determine the benefits can justify the administrative impost.

## 5.4 Extending the zero BAC requirement

The primary road safety benefit over the length of the provisional period derives from the zero BAC requirement. Health researchers have also estimated that requiring licensed drivers to maintain a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of zero until at least the age of 25 years would lead to substantial safety and economic benefits (Hall et al, 2010).

The National Road Safety Strategy specifies that this issue be examined. Specifically, the Strategy states that a “Review, in consultation with stakeholders and the community, [of ] the application of BAC limits currently applying to certain licence categories” will be undertaken. To address this action, an Austroads project to examine the effects of lower BAC limits to target special licence groups was undertaken.

The Austroads report is still being finalised, but the analyses have revealed the following:

- young drivers aged 21-25 years are a high risk group (contributing to 40.6-53.2% of killed drivers with BAC ≥0.05%, and 25.7-40.4% of killed drivers with BAC ≥0.15%).
- the drink driving problem of the special licence groups analysed is such that it is worth considering a reduced BAC limit for young drivers aged 21-25 (those beyond the current zero BAC limit restrictions and fully licensed).
- for young drivers aged 21-25 years in Australia, a reduction of BAC limits from 0.05% to zero would result in reductions in fatalities up to 19.1% and serious injuries up to 6.1%.
- for young drivers aged 21-25 years in Australia, a reduction of BAC limits from 0.05% to 0.02% would result in similar reductions to those estimated for a zero BAC limit.
- even if the reduced limit only applied to one high risk special licence group, the costs of lowering BAC limits with associated short-term public education costs would be less than the road trauma cost savings."

Consideration of how to overcome issues associated with enforcing a zero BAC requirement beyond the provisional period would be needed if this measure were

introduced. Some may debate whether this issue should be addressed under a GLS or whether it is treated separately. Further research is needed to fully understand the potential of an extension of the zero BAC limit and how this could be implemented and to win acceptance from the community.

## 5.5 Driving programs as part of the GLS

It has been suggested that driver education and training may help to accelerate the benefits of experience by developing better skills in novice drivers or helping them to deal with risky situations.

In the past, driver education programs that focused on car control skills were popular, especially in the US where these programs were commonly delivered in high schools. However, extensive evaluations found that beyond imparting basic car control and road law knowledge skills, these programs did not lead to reductions in casualty crashes or traffic violations, and in some situations encouraged earlier provisional licensing which has a negative impact on road safety (Kinnear et al, 2013). In addition, driver training that attempts to impart advanced skills such as skid control to learner drivers may contribute to increased crash risk, particularly among young males (Christie, 2011).

Some research from the preventative health field has suggested that programs that are designed to improve cognitive skills, to build resilience and to increase parental monitoring have the potential to improve a young person's ability to deal with high risk situations (Senserrick & Williams, 2013), although evaluations have not been undertaken to link these programs to reductions in crash involvement and as a result should be evaluated prior to being encouraged as a road safety initiative (Kinnear et al, 2013). Programs that inform and support the GLS are also regarded as potentially being advantageous but again the evidence to support this directly is lacking (Kinnear et al, 2013).

A very large scale trial of such a program for newly licensed drivers is currently being undertaken. The P Drivers Project aims to determine whether an 8 hour behaviour change program (largely undertaken as group discussions) will be effective in reducing crash involvement and offences compared with a control group.

Some jurisdictions currently offer specific programs about driving as part of their GLS, specifically Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales.

New South Wales operates the Safer Driver Program which comprises class room and in-car components for learner drivers who have completed 50 hours of supervised driving experience. This program is voluntary, but participants who complete the course can reduce the number of required supervised driving hours from 120 to 100.

Despite the high value that the public place on driving tuition programs, most jurisdictions were unwilling to consider introducing such programs until good evidence of the effectiveness of the program is available.

Some jurisdictions allow a learner to claim a higher number of hours of experience if the driving they have undertaken is with a professional driving instructor. These approaches have not been evaluated sufficiently to determine whether this is good practice or not. Encouraging some professional driving tuition, together with extensive supervised driving experience, is regarded as good practice and encouraged by many jurisdictions in Australia and Europe. However, greater evaluation of these practices is required to rigorously determine their effectiveness within a GLS.

## 5.6 Nature and value of support programs for disadvantaged

As outlined earlier in this report, ensuring that all young Australians have the opportunity to progress through the GLS and to achieve licensing is a key priority for jurisdictions. It is evident that the level of investment in conducting support programs varies considerably across jurisdictions. What the most appropriate level of investment is, as well as whether this investment comes entirely from road safety budgets or whether it is jointly funded by other departments which may benefit are important issues. The arrangements that occur in many jurisdictions include:

- Assisting people complete the licence application process. This includes assisting with accessing birth certificates and other paperwork and mobile licensing sites in remote areas.
- Conducting specialised programs to assist with safety and licensing in rural and remote areas. One example is the DriveSafe Remote program in the Northern Territory.
- Conducting community based programs to assist young people get supervised driving practice usually with a mentor as discussed in section 2.6.3.
- Reducing the licensing requirements to enable greater access to licensing in remote areas – such as the New South Wales “Restricted P1 licence” offered in rural and remote communities.

While the needs of disadvantaged groups are recognised by all jurisdictions, how to effectively and efficiently ensure that disadvantaged young people are able to obtain a licence and to participate in the GLS process as much as possible to maximise the safety benefits is an ongoing challenge. Undertaking some further research, evaluations and reviews and sharing this information will assist jurisdictions in knowing which programs and initiatives warrant investment to achieve the best outcomes.

## 5.7 Recommendations for future research

Further research is required to determine the value of some emerging policy areas to determine the potential value of these measures. Suggested research includes:

- Determining whether there are any benefits in restricting the type of people that can supervise learners (years of experience and license cancellations) and whether restricting the nature (and in effect the number) of people who can supervise has a positive effect on road safety.
- Exploring the potential of on-line learner log books which may not only be preferred by learners, but may provide a valuable source of information about the nature of driving that learners undertake and also enable effective and timely communication with learners and their supervisors.
- Quantifying the road safety value in requiring a clean driving record or the completion of an exit test before graduating to a full licence.
- Reviewing the extent of drink driving among young full licenced drivers – in terms of infringements and crash involvement to determine whether extending the zero BAC is justified and how this could practically be implemented in the community. The current Austroads project will provide guidance here.
- Determining what the optimum protocol for enhanced penalties is for novice drivers.

- Undertaking detailed evaluations of the road safety benefits of safe driving programs that are designed to be part of the GLS process.
- Investigating the level of investment required to support disadvantaged young people progress through the GLS; what are the additional social benefits and what are the consequences of not having these programs or measures.

# 6 Elements of GLS with unknown or minimal evidence

There are some elements of current GLS programs that exist in some jurisdictions that have either minimal levels of effectiveness or the effectiveness of the measures is not known. While a lack of evidence does not necessarily mean that these measures are not effective, research evidence about their impact is needed before they can be strongly advocated for inclusion in GLS policy models.

## 6.1 Vehicle power restriction

Young drivers of high performance vehicles have been found to have a higher crash injury risk than those who do not drive high performance vehicles. Research based on modelling that assumed 100% compliance with this restriction shows injury reductions ranging from 0-4%-1.8% (Keall & Newstead, 2013). Given that compliance in the real world is not likely to be 100%, the effectiveness of this measure is likely to be even lower in reality.

While the effectiveness of vehicle power restrictions is very small, it is a measure that is used in a number of jurisdictions and enjoys good community support. Enforcement of this condition can be difficult. Several states have simplified their programs recently, although interest in adopting these restrictions among the jurisdictions where they are not currently in place is low, due to the minimal effectiveness of the restriction and the administration and enforcement difficulties associated with it.

## 6.2 Reduced speed restrictions

Some jurisdictions apply overall maximum speed limits on learner and provisional drivers, which are lower in some instances than the signposted speed limits. There is not a great deal of available research on the value of this measure. One position taken on this matter is that this restriction creates speed differentials between vehicles which can increase crash risk, and they should not be included in GLS models (Senserrick & Williams, 2013).

Some states that did have reduced speed limits for novice drivers have increased them in recent years, and have reported no increase in crashes. However, jurisdictions that currently apply lower speed limits for learners and provisional drivers believe that they are effective risk reduction measures, especially for P1 drivers. Police have commented about the difficulty in enforcing this restriction especially in border areas.

## 6.3 Allowing novice drivers to “trade-off” hours of experience

Some jurisdictions seek to motivate young drivers to undertake road safety programs, activities or behaviours by offering them inducements or rewards.

One approach used by some jurisdictions both in Australia and overseas is to motivate young people to undertake road safety programs by allowing them to “trade-off” hours of supervised driving experience if they undertake certain initiatives. This arrangement is in place in New South Wales for learners who complete the Safer Driver Program and in both New South Wales and Queensland for learners who undertake professional driving lessons. In the Australian Capital Territory, provisional

drivers who complete the Road Ready Plus program are permitted to drive without displaying their P plates and have their demerit point limit increased from 4 points to 8 points.

The nature of how novice drivers can be motivated to undertake safer behaviours or engage with specific programs needs further review and evaluation. Some road safety researchers caution against allowing novice drivers to trade off hours of supervised driving experience for completing other as yet unproven programs (Sensserick and Williams, 2012). It is also important that any initiatives that jurisdictions put in place do not encourage earlier licensing and that measures that are known to be effective, such as extensive pre-driver experience and lower demerit point thresholds are not traded off for measures which lack evidence of their effectiveness.

# 7 Achieving improved GLS policy

It is widely acknowledged that changing licensing policy is often a long and hard-fought process. The key elements of achieving improved GLS policy rely on having evidence of the effectiveness of specific measures, and having reasonable levels of community support or acceptance of any proposed changes.

Research into the barriers to the implementation of elements of GLS models shows that there is little evidence to substantiate community concerns about the impact of often contentious measures such as late night driving and passenger restrictions when these measures have been applied (Kinnear et al, 2013). Research does indicate that community support for GLS models usually increases after it is implemented, which often enables jurisdictions to strengthen their GLS with further changes (See TRL, (2103)).

In order to make the advances in young driver licensing and safety that have been achieved by all Australian jurisdictions in the past, jurisdictions have seized the need to change and have implemented measures that are evidence based.

In order to continue to improve and enhance Australian GLS models, jurisdictions will need to:

- Develop sound and effective ongoing communication programs to inform the community of the need to address young driver safety and the evidence that shows that certain elements of GLS models will lead to less young driver road trauma.
- Outline the crash reductions and financial and economic savings to government and the community that could be achieved with certain measures – and make sure that this is communicated to key opinion leaders and the community.
- Commit to the ongoing review of key areas of young driver safety and to evaluating the effectiveness of any new GLS measures.
- Share evaluations and experiences with other jurisdictions, as well as with the public, opinion leaders and the community.
- Ensure the Austroads road safety and registration and licensing groups continue to work closely together
- It is recommended that some processes to assist progress with improvements to GLS models around Australia could be established. It is proposed that a communication and information sharing process be established by Austroads to facilitate:
- Each jurisdiction reporting on their progress in improving their GLS and reporting on the outcomes of evaluations
- Updates on key research evidence emerging locally and internationally
- Sharing experiences on effective ways of promoting and achieving GLS policy improvements
- Jointly reviewing the elements of the GLS policy framework and establishing some agreed timelines.

Holding an annual workshop or meeting to facilitate this information sharing including bringing it formally to the attention of government transport related chief executives could be highly advantageous.

Such information sharing and reporting is likely to support senior management (and the public) to more fully understand the status of the GLS measures in their jurisdiction compared with others, to be informed of the latest research findings about GLS measures, and to be aware of the potential road safety benefits of specific measures.

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# 9 Appendix A: Evaluations of Australian GLS models

Detailed outcome evaluations of GLS models have been undertaken in Victoria and Queensland and the key findings of these evaluations are outlined below. It is worth noting that both Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have recently commissioned detailed evaluations of the GLS in their jurisdictions. A brief review of the efficacy of late night driving restrictions in Western Australia has been undertaken and these results are also reported here. South Australia has recently reviewed its GLS and undertaken a significant community consultation process. Considerable changes to the South Australian GLS have been legislated and will come into effect in July 2014.

## 9.1 Victorian GLS interim evaluation

Victoria introduced a new Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) in 2007-08. The new GLS comprised a four stage licensing process:

- Learner period – 16 years eligibility and held for 12 months (increased from 6 months) and a requirement for a minimum of 120 hours supervised driving documented in a logbook (new).
- P1 period – 18 years to be eligible, held for 12 months, includes a peer passenger restriction (new), mobile phone ban (new) and zero BAC.
- P2 period – 19 years to be eligible, held for 3 years (increased from 2 years), zero BAC.
- Full licence – a good driving record during P2 to obtain a full licence.

A new provisional licence driving test was developed and introduced which was designed to help identify those licence applicants who meet the 120 hour requirement and tougher drink-drive sanctions for young and provisional drivers were introduced.

Surveys were conducted with learner and provisional drivers under the old and new GLS and an analysis of casualty crash data was conducted to identify key trends in serious road trauma involving novice drivers before, during and after the introduction of the GLS.

Interim evaluation results were published in 2012 (Healy et al, 2013). The results examine the crash involvements of drivers in their first year of provisional driving.

### 9.1.1 Key results include:

- a significant reduction of 23% in the casualty crash involvement of drivers (aged 18-20 when first licensed) in the first year of holding a provisional licence when compared with a control group, equating to a saving of approximately 240 casualty crash involvements per annum.
- a significant reduction of 31% in the fatal and serious injury crash involvement of drivers (aged 18-20 when first licensed) in the first year of holding a provisional licence when compared with a control group, equating to a saving of approximately 75 involvements per annum.
- a significant reduction of 16% in the casualty crash involvement of drivers (aged 18-20 when first licensed) in the first 9 months of the second year of

holding a provisional licence, equating to a saving of approximately 75 involvements per annum.

- a significant reduction in the proportion of casualty crash involvements (57%) and fatal and serious injury crash involvements (58%) of target drivers (aged 18-20 years when first licensed) carrying two or more peer passengers in their first year of holding a provisional licence; these percentage reductions equate to approximate savings of 70 and 25 involvements respectively per annum.

### 9.1.2 Key results from the learner and provisional driver surveys show that:

- the number of hours of supervised driving practice for 17 and 18 year olds (at the time of learner permit acquisition) has approximately doubled over the survey period. This indicates learners have been generally following the new GLS rule.
- the Learner Permit holding period increased most noticeably with the introduction of the new minimum holding period for a permit of 12 months (previously six months).
- hands-free phone use was less common for post-GLS provisional drivers (consistent with the new rules about hands-free phone use).
- post-GLS drivers were much less likely to carry more than one peer-aged passenger in the first and second surveys (in line with the new passenger requirement).

A more detailed analysis is being undertaken to determine the effect of the GLS over the entire provisional period and is likely to be available in 2015.

## 9.2 Queensland GLS evaluation

An evaluation of the Queensland GLS has been undertaken. The detailed report has not yet been released, although key findings were presented in a recent conference paper (Newstead & Scully, 2013). The evaluation was designed to assess the impact on novice driver crash involvement after the introduction of a new GLS in 2007. The main features of the new GLS were the increase in the minimum learner period from 6 months to 12 months, a requirement for 100 hours of supervised driving and restricting P1 drivers from driving late at night if carrying more than one peer aged passenger.

The overall effect of the new GLS was a 30% reduction in novice driver fatal crashes, a 13% reduction in novice driver fatal and serious injury crashes and a 4% reduction in all reported crashes.

Some attempts were made in the evaluation to assess the effect of various different components of the new GLS. However, most of the findings that addressed each component did not reach statistical significance, due to the low sample sizes and delays in receiving crash data.

The longer learner period (which increased from 6 months to 12 months) was associated with a 10% increase in crash involvement among learners. However, this increase was found to be an artefact of increased driving exposure among the learners who undertook the new GLS. The authors concluded that the increase in learner driver crashes, due to increased exposure was more than offset by the reduction in serious injury and fatal crashes among novice drivers overall. No details on the level of compliance with each component of the GLS were reported in the evaluation.

## 9.3 Western Australian review of late night restrictions

Night time driving restrictions for novice drivers came into effect in Western Australia in June 2008 which were added to the existing GLS which was implemented in 2001-02. The laws restrict P1 drivers from driving late at night (between 12:00 am and 5:00 am) during the first 6 months of getting a licence. There are exemptions for late night travel for work, study and training reasons but these exemptions are not issued by the road authority. Instead, it is a legal defence for P1 drivers to be driving during 12:00 am to 5:00 am if they are driving for work, education or training purposes. It is up to the P1 driver to supply documentation to any attending police officer that the work/education exemption applies to them. As such, no data is available about the number of Western Australian P1 drivers who drive between 12:00 am and 5:00 am under the exemption provisions.

An examination of the crash patterns for P1 novice drivers before and after the introduction of night time driving restrictions in Western Australia has been undertaken and provided by the Western Australian Office for Road Safety (Crackel, 2013). This analysis compared the crash data for novice drivers in their first six months of licensure (P1) aged 17 to 19 years and for those aged 20 years and older.

Prior to the introduction of the late night restriction, the average monthly count of novice drivers aged 17 to 19 years involved in injury crashes was 2.6 per month and after 30 June 2008, the average was 1.1 per month, a decrease of 58%.

In contrast, more experienced drivers aged 20 years and older (most of who would no longer be subject to provisional licence conditions) did not show any consistent pattern in their crash involvements between 12:00 am and 5:00 am over the 10 year period (2002 – 2011).

The Western Australia Office of Road Safety has concluded from the initial investigation that novice drivers (in the first six months of a provisional licence) had a much lower level of crash involvement in night time crashes after June 2008, compared to the period January 2002 to May 2008, approximately 11 months after the introduction of the night time driving restrictions. In contrast, more experienced drivers, 20 years of age and older, did not show any increase or decrease in their crash involvements over the 10 years to December 2011.

It should be noted that these investigations do not represent a detailed evaluation with statistical analysis. The effect of the crash reduction could be partly due to other factors that were not controlled for in this review.

## 9.4 South Australian review of GLS

In 2011, the South Australian Government released a GLS Discussion Paper. This paper outlined several possible ways for reducing road trauma among young drivers. These initiatives included:

- introducing a passenger restriction for P1 drivers allowing for no more than one passenger aged under 21 years
- introducing a late night driving restriction between midnight and 5am for P1 drivers
- raising the minimum age for a provisional licence from 17 to 18 years
- extending the total minimum provisional period from two to three years (one year on P1, two years on P2).

Presented in the discussion paper was a summary of the literature and also estimates of the South Australian crash savings for each of the proposed measures which were developed by the Centre for Accident Safety Research (CASR).

The public consultation process ran for 8 weeks. Over 1,000 responses were received, from stakeholders, local governments, community groups and 987 responses from the general public.

The level of support for the proposed initiatives from road safety researchers was very strong. Support for the initiatives from the public was mixed, with the proposal to increase the licensing age receiving relatively low levels of support (DPTI, 2012).

In November 2013, the South Australian Government announced that licensing changes had passed through parliament and that P1 passenger and late night driving restrictions and the extension of the P2 period to 2 years would come into effect from July 28th 2014.

# 10 Appendix B Summary key findings from the consultations with jurisdictions

## 10.1 Consultation process and reporting

A range of issues that relate to GLS approaches such as age of licensing, experience requirements, risk reduction strategies, testing approaches as well access to licensing for disadvantaged groups were outlined in the discussion paper.

The discussion paper aimed to provoke and guide discussions subsequently held with each jurisdiction to inform the development of an Australian GLS policy framework. The discussion paper was generally well received by jurisdictions. It informed them about what others are doing across Australia and encouraged them to consider opportunities to introduce additional measures, which could help generate further road safety benefits.

It was originally intended that the notes of discussions held with each jurisdiction would be circulated to all jurisdictions for their information as part of this briefing paper. However, there was considerable concern expressed by officers in some jurisdictions that publication of any comment with which they could be aligned was not desirable. The notes from each individual jurisdiction will be forwarded on a strictly confidential basis to the Project Manager for record purposes and safe keeping.

The key points from the consultations are summarised in this paper. These findings, together with the key research summarised in the discussion paper will inform the development of a draft national GLS policy framework, which will be discussed at the workshop, ideally attended by all jurisdictions, on August 27th in Melbourne.

## 10.2 Consultations findings

### 10.2.1 General response to a national GLS policy framework

There was strong interest from state and territory practitioners in the project. All jurisdictions expressed interest in knowing what other jurisdictions were doing and in emerging evidence to warrant the exploration of new measures within their state or territory.

It should be noted that the elements of good practice are present to varying degrees in the graduated licensing systems applied in all jurisdictions. The opportunity exists to improve practice by strengthening existing arrangements and introducing some new measures rather than completely replacing existing approaches.

Each jurisdiction is interested in learning about what is successful elsewhere and in working with their community to achieve improvements to their GLS over time. Comparing the GLS models from all states and territories a decade ago with current practice, demonstrates how significantly Australian approaches to GLS have improved. A common message from the jurisdictions is that evidence based practice and learning from other jurisdictions to implement improvements is critical, but this does need to be at a pace each jurisdictional community will support.

The ability and readiness to implement any improvements to existing GLS models varies considerably. Some jurisdictions are in the process of reviewing young driver licensing with a view to making improvements in the future. For instance, the

Australian Capital Territory (ACT) are commencing a substantial community review of their existing GLS system later in 2014. Tasmania is proposing a review of some GLS components later this year, as is the Northern Territory. In addition, South Australia has just introduced major enhancements to their GLS which have just come into effect.

Some states are in the process of evaluating the effect of existing systems. Victoria is undertaking a full evaluation of their GLS, with outcomes expected in 2015. Queensland has recently completed an evaluation, and New South Wales and Western Australia are just commencing evaluations of specific elements of their GLS.

Overall the jurisdictions saw value in the development of a GLS policy framework, as it has the potential to assist them in their work to continuously improve their novice driver licensing systems.

### 10.2.2 Key findings - skill acquisition and experience

There is substantial similarity of intent with the GLS schemes in place across the states and territories. There are differences in detail and variations on core themes with some "outlier" differences.

The essential elements of a learner permit period, followed by a provisional period (usually in two stages), which includes a zero BAC and other restrictions, before full licensing is the path followed by most states and territories.

Most jurisdictions have moved or will consider moving to having a learner period that lasts for 12 months, which for most states means that the age at which a person can obtain a licence is 17 years, although in practice, most people are older than this. Similarly, most jurisdictions recognise the value of extensive supervised driving experience prior to solo driving and require that a minimum number of hours is undertaken prior to testing for a provisional licence. However, the amount of required supervised driving hours varies considerably, from none to 120 hours. The primary reason why jurisdictions have no or low requirements for supervised driving hours is the concern about access to licensing among some disadvantaged groups. There are also community concerns about the impact this will have on the lifestyle of young people, given the limited transport options in remote areas.

### 10.2.3 Key findings - Licence testing

Most jurisdictions had broadly similar approaches to testing. All have a knowledge test to gain a learner permit. An on-road test and in several jurisdictions, a hazard perception test is used to determine if a person can gain a P (or P1) licence. Despite all sharing the same objective in terms of having effective tests to determine if a person is safe to drive as either a learner or provisional driver, all of the jurisdictions have different tests. Many jurisdictions noted the importance of the Austroads project on a standard Hazard Perception Test. The only on-road test that had been evaluated (with positive outcomes) is the on-road driving test used in Victoria, although Queensland and Western Australia are in the process of evaluating their on-road tests.

Most jurisdictions felt that having additional testing requirements to graduate from P1 to P2 or to a full licence was not warranted and a number commented that their governments were trying to reduce the administrative burden on government and "red tape" in general, rather than increase it.

### 10.2.4 Key findings – risk reduction measures

In terms of risk reduction measures for novice drivers, a provisional period with a zero BAC and mobile phone restrictions is widely accepted as appropriate and effective. However, prohibition of hands free mobile phone use during the P2 period is only in place in a few jurisdictions. The potential of additional restrictions on new drivers such as passenger restrictions at night, full-time passenger restrictions (24 hours per day) and late night restrictions is of interest to the jurisdictions that do not have these measures in place already. Assessing the road safety benefits derived from these measures, as well as how they can be "sold" to the community as beneficial are key factors in the ability of jurisdictions to adopt such measures.

While all jurisdictions require that provisional drivers have a zero BAC, the varying lengths of the provisional period together with the minimum licensing age mean that the outcomes are very different across the country. As such, the minimum age at which a young person can drive with a 0.05 BAC limit is shown in the table below.

| State/ Territory | Min. age a young person can drive with 0.05 BAC |
|---|---|
| Western Australia | 19 years |
| Northern Territory | 19.5 years |
| New South Wales | 20 years |
| Queensland | 20 years |
| South Australia | 20 years |
| Tasmania | 20 years |
| Victoria | 22 years |

Extending the zero BAC requirement beyond the provisional period was perceived to be difficult by many jurisdictions.

### 10.2.5 Key findings – behavioural control measures

While each jurisdiction applies some additional measures or penalties on young novice drivers, the approach that jurisdictions take varies considerably.

Some jurisdictions indicated that the penalty system needs to deter novice drivers from certain behaviours, but should also give them an opportunity to learn from their mistakes. These jurisdictions had higher demerit point thresholds before licence suspension over the GLS period. However, other jurisdictions indicated that the philosophy in their jurisdiction was that rather than including more restrictions on all provisional drivers (such as night and passenger restrictions), it was better to have very tough penalties for the small number who offended.

Some jurisdictions were grappling with the balance between improving road safety outcomes and the need to ideally keep young people within the licensing system.

### 10.2.6 Key findings – access to licensing

All jurisdictions noted the difficulty in ensuring that all members of the community are supported to progress through the GLS, and gain a licence. All jurisdictions were undertaking measures to assist disadvantaged groups to do this. Some jurisdictions were funding quite large scale community based programs to assist young people meet the key requirements of the GLS. Other jurisdictions were introducing measures via legislation and or regulations to either reduce or make the licensing requirements more flexible to enable better access to licensing for some individuals.

### 10.2.7 Concluding comments

Many of the jurisdictions made some general comments about the overall development of a GLS policy framework. These are summarised below.

- It is important that different jurisdictions have something to aim for regardless of what GLS measures they currently have in place.
- The GLS policy framework should refer to key principles and encourage this rather than one definitive model with all of elements specified.
- The framework should guide jurisdictions, rather than prescribe one model.
- Jurisdictions need to ensure that changes to improve the convenience of the GLS for novice drivers shouldn't undermine the overall safety benefits. That is, don't take away anything that currently makes young people safer.

In many ways the findings of the consultations highlight the strengths of each Australian jurisdiction's graduated licensing system and their approach to road safety. It is not necessarily a bad thing for the states and territories to have different arrangements (around the same general themes) in place. One approach is not necessarily the best answer although progress towards a similar goal should be the objective.

It is vital that positive information and evaluation outcomes are widely shared between jurisdictions and that governments are prepared to make this information available to their communities.