



Driving Experience Among Newly Licensed Māori Drivers

The New Zealand Drivers Study is a large on-going study of newly licensed drivers that will provide scientific evidence on which to base future policies and programmes that have the potential to ensure a reduction in traffic related injury among New Zealand drivers. The main objective of this study is to identify risk and protective factors for traffic-related injury among newly licensed drivers in New Zealand. From the results of such studies it is possible to identify factors that can be targeted to reduce those injuries. One part of this study looked at the driving experience among newly licensed Māori drivers.

As Māori we are everywhere. Some of us live in our own *rohe* (tribal area) while others have set up home in towns and cities throughout *Aotearoa* / New Zealand such that now over 80% of Māori live in urban areas.

This study, which provides the first set of NZDS results relevant to Māori looked to see if there were any differences in the driving experiences of young Māori who live in a rural home compared with those who live in urban areas. Results on the driving profiles of all NZDS participants at the time they gained their learner licence will be available in the near future.

What did we do in this study?

Highlights:

- 20% of the participants in the New Zealand Drivers Study (NZDS) self-identified as Māori
- 81% of Māori participants lived in urban areas and 19% lived in rural areas
- The majority of the Māori participants in the NZDS were 15 or 16 years old when they got their licence
- Most Māori participants in the New Zealand Drivers Study had driven a car before they got their learner licence.
- Learning to drive and a sober driver being required were the most common reasons Māori participants gave for driving before licensing.
- Overall, the nature and extent of driving before licensing was similar between Māori living in urban and rural areas.

The New Zealand Drivers Study (NZDS) is a nationwide study of 3992 newly licensed drivers who are to be interviewed at each stage of the graduated licensing process (i.e. at the learner, restricted and full licence stages).

At each interview the participants are asked about a wide range of licensing and driving related factors that may impact on their driving experience and behaviour.

When the participants in this study had gained their learner licence they were interviewed and this *korero* provided a driver profile which revealed their driving experiences before they received their learner licence.

What did we find out about the Māori people who took part in the NZDS?

How many Māori people took part?

- 20% (n = 824) of the participants in the NZDS self-identified as Māori. (Compared with the New Zealand population where 15% identify as Māori).

Where did the Māori people taking part live?

- 81% of Māori participants lived in urban areas and 19% lived in rural areas. (Based on Statistics New Zealand classification, urban areas include Gisborne, Napier-Hastings, Rotorua and Tauranga as well as all major metropolitan cities).

What was the gender balance of the Māori people taking part in this study?

- Both groups had slightly more females than males (55% of the participants in the urban areas were female and 54% in the rural areas were female).

What was the age group of the Māori people taking part?

- 55% of the urban group and 72% of the rural group were aged 15 - 16 years when they gained their learner licence and joined the study.

What was the occupation of most people taking part?

- Most people in both the urban and rural groups were students when they gained their licence.



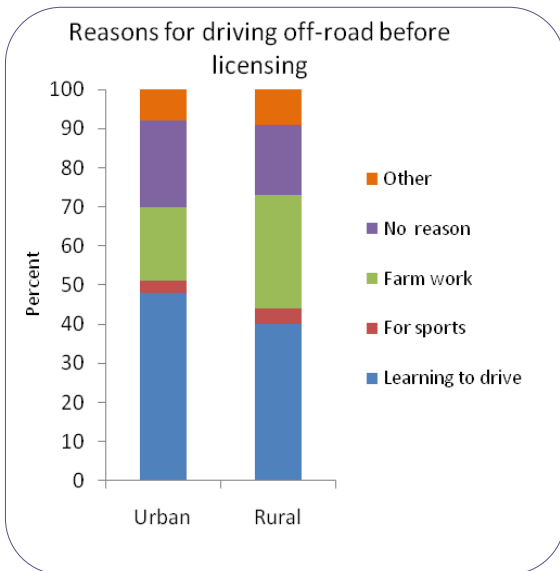
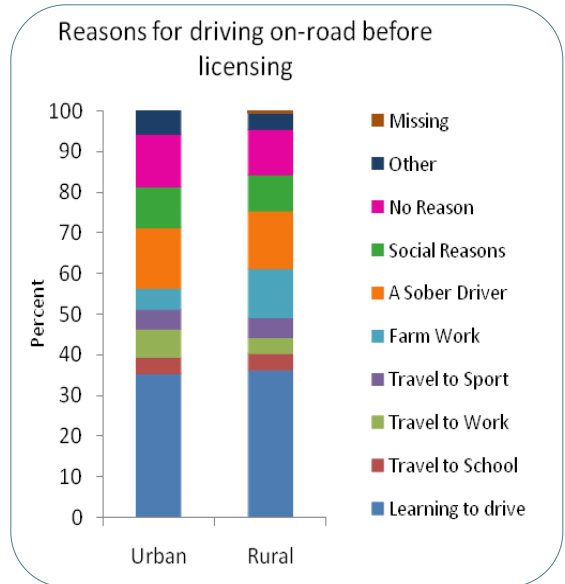
What did we find out in this study?

On-road car driving experience

83% of rural participants and 65% of urban participants had driven a car on-road before they got their learner licence

Of those who had driven:

- Over half of each group had driven before age 15 years (urban; 54%, rural: 70%).
- Most urban (48%) and rural (49%) participants had driven 20 times or more, and between 1 and 100 kilometres in total (urban: 56%, rural: 65%).
- For both groups, learning to drive was the most common reason for driving (urban: 33%, rural: 36%).
- Being a sober driver was the second most common reason for driving before licensing for both groups (14% each group).



Off-road car driving experience

70% of rural participants and 49% of urban participants had driven a car off-road before they got their licence

Of those who had driven:

- Over half of each group had driven before age 15 years (urban: 64%, rural: 78%).
- Rural participants drove more often than urban participants (20 times or more, urban: 27%, rural: 50%). However, both groups most commonly reported driving between 1 and 100 kilometres in total (urban: 79%, rural: 83%).
- Learning to drive was the most common reason for driving in both groups (urban: 48%, rural: 41%). Driving for farm work was more common among the rural participants (urban: 19%, rural: 29%).

*As a bird needs
feathers to fly,
so a driver needs
a licence to drive.*

What were the main findings of the study?

- Getting behind the wheel and driving **before** gaining a licence was very common among the Māori participants in the NZDS.
- Contrary to common perceptions, driving experience before gaining a licence was very similar between the urban-living and rural-living groups.
- The main reason both the urban-living and rural-living participants drove before gaining a licence was so that they could learn to drive.
- Many people taking part in this study, in both the urban-living and rural-living groups reported that the other reason they drove a car before they had gained a licence was because they were being the sober driver for their family or friends.