



Young woman jailed for culpable driving

By LEE KINDLER

A P-PLATER, who was speeding when her car spun out of control killing one passenger and seriously injuring another, was sentenced to five years jail with a minimum of 2½ years in a Melbourne court yesterday.

Nicole Rami, 18, was killed instantly and Jackie Lester, 17, sustained serious injuries when Kate Wilson, 18, ploughed her parents' Holden Commodore into a tree. The crash occurred on the Reed Highway in Stoggsville at 3:15 am on October 10th last year.

Wilson of Stoggsville pleaded guilty to the charge of culpable driving in the Melbourne Magistrates court yesterday.

Senior prosecutor Lisa Ricketson told the court that crash investigators had measured Wilson's speed on impact at 124km/h, over 20 km/h beyond the speed limit. Ricketson said that Wilson had borrowed her parents' car to attend a



Site of the fatal crash: the Reed Highway where one young woman lost her life

Photo: Courtesy of TAC

friend's 18th birthday party in Ballarat with friends Rami and Lester.

Back seat passenger, Lester, sustained a broken arm and leg in the accident and spent two weeks in hospital recovering from the injuries. Wilson escaped with minor cuts and

bruises.

Senior Magistrate Victor Raker said that while Wilson had shown remorse, she must face a penalty for her irresponsible driving. "Ms Rami's parents have lost their daughter forever," Mr Raker said.

Young drivers at risk

By LEE KINDLER

TAC statistics show that young drivers are involved in more serious crashes than any other group of drivers on the road.

Each year, 40-50 young drivers are killed, 100 are involved in fatal crashes, and 7,000 have serious

injuries. The greatest risk is in the first year of driving. First year drivers in Victoria are almost four times more likely than experienced drivers to be involved in a fatal or serious injury crash.

An analysis of accidents involving young drivers by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau

MOST COMMON TYPES OF CRASHES FOR NEW DRIVERS:

- Hitting the rear of another vehicle
- Collisions turning right at intersections
- Being hit by a right turning vehicle
- Being run off the road

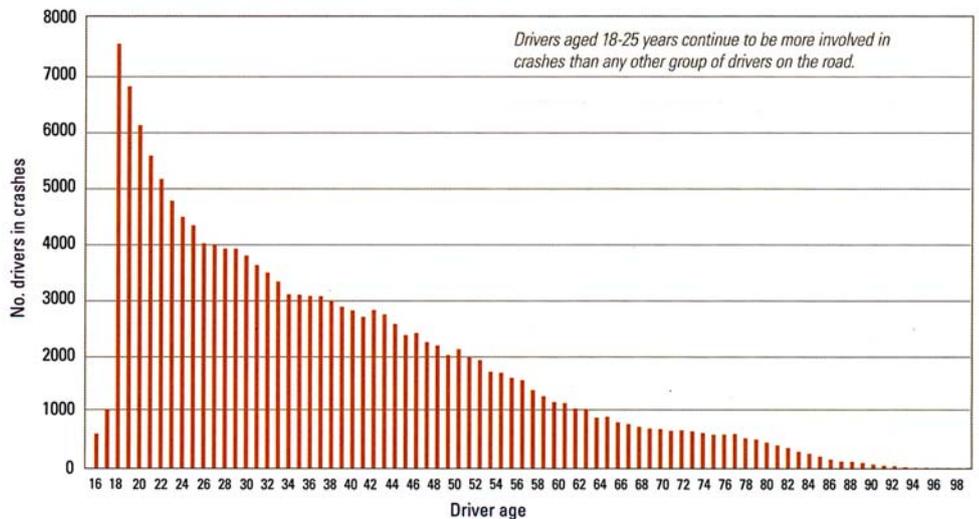
Young drivers at risk

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(ATSB), found that crashes were most commonly caused by lack of experience, underestimation of risks, deliberate risk taking behaviours, and use of alcohol and drugs.

According to the TAC, reducing risk taking behaviour, and increasing learner driver experience will cut the number of young driver crashes.

Age of drivers involved in casualty crashes Victoria 1999-2004.



Drivers aged 18-25 years continue to be more involved in crashes than any other group of drivers on the road.

YOUR SAY

How can we stop young people dying on our roads?



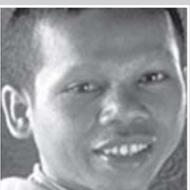
Elizabeth Palmer, 22
 "The government should bring in compulsory defensive driving courses for people on their Ps. They should be given free to everyone that gets their licence."



John Donovan, 42
 "We should put the driving age up to 21. That will give young people more time to mature before they get behind the wheel."



Judy Papos, 28
 "There should be tougher penalties for P-Platers who are caught speeding or breaking the rules."



John Tran, 19
 "Parents need to be more willing to take their kids out driving when they are on their Ls so they get more experience with different road conditions."

PUBLIC FORUM ON YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY

How can we stop young people dying on our roads?

THE FACTS:

- More young people die from road crashes than from any other cause
- 18-25 year olds account for some 27% of all driver deaths whilst making up only 13% of all licensed drivers
- Probationary drivers are involved in casualty crashes at triple the rate of experienced drivers
- The cost to the community from casualties, involving young drivers is more than \$1 billion every year, while the human suffering caused is immeasurable

Source: Young Driver Safety and Graduated Licensing - Discussion Paper

HAVE YOUR SAY

Members of the public are invited to offer their opinion on this important issue.

There will be a public forum held at **Zadie Hall, Wye Street, Smitham** on **25th March** at **6pm**.

Letters to the Editor

Killer Highway

I am writing to point out the appalling state of the Reed Highway. Three fatal accidents have occurred this year on the stretch between Stoggsville and Hampton Hill. The road is in terrible condition and extremely dangerous. There are large ruts in the road making it very difficult to drive on. There are also big trees on the edge of the road, some of which are growing at bends. This can be lethal for drivers who lose control and run off the road. How many more deaths have to occur before the Council will do something about it?

Helen Burroughs, Stoggsville

No social life

Placing restrictions on P-Platers driving at night would be completely unfair for young people living in country areas. I live in Shepland, an hour out of the city. There is very little entertainment for young people in Shepland, so if I want to go out with my friends I have to travel to the city. There is no public transport to Shepland after 6pm so if I couldn't drive, I would be stuck at home. The night time restrictions would mean a complete end to my social life.

Marty Owen, Shepland

Jobs at risk

I think the government's plan to ban first year drivers from using hands-free mobile phones is impractical. I work as a courier and it is essential for me to use a hands-free phone to receive instructions about my next deliveries. If I have to stop for each call, I will lose valuable time, which will cost my

employer money. I am a good worker but this will make me a burden on my employer and put my job at risk.

Ken Tran, Kelly Island

First car subsidy

Young drivers are at risk because they can only afford older cars. Older cars have fewer features to assist with safe driving, and are more dangerous when an accident occurs. Young people also do not have the experience to handle the imperfections that many older cars have. The government should provide a subsidy for drivers buying their first car. This way they could afford a newer car with additional safety features.

Mariam Ibrahim, Mattington

Please note: The lead article, letters to the editor, vox pops and editorial have been constructed for this newspaper. They are not authentic.

No hands-free for first year drivers

The government's proposal to ban new drivers from using hands-free mobile phones as part of a graduated licensing system is long overdue.

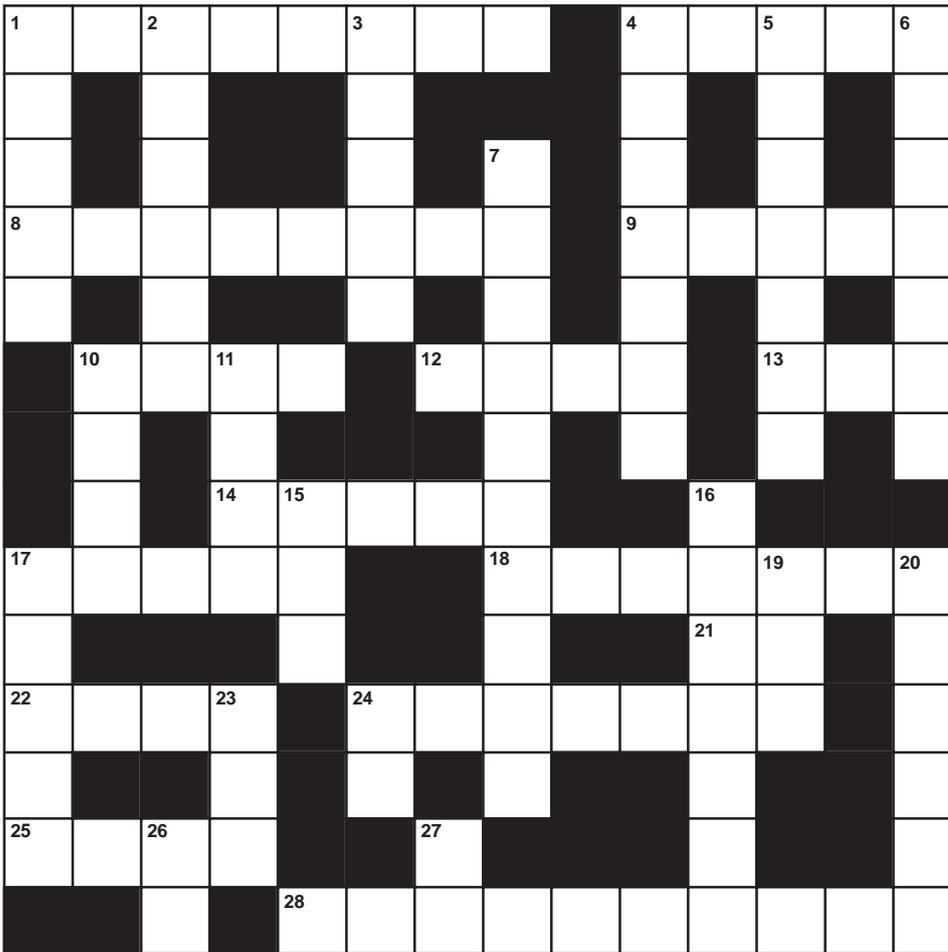
Under the changes, P-platers would also be barred from using hands-free mobile phones until their second year of driving. This is a small inconvenience for young drivers. A considerable number of young drivers have been involved in serious crashes while using mobile phones or sending SMS messages. Current research shows that using a mobile phone, even hands-free, while driving can increase the risk of having a fatal accident by up to five times.

Two US states have introduced the prohibition of all mobile phone use among new drivers. Both have shown a reduction in the number of accidents. Inexperienced drivers are especially vulnerable to the distraction of mobile phones. They are still developing the complex perceptual and motor skills required to drive a car safely. Given that P-platers are already almost four times more likely to be involved in a fatal or serious accident, the diversion of a mobile phone is an unnecessary, added risk.

The new system may cause difficulties for some new drivers in occupations where hands-free mobile phone use is required. Employers will need to be flexible while new drivers see out their initial probationary year.

Banning first year drivers from hands-free mobile phone use is a chance to minimise the risks facing young people at the most dangerous stage of their driving lives.

Crossword



Clues

Across

1. Someone who is killed or injured in an accident.
4. Ability that improves with knowledge and practice.
8. Driving a car faster than is allowed by law.
9. You cannot park within _____ metres of an Australia Post mail box.
10. What goes on the wheel.
12. Something you don't want to hit in your car.
13. Abbreviation for Victoria.
14. To go from one side of the road to the other.
17. How you want to arrive at the end of your car trip.
18. Not moving.
21. Abbreviation for a lane.
22. To reverse a car.
24. An important road sign that is in the shape of a triangle.
25. What you shouldn't do when you are driving.
28. Someone who travels by foot.

Down

1. When two or more cars hit each other.
2. A major priority of VicRoads is road _____ .
3. The speed _____ in built up areas is 50 kmh.
4. The age at which you can get your Learner's Permit.
5. To get better.
6. What you get when you pass your probationary driver's test.
7. The opposite to being a sensible and safe driver.
10. The road _____ is the count of how many people are killed on our roads.
11. The abbreviation for the Royal Automobile Association of Victoria.
15. The colour of the traffic light for stop.
16. What we sometimes call a probationary driver (1-6).
17. The colour of the traffic light that is between stop and go and means proceed if it is safe to do so.
19. If you are caught speeding you will have to _____ a fine.
20. You should have _____ for at least 120 hours before you go for your probationary licence.
23. An abbreviation for kilometres per hour.
24. What you can do if the traffic light changes to green and the road is clear.
26. The abbreviation for street.
27. The abbreviation for road.

Solution

See your teacher for the solution to the crossword. It is in the Introduction to these materials.



Some VicRoads online resources for Learning to Drive

The L site - the Learner Driver Online resource at:
<http://www.lsite.vicroads.vic.gov.au>

Online practice test - follow the links to **Getting your L's** at:
<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au>

