

# Wheel time overlooked

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MOTORING EDITOR

LEARNER drivers who undergo advanced safety courses at a training centre, circuit or other off-road facility will not be acknowledged for their effort.

Under new laws from July, learners aged under 25 must gain 100 hours of certified, supervised driving experience on public roads.

But advanced driver training at facilities such as the Government's own Mt Cotton centre will not qualify for the learner's required logbook hours.

Safe Drive Training managing director Joel Neilsen said the system was unfair since every hour a learner spent with a driving school instructor on

the road qualified for three hours off the logbook.

"This is a slap in the face to defensive driving courses," Mr Neilsen said.

"We are not necessarily asking for the same triple-credit deal as driving schools but surely an hour spent learning emergency car handling procedures in the safety of a supervised training facility should be credited to logbook hours."

Queensland Transport young driver project team spokeswoman Linda McIntyre told Mr Neilsen the 100 hours of on-road training was designed to "encourage young drivers to interact with and be

exposed to a range of traffic, road, and weather conditions".

"Therefore, supervised driving undertaken in an artificial driving environment, such as a driver trainer centre-facility will not count towards the completion of the 100-hour driving experience requirement."

But Mr Neilsen said Queensland Transport had never attended his program to see what they did for drivers.

The Government's Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee had recommended the introduction of high school driver training yet those attending such courses would not be able to claim this as logbook hours.

"This could have been a low-

cost, no-cost way for the Government to encourage novice drivers to undertake defensive driving programs, as the participant could claim the hours spent at the course in their logbooks," Mr Neilsen said.

He said his Safe Drive Training company was the largest supplier of novice driver training in Queensland. More than 3500 novice drivers every year attended its seven-hour safe drive test course.

"Novice drivers attending our course should at least be able to claim the practical hours of the course in their logbooks," Mr Neilsen said.



WHEEL time ... young driver Ashlea Pleffer's training with Safe Drive will not qualify as required on-road experience

## The new laws

- Minimum learner age lowered to 16.
- Learner period extended to 12 months.
- Introduction of a two-phased provisional licence system – P1 and P2.
- Compulsory L plates.
- Learners must log 100 hours of certified, supervised driving experience on public roads.
- Motorbike learners required to hold a car provisional licence for 12 months before obtaining a motorbike learner licence.
- High-powered vehicle restrictions for provisional drivers.