



NEWS RELEASE

Premier of New South Wales

INTRODUCING A FAIRER SYSTEM FOR LEARNER DRIVERS

Saturday 12 February, 2011

Premier Kristina Keneally today announced a three-year \$15.6 million overhaul of the learner driver log book system to make it fairer, easier and safe.

The new package of reforms ease log book requirements on families, encourage access to professional driving courses, and provide free assistance to disadvantaged young people.

The Labor Government will start work now on introducing the changes, which will benefit new and existing drivers on their L Plates from 1 July 2011.

The package is designed to benefit the 100,000 people who successfully apply for their L Plates per year, and includes:

- **An across the board reduction in minimum log book hours** for learner drivers from 120 hours to 100 hours;
- **A further 20 hour discount** for learners who get 10 hours of professional instruction – meaning they only have to do 80 log book hours;
- **A \$3.6 million, three year fund** to provide 10 free one hour professional driving lessons for up to 6,000 disadvantaged learner drivers; and
- **A \$1.2 million injection** to organisations that make cars or supervisors available to disadvantaged learner drivers – tripling the current funding of \$400,000 per year.

Ms Keneally made the announcement today with Minister for Roads, David Borger.

“This package will keep road fatalities down at the same time as easing the burden that log book hours can have on young people and families,” Ms Keneally said.

“Families have told us they want a learner driver’s log book system, but they want one that is fairer and more flexible – we have listened and we have acted.

“Work starts today on changes to the log book system that will mean learner drivers will only need 100 hours of practice, or 80 if they have professional assistance.

“People already on their L plates today will be able to take advantage of the new log book and driving hour requirements when they come into effect on 1 July.”

Mr Borger said the Labor Government has improved the quality of the Graduated Licensing Scheme by building in more incentives and more access for professional driving lessons.

“This package is a recognition that access to proper driving lessons, and a car to conduct them in, should not be restricted to those who can afford it,” he said.

“This initiative will mean there are 6,000 more young drivers each year with professional training – which is good for them and good for road safety.

“A license makes it easier to get a job, and the assistance measures built into this package will open up opportunities for 6,000 disadvantaged young people per year.”

Mr Borger called on the Liberal and Nationals to scrap their proposed user-pays learner's scheme and endorse Labor's fairer package.

"This funding is already in the budget, we have already directed the RTA to start working on our plan, and it will be in place in just over four months," Mr Borger said.

"The only thing that could stop reduced driver log book hours and free driving instruction is a Coalition Government, who instead want to push responsibility for driving instruction onto insurance companies."

"Under the Coalition's policy, only drivers who can afford comprehensive car insurance – sometimes worth more than \$1000 per year – would get free driving instruction.

"It is Labor's view that the Government should be making access to driver training more accessible to everyone, not just those who can afford comprehensive insurance."

The new requirements will apply to everyone on their L plates on 1 July 2011. For more information go to www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

Background notes

Graduated licensing schemes in NSW

- Graduated Licensing Schemes for young drivers were first introduced in NSW in 2007. The 2007 scheme included a number of initiatives for young drivers, including:
 - 120 hours of supervised driving experience
 - Automatic 3 month loss of license for speeding by a P1 driver
 - Night time peer passenger restrictions
 - A complete ban on mobile phone use, including hands free
- In November 2008, the Parliamentary Staysafe Committee recommended the RTA monitor and evaluate the economic and social impact of the increase in log book hour requirements to a minimum of 120 hours.
- Changes were made to the learner log book requirements in 2009, to introduce a ratio of one hour of driver training equaling three log book hours, up to a maximum of 30 hours. This ratio remains in place

Other jurisdictions

- All States and Territories have Learner Driver schemes, with rules as follows:
 - Victoria requires 120 hours
 - Queensland requires 100 hours
 - South Australia requires 75 hours
 - The ACT and Tasmania require 50 hours
 - Western Australia requires 25 hours.

Eligibility for access to 10 free driving lessons

- Free driving lessons will be made available to young disadvantaged drivers from 1 July 2011
- The RTA will assess eligibility on a case by case basis
- Eligible people will include:
 - Healthcard holders
 - People on low incomes
 - People who because of hardship don't have access to a vehicle or supervising driver.