

Tuesday 27 April 2010

**DRAFT**

## New measures proposed to curb youth road toll

University of Adelaide researchers have called for passenger restrictions on inexperienced drivers to curb the appalling road accident statistics among the State's youth.

Dr Lisa Wundersitz from the University's Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR) says drivers aged 16-24 years make up 13% of the State's licensed driving population, but in 2009 were involved in 33% of fatal crashes in South Australia.

"Young drivers are over-represented in crashes. Not only do they account for more than a third of all fatalities in the State, they also make up 25% of drivers seriously injured," she says.

The State Government has passed legislation to extend the learner period from 6 to 12 months but has not adopted passenger restrictions for young drivers, which are in force in the other four mainland states.

The high number of crashes among newly-licensed drivers suggests that inexperience plays a major factor in road accidents, Dr Wundersitz says.

"We need to look at making changes to the licensing scheme, such as restricting passenger numbers for inexperienced drivers."

Current attitudes that promote risk-taking among young male drivers as "cool behaviour" also need to be challenged, she says.

"The third factor we need to address is unsafe vehicles. Young drivers need to be encouraged to purchase safer cars with features such as electronic stability control."

The number of young driver fatalities in South Australia increased from 28 deaths in 2008 to 41 in 2009. To date, seven drivers aged between 16-24 have been killed this year on the State's roads.

**WHAT:** CASR Public Lecture: "Current issues in young driver road safety" by Dr Lisa Wundersitz

**WHERE:** Art Gallery of South Australia Auditorium, North Terrace

**WHEN:** Wednesday 28 April, 4pm-5.30pm

**RSVP:** Leonie Witter on (08) 8303 4114 or [leonie.witter@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:leonie.witter@adelaide.edu.au)

### **Media Contact:**

**Dr Lisa Wundersitz**

*CASR Researcher*

The University of Adelaide

Phone: +61 8 8303 6298

Mobile: +61 427 792 595

[lisa.wundersitz@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:lisa.wundersitz@adelaide.edu.au)

**Candy Gibson**

*Media Officer*

The University of Adelaide

Phone: +61 8 8303 3173

Mobile: +61 414 559 773

[candace.gibson@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:candace.gibson@adelaide.edu.au)