

# Winston Churchill Fellowship Report 2025

## Licensing for Life: International Lessons for Equitable and Effective Driver Licensing Systems

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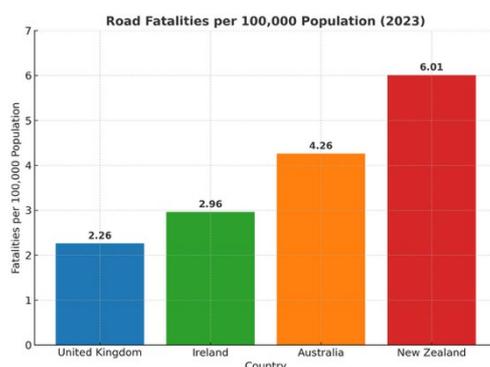
### Acknowledgements

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### Executive Summary

This Winston Churchill Fellowship examined how New South Wales (Australia), the United Kingdom, and Ireland design driver-licensing systems that balance accessibility, education, enforcement, and safety. Through visits, interviews, and policy reviews, I explored structured driver education, community access programmes, fines hypothecation, and parent/whānau engagement, and how these reduce crashes while supporting disadvantaged learners to gain skills and confidence. This report outlines the New Zealand context, presents international case studies, and highlights practical opportunities to strengthen road safety and improve equitable licensing outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand.



### Key Findings

1. **Structured, evidence-based learning** (e.g., Ireland's EDT; NSW GDLS/SDC) produces safer novice drivers.
2. **Equity-focused access programmes** (e.g., NSW DLAP) remove barriers and lift GDLS compliance and safety outcomes.
3. **Hypothecated funding** (e.g., NSW Community Road Safety Fund) sustains best-practice licensing initiatives.
4. **Education-first enforcement** (e.g., UK NDORS) reduces reoffending and improves driving attitudes.

5. **Parent/community involvement** and early road-safety education build safer driving cultures over time.

## 1. Introduction

### Background

Driving underpins employment, education, and participation; in New Zealand, over 70% of jobs require a licence. Yet access barriers remain high for many young people, Māori, Pasifika, rural, and low-income learners. While licensing is often seen as a rite of passage and work requirement, novice drivers are over-represented in deaths and serious injuries. Barriers to training and licensing have direct safety impacts by limiting the skills, experience, and supervision needed to drive safely. Driving is a privilege and social responsibility and we all share a duty to keep each other safe on the road.

New Zealand's Graduated Driver Licensing System (GDLS), introduced in 1987 and updated in 2012, this improved safety but has not kept pace with international best practice or growing inequities. These gaps restrict social and economic participation and contribute to unlicensed driving and elevated crash risk.

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## 2. New Zealand Context

### The Current Licensing Landscape

NZ's GDLS has three stages (Learner → Restricted → Full) with no mandated supervised hours or professional instruction. Testing wait times, locations, anxiety, and costs deter many. Key challenges include fragmented delivery and short-term funding, high lesson/test costs, rural isolation and lack of vehicles or supervisors, no national equity strategy, and no standalone hazard-perception test. A prevailing view of driving as a "right" can undermine respect for licensing requirements and safe behaviours.

Each year, about **70,000** people struggle to navigate licensing due to compounded barriers (cost, transport, admin complexity, limited local services), disproportionately affecting Māori, Pasifika, rural communities, and low-income learners. These inequities have direct safety consequences, with unlicensed or underprepared drivers more likely to crash or drive unsafely due to limited training and supervision.

 <https://drivingchange.nz/issue-nz-drivers-licensing-system/>

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## 3. International Case Studies

### 3.1 United Kingdom

The United Kingdom operates under a **two-stage driver licensing model** - *Provisional* and *Full*, supported by comprehensive education and behaviour-change initiatives designed to reduce crash risk and improve lifelong driving competence.

## Licensing Overview

- **Minimum age:** 17 years.
- **Theory Test:** Covers road rules, hazard-perception testing, eco-driving, and safe behaviours.
- **Practical Test:** 40–70 minutes (for extended tests), including “show me / tell me” safety questions.
- **Probationary period:** Two years under the *New Drivers Act 1995* — a licence can be revoked if the driver accumulates **6 or more demerit points** within that period.

## Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)

The UK’s Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) oversees driver testing, vehicle safety standards, and lifelong road-safety education. It runs the Theory and Practical driving tests, registers Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs), and leads initiatives that support learning, testing, and ongoing competence. Two flagship programmes - **Safe Driving for Life** and **Ready to Pass?**, provide an integrated approach to driver learning and crash-risk reduction.

**Safe Driving for Life** is DVSA’s official driver-education platform for every stage of driving, from learner to lifelong competence. It offers interactive e-learning, theory and hazard-perception practice, and resources for learners, instructors, parents, and road-safety educators. The aim is a culture of continuous learning, going beyond minimum test standards through self-assessment, sound decision-making, and defensive driving. Content is evidence-based and regularly updated to reflect emerging risks, technology changes, and UK crash data.

**Ready to Pass?** (DVSA, launched 2022) improves learner preparedness to cut repeat failures and ease test wait times by urging candidates to book only when they can drive safely and independently. It promotes quality practice and the role of professional instructors in confirming readiness, and provides online tools, videos, and checklists.

### Key messages:

- **Only book when ready** - consistent safe driving, not luck.
- **Instructor sign-off** - seek Driving Instructor (ADI) confirmation before booking.
- **Independent driving** - manage routes, conditions, and risks solo.
- **Manage nerves** - use tools to handle test-day pressure.
- **Reduce wasted bookings** - responsible scheduling to ease backlogs.

**Impact:** Better learner outcomes, fewer cancellations, and a shift from “testing to pass” to “learning for life.”

**FirstCar** is a national road-safety education platform that partners with DVSA, emergency services, and local authorities to embed safety messaging across the licensing journey. It’s free print guides- **Young Driver**, **Theory Test**, **Practical Test**, and **Parents**, are distributed at DVSA test centres and via council road-safety coordinators, delivering consistent, high-quality content to learners and parents at key stages. Each guide tailors advice to its audience, linking test preparation with the attitudes,

awareness, and responsibility needed for safe driving. Funded through DVSA sponsorship and partner advertising (insurers, manufacturers, safety organisations), FirstCar ensures nationwide consistency in driver-education messaging.

### **The Honest Truth – Embedding Safety in Every Lesson**

**The Honest Truth** (founded 2009 by a Devon & Cornwall police officer) weaves risk-awareness into everyday driving lessons rather than running as a standalone course. It equips Approved Driving Instructors with training and resources to have one-to-one, reflective conversations about real-world risks (speed, seatbelts, distraction, impairment, peer passengers, fatigue, phones, road conditions, vulnerable users), the programme’s “Ten Truths.”

An app-based platform lets instructors log what’s been covered and track learner engagement, while a learner handbook reinforces messages at home. Now supported by the Road Safety Trust, FirstCar, and DVSA, the programme involves **2,000+ instructors** and reaches **~80,000 learners a year**, showing how behavioural education can be integrated into standard driver training.

### **Kent County Council – Young Driver and Passenger Programme**

A school-based initiative for Years 12–13 that targets both young drivers and the influence of their passengers. It empowers passengers to speak up and reduce risk using practical tools (assertive communication, pre-ride agreements, simple bystander strategies) delivered through four virtual modules - *Driving & Seeing, Impairment, Speed & Force, Impulse & Control*, plus a live Q&A with a Road Safety Officer.

Resources include student workbooks and a teacher guide, and the programme aligns with Kent’s **Speak Out** campaign. Recognised with the **2024 Prince Michael International Road Safety Award**, it combines digital delivery, peer learning, and evidence-based behaviour change.

**NZ relevance:** with ~20% of NZ road deaths being passengers, strengthening the passenger voice can cut exposure to the Fatal Four (speed, impairment, distraction, restraints) and support safer peer decision-making.

### **NDORS / Road Safety Trust**

**NDORS (UK)** offers eligible drivers an education course instead of demerit points and fines for minor offences (e.g., speeding, low-level careless driving, signal violations).

Administered by **UKROEd** with police forces and the **Road Safety Trust**, it shifts the focus from punishment to behaviour change. Core courses include **National Speed Awareness, Safe & Considerate Driving**, and **What’s Driving Us?** These use discussion, reflection, and self-assessment to address risky attitudes and habits.

A **TRL** evaluation found participants were **23% less likely to reoffend** and drove about **7 mph (≈11 km/h) slower** afterwards.

The scheme is **self-funding** (participant fees cover delivery, police admin, resources)

and any surplus supports road-safety research via the Road Safety Trust. There are approximately **~1.6 million participants annually** and **10 million+** have complete programmes since its launch.

### **NZ Relevance and opportunities**

☒ **Localise UK resources** into an NZTA-endorsed national standard to replace patchy materials and align education, parent engagement, and test prep across GDLS stages.

☒ **Distribute consistent guides** (FirstCar-style) via NZTA test centres, schools, and road-safety coordinators so every learner/parent gets standard, evidence-based information from theory to restricted.

☒ **Adopt The Honest Truth approach** so instructors deliver consistent, evidence-based road safety risk education within lessons, nationwide to address attitudes and behaviours.

☒ **Introduce passenger-empowerment education** (Kent model) to strengthen peer influence and reduce passenger fatalities.

☒ **Pilot education-in-lieu-of-fines** as an alternative pathway (NDORS) for low-level first offences (e.g., speeding, distraction, inconsiderate driving, restraints), funded by ring-fenced infringement revenue.

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## **3.2 Ireland**

Ireland's Road Safety Authority (RSA) runs a nationally integrated system -education, licensing, and enforcement aligned to Vision Zero 2050, with consistent messaging across schools, workplaces, and communities. The focus is on structured learning, test preparation and clear post-test expectations.

### **Licensing framework**

- **Pathway:** Learner Permit → Full Licence (**Novice** status for two years).
- **Essential Driver Training (EDT): 12 × 1-hour mandatory lessons** delivered over **6 months** by approved instructors, covering hazard perception, vehicle control, road awareness, and safe decision-making.
- **Supervised practice:** Recommended **3 hours between each EDT lesson**, logged against set tasks in an instructor-signed logbook (evidence required to book the practical test). This provides at least **48 hours** of combined structured learning and supervised practice before testing.
- After passing the test there is a **Novice phase (2 years):** Drivers display 'N' plates, have **lower demerit threshold (7 points)**, and a **reduced BAC (0.02%)**, reinforcing safer behaviour immediately after licensing.

### **Why it works**

- **Consistency and quality assurance:** A national syllabus, mandatory lessons, and signed logbooks standardise teaching quality.
- **Readiness over speed:** The 6-month (or longer) cadence and practice requirement drive genuine preparedness rather than “test at first opportunity.”
- **Behavioural guardrails:** Novice conditions target the highest-risk period with simple, enforceable rules.

## Costs and support

- Typical EDT cost **€600–€700** for 12 lessons.
- Targeted assistance only: **Training Support Grant** (up to €250 for eligible jobseekers) and occasional **SICAP** subsidies via local community priorities. Most learners **self-fund**.

## NZ takeaways

- **Mandate a structured syllabus** within GDLS (EDT-style), with **minimum supervised practice** and an **NZTA-approved logbook** signed by instructors.
- **Adopt a defined Novice phase** with plates displayed (lower BAC/points) to manage early solo-driving risk.
- **Set national quality controls** (provider approval, curriculum standards, audit) to ensure consistent outcomes across regions.
- **Targeted subsidies** (via a Driver Equity Fund) can support priority learners and those facing barriers without diluting the system's standards.

## 3.3 Australia (New South Wales)

New South Wales (NSW) pairs a comprehensive GDLS with structured training and targeted support for disadvantaged learners, sustained by hypothecated fines revenue.

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### Licensing Overview

- **Learner → P1 → P2 → Full Licence**
- **120 hours of supervised driving practice required**, including at least **20 hours at night**.
- **Hazard Perception Test (HPT)** before progressing to P1.
- **Safer Drivers Course (SDC)**: 5-hour blended course (theory and in-car components), providing **20 bonus logbook hours**.

This ensures young drivers gain substantial supervised experience and hazard-recognition skills before solo driving; more supervised hours are linked to lower novice crash rates.

### Driver Licensing Access Program (DLAP)

After NSW strengthened its GDL in 2007 (raising supervised-practice to **120 hours** and extending the learner period), **DLAP** was created to offset new access barriers for disadvantaged learners.

It provides practical help across the licensing journey including ID and **Driver Knowledge Test preparation**, **access to dual-control vehicles and volunteer mentors** to log hours, **test readiness and mock assessments**, and **re-licensing support**.

Early Transport for NSW trials found wider benefits beyond licensing: **fewer unlicensed-driving offences, judicial cost savings**, and improved **social cohesion, participation, and employment**.

DLAP targets systemic barriers in **rural, Aboriginal, refugee, and low-income communities**, using structured community delivery to improve licensing access and road safety.

## Programme Framework

DLAP operates through a network of 19 providers serving more than 125 communities across NSW. Each provider delivers services aligned to four progressive support stages:

1. **Pre-Learner Support** – Helping participants obtain required identification documents and prepare for the Driver Knowledge Test (DKT).
2. **Supervised Driving** – Providing access to dual-controlled vehicles, fuel, and volunteer mentors to meet the 120-hour logbook requirement.
3. **Provisional Licence Preparation** – Focused on confidence building, test readiness, and mock assessments.
4. **Re-Licensing Support** – Supporting individuals to reinstate suspended or expired licences or transition from restricted conditions.

Around **40%** of DLAP participants are Aboriginal and **23%** are from refugee or migrant backgrounds, underscoring the programme's equity focus. **Transport for NSW** actively manages the network, regularly reviewing coverage and using a **rolling tender** to bring in new providers where service delivery gaps or demand emerge. All providers complete **TfNSW-approved training and accreditation**, which keeps delivery consistent across regions and maintains high standards of quality, safety, and accountability statewide.

## Funding Model

DLAP is funded by NSW's **Community Road Safety Fund (CRSF)** - a hypothecated pool that channels all camera and traffic-fine revenue into road-safety initiatives. The CRSF invests **\$10m+ AUD a year** in DLAP, enabling **multi-year, stable contracts** so providers can plan and scale.

This model **reinvests enforcement into prevention and education**, aligning fines with community outcomes. **Transport for NSW** reviews funding regularly, applying **CPI increases** and adjusting for regional costs and demand to ensure programme quality is not compromised. They also back **training, evaluation, and capacity-building** to keep delivery consistent, safe, and high quality statewide.

## The Safer Drivers Course (SDC)

Learners **under 25** with a valid permit and **50+ supervised hours (incl. night)** can take NSW's **Safer Drivers Course (SDC)**. Delivered by **accredited providers** statewide, it builds defensive-driving and decision-making skills and embeds **hazard awareness and risk management** in the licensing pathway, complementing **DLAP**. The SDC is **optional**, adding value without creating another mandate, helping maintain learner

engagement.

### Course structure:

- **3 hours of classroom theory**, focusing on safe attitudes, peer pressure, and risk awareness.
- **2 hours of in-car practical coaching**, where learners apply defensive driving strategies under instructor supervision.
- Upon completion, learners receive **20 bonus logbook hours**, helping them progress toward the 120-hour supervised driving requirement.

Facilitators and in-car coaches must be accredited (driving-instructor licence, SDC-specific training, current Working with Children Check). The course runs in two parts (separate classroom and practical sessions). The fee is **AUD \$140** paid to providers. The NSW Government tops this up to maintain quality and sustainability, and offers **up to 1,000 free places** each year for disadvantaged learners and those in Out-of-Home Care.

Transport for NSW's process evaluation found the SDC well run with good learner engagement and strong classroom–in-car alignment. Monash University research reports higher confidence, better risk awareness, and greater use of low-risk strategies post-course; while direct crash-reduction is hard to isolate, the SDC reinforces safer habits and hazard perception for young drivers.

### Programme Impact

The combined effect of structured driver training, community delivery, and sustainable funding has produced significant results in New South Wales:

- **Youth fatalities down 69%** since the strengthened GDLS and rollout of DLAP/related programmes (TfNSW).
- **Better outcomes for participants:** higher test pass rates, less unlicensed driving, improved employability.
- **Stronger provider capacity:** stable three-year contracts and staffing.
- **Community-led delivery works:** evaluations show better engagement and retention in high-need areas.

DLAP and SDC show how equity and safety reinforce each other, giving at-risk learners the resources and education needed to drive safely.

### NZ Relevance and opportunities

- ❑ **DLAP as an equity model:** targeted community delivery reduces unlicensed driving and improves safety.
- ❑ **Hypothecated funding:** reinvest traffic-infringement revenue into a separate **Driver Equity Fund** to **supplement, not replace**, NZ's existing CRSF (personalised-plates funded) and meet unmet education/training needs.
- ❑ **Safer Drivers Course (SDC):** blend hazard-awareness theory with coached practice and logbook-credit incentives; consider **replacing NZ's weak-evidence "advanced" courses** with an SDC-style approach.

- ☐ **Stable contracting:** multi-year agreements and rolling tenders provide provider stability and responsiveness, a lesson for NZ's fragmented, fixed-term funding.
- ☐ **Stronger GDLS:** mandate supervised hours, staged progression, and hazard-perception testing to cut novice crash rates.
- ☐ **Structured education via accredited community providers:** gives government oversight of curriculum and quality, and ensures equitable access for learners facing barriers.

## 4. Comparative Analysis and Discussion

The examination of licensing systems across **the United Kingdom, Ireland, and New South Wales (Australia)** highlights a consistent theme: the safest and most equitable driver-licensing systems combine **structured education, targeted accessibility support, sustainable funding models, and integrated policy oversight**. Each jurisdiction demonstrates that a safe, fair licensing process is achieved when learning is treated not as a compliance task, but as a structured educational journey supported by community and reinforced by policy.

### 4.1 Structured Learning and Education Integration

Across all three jurisdictions, driver education is seen as an **essential public-safety investment**, not an optional personal responsibility. Each model ensures that structured, staged learning is embedded throughout the licensing journey, with defined competencies, supervised experience, and reflection opportunities.

- **Ireland's Essential Driver Training (EDT)** is a structured, competency-based programme: **12 instructor-led lessons**, each backed by **3 hours** supervised practice between lessons. With clear goals, instructor sign-off, and a national logbook, it builds accountability, consistency, and progressive skill development for all learners.
- **The UK's DVSA model**, through *Safe Driving for Life* and *Ready to Pass?*, reinforces continuous learning and test readiness, promoting self-assessment and responsibility rather than test-chasing.
- **New South Wales** pairs the **Safer Drivers Course (SDC)** with the **optional DLAP**, which helps learners complete the mandated **120 supervised hours** - together creating a structured learning-and-support framework across the licensing pathway.

This integrated Australian model is the **closest alignment to New Zealand's Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) system**, demonstrating how structured education can coexist with strong accessibility and equity mechanisms. Each of these systems recognises that structured, evidence-based learning significantly reduces crash risk, improves learner preparedness, and fosters a culture of lifelong safe driving.

### 4.2 Accessibility and Equity in Licensing

Equitable access to licensing emerged as a critical success factor - particularly for addressing the intersection between road safety, employment, and social inclusion.

- 📌 **NSW DLAP:** Targets learners facing social/financial barriers that disadvantaged some groups. Early trials showed benefits beyond road safety: fewer unlicensed-driving offences, judicial cost savings, stronger social cohesion/participation/employment. Flexible, consistent delivery via regular provider reviews, **rolling tenders**, and mandatory **TfNSW** accreditation across **125+ communities**.
- 📌 **Ireland RSA:** Coordinates national education and testing standards. Mobile teams deliver Road Safety Matters, **Transition Year Road Safety**, and the mobile **RSA Shuttle** reach even remote schools and communities.
- 📌 **UK – accessibility model:** Publicly funded national resources (**FirstCar, Safe Driving for Life & Ready to Pass?**), **The Honest Truth** integrated into lessons, and **NDORS** (education-in-lieu-of-fines) shift enforcement toward behaviour change.

Together, these examples show that accessibility and fairness are central to safety when licensing systems address economic and social inequities, they not only produce safer drivers but also more cohesive communities.

#### 4.3 Sustainable and Targeted Funding Models

A defining feature of both **NSW** and the **UK** systems is the commitment to **sustainable, ring-fenced funding** for road safety and driver education.

- 📌 **NSW:** The hypothecated **Community Road Safety Fund (CRSF)** channels traffic and camera-fine revenue into community programmes. **~AUD \$10m/year** supports DLAP and related initiatives, enabling **multi-year contracts, stable staffing, and quality assurance** via CPI-linked adjustments and regular reviews.
- 📌 **Penalties → prevention:** Reinvesting enforcement revenue turns fines into positive action where offenders help fund education that builds safer attitudes and awareness.
- 📌 **UK: NDORS** is self-funding; course fees cover delivery and excesses are reinvested via the **Road Safety Trust**, while participants deepen understanding of the risks behind their offences.
- 📌 **Ireland:** Road-safety education is funded within the **RSA** operational budget for national consistency; however more **targeted support for disadvantaged learners** would further lift participation.

#### 4.4 Enforcement and Behaviour Change

Each jurisdiction integrates targeted and educative alternative enforcement pathways to help drive long-term behaviour change:

- The **UK's NDORS scheme** replaces financial penalties with education opportunities for some offences, producing measurable results - a **23% reduction in reoffending** and an average driving-speed reduction of **7 mph (approximately 11 km/h)** among participants.

- **Ireland’s structured EDT and Novice Phase** use mandatory learning and targeted probation requirements to embed responsible driving habits early.

The consistent finding is that **alternative pathway enforcement**, where learning replaces or complements penalties supports better long-term safety outcomes and public acceptance than punitive approaches alone.

#### 4.5 Cultural Change and Social Responsibility

Beyond policy and funding structures, all three jurisdictions frame licensing as a **shared social responsibility** rather than an individual entitlement.

- In **Ireland**, lifelong road-safety education begins in schools and continues through adulthood.
- In the **UK**, community-led initiatives like **The Honest Truth** and **Kent County Council’s Young Driver & Passenger Programme** focus on attitudes, peer pressure, and giving passengers the tools to speak up – potentially particularly relevant for New Zealand, where **around 20% of road fatalities are passengers**.
- In **NSW**, DLAP reframes licensing as both a safety and social-equity measure - a gateway to employment, community participation, and wellbeing.

New Zealand’s challenge is similar: shifting the perception of driving as a “rite of passage” or work necessity to a **social contract based on shared responsibility and safety**.

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## 5. Recommendations

Drawing on lessons from NSW, the UK, and Ireland, this Fellowship outlines structural, educational, and equity-focused reforms to strengthen New Zealand’s licensing system. The aim is to align road safety and social equity so everyone, regardless of background, location, or income has an accessible, supported, and safe path to obtain and keep a licence.

### 5.1 Establish a Dedicated Driver Equity Fund

- Establish a hypothecated **Driver Equity Fund** (modelled on NSW’s CRSF) to **sustainably resource driver education**, training, and support - explicitly **supplementing, not replacing**, New Zealand’s existing CRSF (currently funded via personalised plates).
- Direct revenue from **traffic camera fines** to this fund ensuring a transparent, ring-fenced mechanism that reinvests enforcement revenue into prevention and education.
- Use this fund to **scale successful accredited community-led licensing programmes**, prioritising regions and groups experiencing the greatest barriers to licensing (e.g. Māori, Pasifika, rural youth, migrants, and people with disabilities).

### 5.2 Embed Structured Learning into the Licensing Process

- **Adopt a national structured framework** (EDT or NSW’s DLAP + SDC style).
- **Mandate minimum supervised hours** and add a **hazard-perception** component to GDLS.
- **Use a standard logbook** across learner/restricted/full stages with supervisor sign-off.
- **Incentivise learning** via **bonus logbook credits** (NSW SDC model).
- **Cover higher-level GDE skills** (risk awareness, resilience, peer influence) alongside core driving/road-rule skills.
- **Align outcomes with RIDS** (Restraints, Impairment, Distraction, Speed) and NZ road-safety strategy.
- **Subsidise access** for learners in community, school, MSD-supported programmes or facing other barriers.

### 5.3 Expand Community-Led Licensing Delivery

- Adopt the **NSW DLAP model** of multi-year funding with rolling tender applications for local providers to deliver consistent, quality-assured licensing support.
- Leverage online learning tools and testing platforms to improve reach and consistency, especially in rural areas.
- Establish a **national provider framework** to ensure programmes meet agreed quality standards while retaining local flexibility.
- Deliver structured education through **accredited community providers** to give government oversight of curriculum and quality, and ensure equitable access for learners facing barriers.
- Prioritise partnerships with **Mā te Māori, mō te Māori** and **By Pasifika, For Pasifika** organisations to ensure culturally grounded delivery models.
- Fund community mentoring, supervised-driving access, and mobile testing services to address rural and regional inequities.

### 5.4 Integrate Alternative Pathway Enforcement

- Pilot **education-in-lieu-of-fines schemes**, based on the UK’s **National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS)** model, for low-level traffic offences (e.g., minor speed or phone-use infringements).
- Ensure course fees or penalties contribute back to the **Driver Equity Fund**, supporting education and community reinvestment.
- Evaluate the impact on reoffending, public attitudes, and enforcement efficiency.

### 5.5 Strengthen School and Tertiary Driver Education

- Integrate **driver education, hazard awareness, and passenger empowerment** into the secondary-school curriculum (Years 10–13), modelled on Ireland’s **Transition Year Road Safety Matters** and the UK’s **Kent County Council Young Driver & Passenger Programme**.

- Expand existing initiatives such as **Licence for Life** and **Driving Change’s school partnerships** to ensure students leave school with at least a learner licence.
- Encourage employer and tertiary-institution partnerships to support licensing as part of vocational pathways (e.g., apprenticeships, Gateway, or Job Starter programmes).

## 5.6 Support Long-Term System Governance and Evaluation

- Establish a **National Licensing and Driver Education Advisory Group** comprising government, community, and industry representatives to oversee reform implementation and ongoing review.
- **Align with Road Safety Objectives** embed education, enforcement, and equity measures across **Waka Kotahi, MoT, MSD, MoE**.
- Introduce **consistent outcome measures** e.g., licensing attainment rates, equity-gap reduction, employment impacts, and recidivism rates to track system performance.
- **Commission independent research** on the social and economic benefits of licensing support programmes (judicial savings, employment, community cohesion).

## 5.7 Reframe Public Attitudes Around Licensing

- Launch a national campaign to reposition licensing as a **public-safety and social-responsibility milestone**, rather than simply a rite of passage.
- Use messaging that reflects the **shared responsibility of all drivers** for keeping others safe, inspired by the UK’s *Safe Driving for Life* principles.
- Promote positive driving norms through storytelling and peer influence, highlighting passengers’ role in speaking up to keep everyone safe.

## 6. Reflection and Conclusion

This Fellowship reinforced that driver licensing is more than regulation - it’s a key enabler of safety, opportunity, and social connection. NSW, Ireland, and the UK show that when education, accessibility, and enforcement work together, the benefits extend beyond safer roads to stronger communities, reduced inequality, and better pathways to employment and independence.

### 6.1 Learning Through the Lens of Equity

Licensing inequity is both a road-safety and social-justice issue. Those least likely to hold a licence are also most exposed to road trauma, unemployment, and isolation. Effective systems respond with support, not punishment, recognising that fairness and safety are interdependent.

In New South Wales, **DLAP** shows how embedding equity in road-safety policy works: community delivery, structured learning, and sustained funding bridge long-standing access gaps. In Ireland and the UK, structured education, lifelong learning, and public

accountability underpin driver development, proving safety isn't achieved by testing alone but through continuous education and community engagement.

Across these models, the lesson is clear: a safe licensing framework must also be an equitable one.

## 6.2 The Role of Community and System Leadership

Community-led innovation, backed by strong central coordination, drives lasting change. From **DLAP** providers in regional NSW to **RSA's** mobile outreach and the UK's partnership campaigns, the best programmes blend local relationships with system-level support and national standards - keeping education relevant, trusted, and responsive.

For New Zealand, this underscores the **Driving Change Network's** role as a community voice and bridge between policy and practice, advocating equitable access, sustainable funding, and partnership delivery.

## 6.3 The Path Forward for Aotearoa

Aotearoa has the foundation to build a world-leading licensing system - one that reflects both our commitment to **Road Safety Objectives** and our belief in **manaakitanga, fairness, and community wellbeing**.

To achieve this, we must:

- Invest sustainably in **driver education, training, and licensing support**, guided by evidence and equity.
- Embed structured learning and hazard awareness into every stage of the GDL system.
- Empower communities, particularly Māori, Pasifika, and rural providers - to deliver local solutions within a nationally supported framework.
- Reinforce the message that **driving is not a right, but a privilege that comes with responsibility to others**.

By doing so, we can create a licensing system that is not only safer, but also fairer - one that opens doors rather than closing them.