

## Youth union movement policy statement on driver licensing

March 2010

**Stand Up believes that any changes to driver licensing laws in New Zealand must not restrict young people's ability to access work, education and community activity.**

Stand Up believes the raising of the driving age will reduce young people's ability to access work, education and community activity, particularly restricting young rural New Zealanders. This will be the imminent case unless strong provisions are in place to ensure young people are not left disconnected from each of these community dimensions.

Stand Up acknowledges that young people between the ages of 15-18 are sadly disproportionately represented in road casualty statistics.

Stand Up strongly recognises the need to focus on harm minimisation to reduce the number of young people crashing on New Zealand roads.

However, Stand Up believes that simply raising the driving age is a blunt instrument that will not address the problem of young drivers dying on our roads. We suggest investment in stronger training provisions as an alternative way to address the issue of young people crashing than to simply raise the driving age.

In New Zealand, there is currently no comprehensive cheap or free driver training available to new drivers.

Stand Up proposes that in order to balance young people's needs to access work, education and community activities with young driver safety, that the Government invest in driver training.

Stand Up believes that providing accessible training to new drivers will ensure young people have the required training and support to make sure they have the necessary skills and experience from day one of independent driving.

Australia has trialled a free training scheme called Keys2Drive. This initiative is soon to be rolled out nationwide and brings together best practice driving instructors and gives them the opportunity to gain additional experience and training through giving free training to young drivers. Based on the success of the Australian trial, Stand Up proposes that the Government trial a similar scheme here.

Stand Up believes that raising the New Zealand driving age will have negative implications on the social, economic and educational fabric of many New Zealand communities if such a move will result in thousands of young people losing the ability to access work, education and community activity.

For more information:

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## **Additional information:**

Stand Up is the youth sector of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi. The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi brings together just under 400,000 New Zealand union members in 40 affiliated unions and is the united voice for working people and their families in New Zealand.

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