

# Insights on Young Drivers in Māngere

*preparatory reading for co-designers*  
*Māngere Young Driver Project*  
**May 2015**

# introduction

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This insights document summarises a review of information about young drivers, the licensing system, road safety and social marketing programmes, as well as a community insight gathering process undertaken in Māngere.

The **Māngere Young Driver Project** is a social marketing programme being designed with the community through a social innovation process. Social marketing is the use of marketing principles and tools to achieve positive behaviour change. This project aims for more young Māngere people to gain a full driving licence. This insights document is intended as background reading for a group that will co-design the programme.

Led by **innovate change** and Curative, this project continues the work of ACC and the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) on the Young Driver Signature Programme.

**The Young Driver Signature Programme** is a partnership between ACC and the NZTA that addresses the environment that supports young people to get their full driver licence. In addition to this community-based social marketing programme, other work streams will focus on support for progressing through the licensing process (including licence application and test preparation) and improved driver education through schools and training providers. In addition to the Signature Programme, other areas of work include a new online driver education programme, learning modules based on the Road Code and improving customer service around driver testing.

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# methodology

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The insights in this document were produced by **innovate change** gathering and reviewing information from a number of local and national sources and by generating and analysing data with a group of insight gatherers in Māngere. A lot of research has already been done on young driver safety in New Zealand, especially for the Young Driver Signature Programme, and a small study had previously been conducted specifically on young drivers in Māngere. This information review began by identifying and synthesising the existing research and other key information such as Māngere population data.

**innovate change** trained 20 Māngere residents to gather insights by interviewing three of their peers. Eleven of the insight gatherers were aged 16 to 24 years; nine were parents or family members of young people. They represented a range of ethnicities and suburban areas of Māngere, and held different types of driving licences – including some with no licence.

The insight gatherers interviewed a total of 61 Māngere people (37 young people aged 15-25 years, and 24 parents and whānau of young people) about their experiences of and attitudes to driving and licensing. A diverse range of ages, genders and ethnicities were interviewed, although this was not a representative sample of the Māngere population. Among the young interviewees, respondents were predominantly Pacific people (identifying as Niuean, Tongan, Samoan or Cook Island ethnicity). A few young Māori, Pākehā and people of mixed ethnicities were also interviewed. The family members interviewed predominantly identified with a Pacific or Māori ethnicity. More women than men were interviewed in both groups.

The interview data was analysed, firstly in a workshop with the insight gatherers before closer analysis of the interview notes was conducted. The interviews were categorised by adapting existing typologies developed by UMR and University of Otago researchers. The interview results were then analysed and synthesised together with the existing research to produce the insights presented in this document. Unless indicated otherwise, the quotes throughout this document are from the insight gatherer interviews.



insights that set  
the scene



# 1. Lots of young people drive unlicensed





***At least half of young drivers in Māngere drive unlicensed or in breach of their learner licence.***

Most young people drive and many do so without graduating to a full licence. Nationwide data shows that around 83% of 16 to 24 year olds have some type of driving licence (UMR 2014), but 40,000 young drivers were issued notices for a licence breach in 2012 – mainly for not following the conditions of their learner licence (Shaw and Gates 2014).

Precise data for Māngere is not available, but various sources suggest that at least half of young drivers in South Auckland are unlicensed. The insight gatherers confirmed that driving without a licence or in breach of the conditions of your licence is common in Māngere.

Over half of the young Māngere people whom the insight gatherers interviewed drove alone with no licence or with only a learner licence. About two thirds of the young people interviewed could be classified as “non-compliant” – they either presently or previously had driven without the correct licence.

Unlicensed and breach driving is an accepted social norm in this community, according to in-depth research conducted with Māngere community members (Waldron and Field 2013). That research concluded that there is no great incentive for young people not to drive unlicensed or to progress through the licensing system. Similarly, an informal survey of 2,400 16-25 year olds from South Auckland, coordinated by ACC staff in 2011, indicated that approximately 70% of the young Māori and Pacific people in South Auckland who drive are doing so without a licence. The Auckland Chamber of Commerce data on licensing in South Auckland also shows that, among its cohort of 18-24 year olds on the Youth Employment Programme, 51% have no licence at all and 32% only have a learner’s licence.

This problem is not restricted to South Auckland. Nationwide research shows that “there is a significant amount of rule breaking, with unlicensed driving and driving with passengers and/or at night-time on a learner or restricted licence being somewhat common,” – and this is especially common among rural communities and Pacific peoples (UMR 2014, 5–6).



2. Unlicensed driving can cause harm



***“I was driving underage with my sister who got a learner licence. We were pulled over. No licence. \$400 for my sis. \$400 for me.”***

*Young person*

Driving without or in breach of a licence has serious risks, including safety, employment, legal and financial consequences. However, these risks do not always deter young drivers.

There are three stages to getting a driver licence – learner, restricted and full. On a learner or restricted licence, drivers have to follow certain conditions that limit what they can do. This system is designed to ensure drivers stay safe as they become more skilled and competent on the road. When people drive in breach of these conditions, or with no licence at all, the risks include:

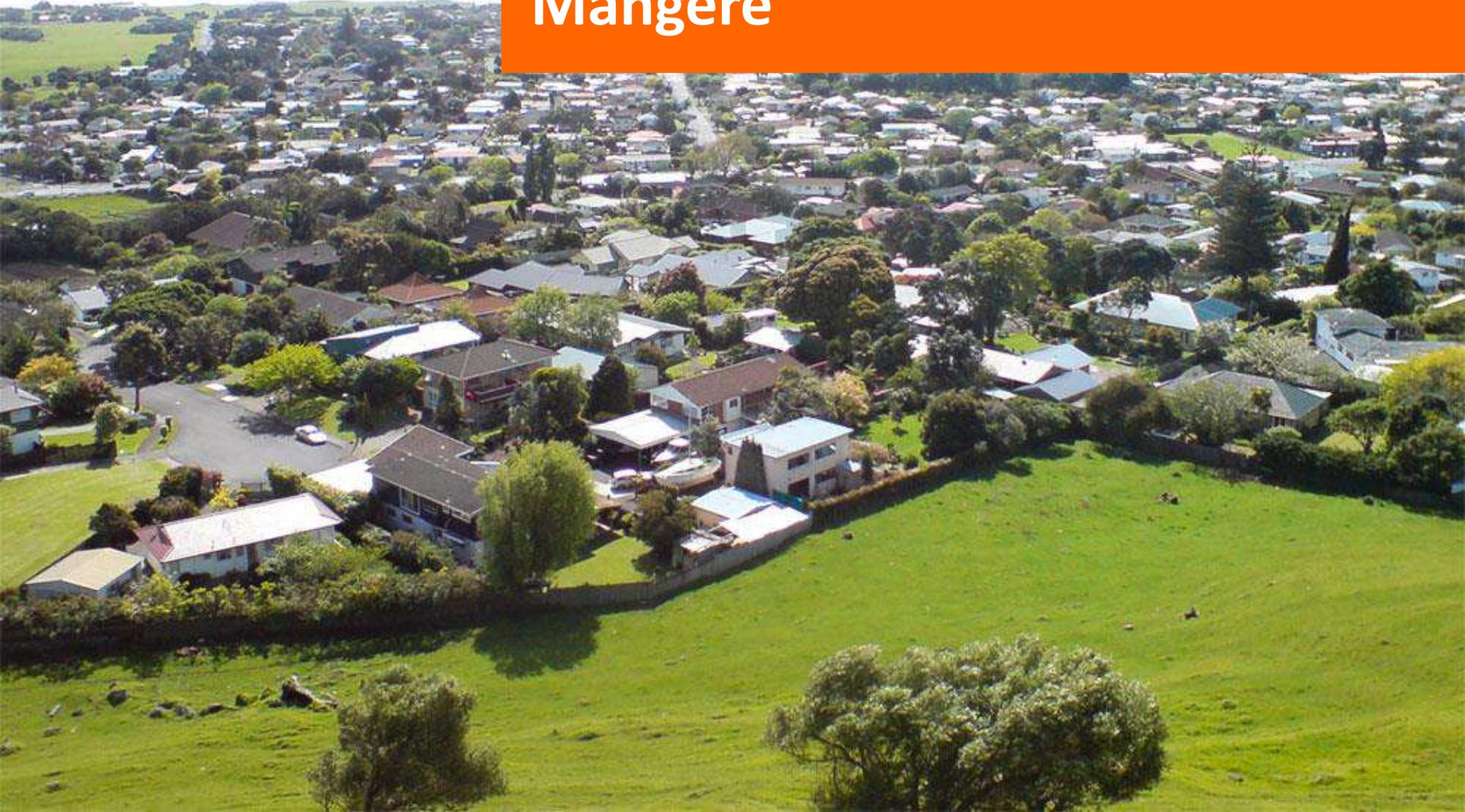
- receiving a fine of \$400
- being forbidden to drive by police
- having their vehicle impounded for 28 days
- being declined vehicle insurance claims.

Road accidents are the main cause of death for 16 to 24 year olds in New Zealand. Police data shows that over half of young drivers at fault in fatal or serious injury crashes have a history of licence breaches. Compared with the rest of the country, young drivers in South Auckland who have never held a licence are over-represented in fatal and serious crash statistics, and young Māori and Pacific people are over-represented in crash statistics involving young drivers on a learner licence.

Young drivers are generally considered to be high risk, firstly because they lack experience on the road and their driving skills are not as developed. Secondly, due to their stage of brain development and socio-cultural factors, those under 25, especially males, are driven to engage in risky behaviour (UMR 2014).

Not having a driver licence can also be a barrier to employment. According to the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, a young person with a full or restricted licence is three times more likely to secure employment. Currently amongst its cohort of 18-24 year olds in South Auckland, 83% of job seekers are unable to apply for a job vacancy where a driver licence is a core competency (Shaw and Gates 2014).

### 3. We have an opportunity to shift community norms in Māngere





## ***Facts about Māngere***

- *Median age is 28 years (compared with 38 years for whole of New Zealand).*
- *New Zealand's highest proportion of Pacific people (59%; alongside 21% European, 18% Māori, 13% Asian).*
- *Median personal income is \$19,700 per year (compared with Auckland median of \$29,600).*
- *Unemployment rate is 15.5% for the adult population (compared with national average of 7%) and 32% for young people (compared with Auckland average of 20%).*

With a population of approximately 63,000, Māngere is the size of a small New Zealand city. Its significant urban population is concentrated in a small area. The population is uniquely youthful, Pacific and has lower incomes than the national average – all of which increase the risk of unlicensed and unsafe driving (UMR 2014).

There is a strong commitment from Māngere community members and leaders to changing norms and improving road safety. People interviewed by the insight gatherers made comments like, “What a great thing you are doing for young people in Māngere,” “Keep up the good work and help our young ones, especially with changing attitudes,” and, “I look forward to the outcomes for helping our young people get their licence.”

These factors make Māngere an ideal community to develop a programme that aims to create positive changes to improve young driver safety.

A lot of initiatives are underway to improve road safety, driver education and testing within the licensing system. ACC and NZTA are working together on Safer Journeys and the Young Driver Signature Programme to address the environment that supports young people to get their full licence.

Even with all the planned improvements to the environment in which young people gain their driver licence, significant work is needed to shift community norms around unlicensed driving. If we want to change behaviour, we will need to do more than simply provide information. This is where a community-based social marketing approach could be useful.

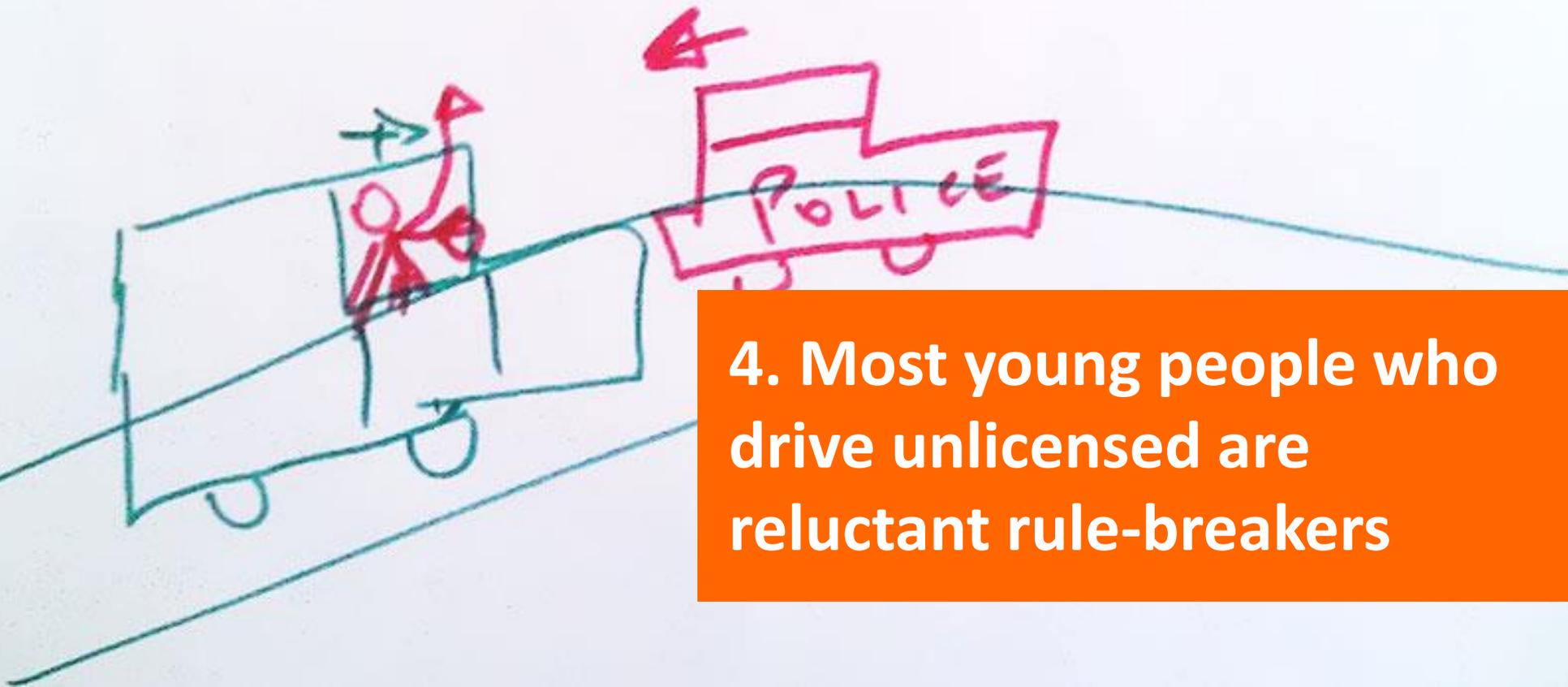
Programmes aiming to change behaviour need to recognise and address the underlying motivations and expected outcomes of individual behaviours, as well as a range of other factors, such as the influence of social norms and individuals' inclination and ability to change their behaviour (NZTA 2015; Robertson 2008). Effective social marketing - the use of commercial marketing theory and tools to achieve social good - can lead to tangible and measurable behaviour change (Andreasen 1994; National Social Marketing Centre 2006; McKenzie-Mohr 2000). To be effective, social marketing programmes must come from a trusted source, identify specific target audiences and behaviour change goals, use multiple channels, capture the target audience's attention, and have messages that impact on motivation.



# insights about young drivers in Māngere

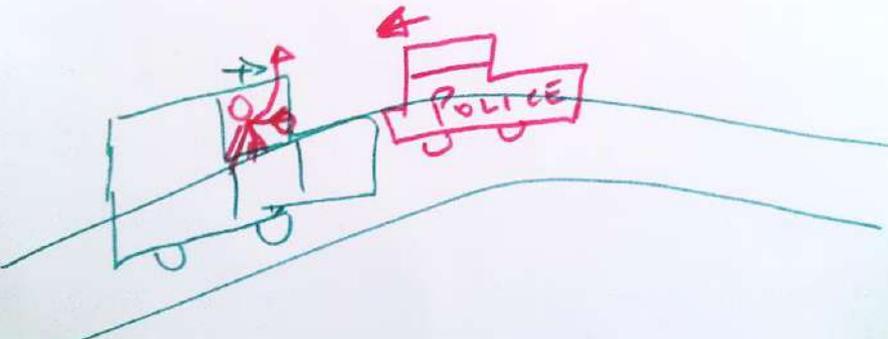


# CONFIDENCE



4. Most young people who drive unlicensed are reluctant rule-breakers

# CONFIDENCE



*Image drawn in an insight gatherer interview*

***“I didn’t like the idea of driving without a licence so I decided to get my licence.”***

*Young person*

***“I don’t need to worry about checkpoints no more.”***

*Young person*

There are many reasons why young people drive without or in breach of a licence. Previous research with young people in Māngere found that there is a lack of disincentives or strong reason not to drive unlicensed and low perceived risks (Waldron and Field 2013).

Young drivers can be grouped in three categories, according to their attitude to risky and illegal driving:

- **Rebels** are the ‘hardcore’ or intentional risk takers. They intentionally engage in risky driving behaviour and may even be disqualified drivers. They generally learn to drive without a licence and are often confident drivers although they may lack confidence about their ability to pass a driving test.
- **Reluctant rule-breakers** drive in breach of their licence conditions or without being licensed, but do not take intentional risks. Aside from licence breaches, this group are law-abiding. Some of these drivers are apathetic towards licensing; others are motivated but face significant barriers.
- **Rule appreciators** are the remaining young drivers who are compliant with licence conditions and do not take intentional risks.

These categories represent an adapted version of the Otago Risk Segmentation Model (Brookland and Begg 2014) and other typologies developed in previous research for the NZTA and ACC (UMR 2013a; UMR 2014).

The majority of the young drivers interviewed for this project were **reluctant rule-breakers**. Some of them were not motivated to get a driving licence or were happy to remain on their learner licence. Others only drove in breach for a specific reason, such as to teach themselves to drive, to be a sober driver for friends or family, or to help their family.

The main reason why reluctant rule breakers said they wanted to get a licence was to avoid breaking the law. Of the young people in this group who eventually progressed through the licensing system, some were motivated to do so for family or work reasons or received encouragement from their parents or caregivers.

**5. Families often allow their young people to drive unlicensed**





***“I had to teach myself to drive so I could drive Mum to hospital every week.”***

*Young person*

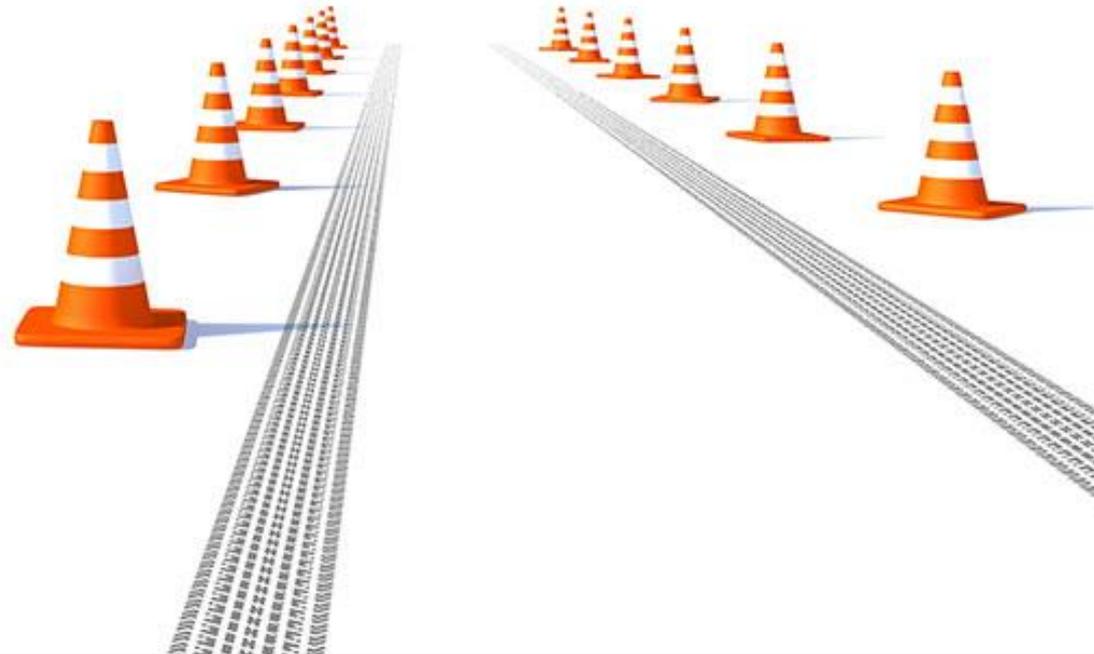
Many young people who drive unlicensed do so with consent from their family. This implicit or explicit endorsement normalises unlicensed and breach driving in the community.

Young people usually have access to a family vehicle (e.g. their parent’s, brother’s, cousin’s, aunt’s or grandparent’s car), which some are allowed to drive before they have the appropriate licence. Often a caregiver sets conditions or rules for the young person driving. They might not be concerned whether they have a licence, but they may instruct the young people to avoid speeding or driving unsupervised. Because parental permission to drive “is perceived as an unspoken sign of approval or recognition of maturity,” and young people value this trust, most will endeavour to drive within the limits set by their family (Waldron and Field 2013, 26).

Some young drivers, especially young Pacific people, are expected to help their family by driving, for instance, to take their grandparents or younger siblings to appointments or events, or to do grocery shopping. Earlier research with the Māngere community found that, “much of the breach driving that these [reluctant rule breakers] are doing is to fulfil a family need, and there are strong feelings of solidarity and protectiveness with regard to local families in survival mode.” (Waldron and Field 2013, 11).

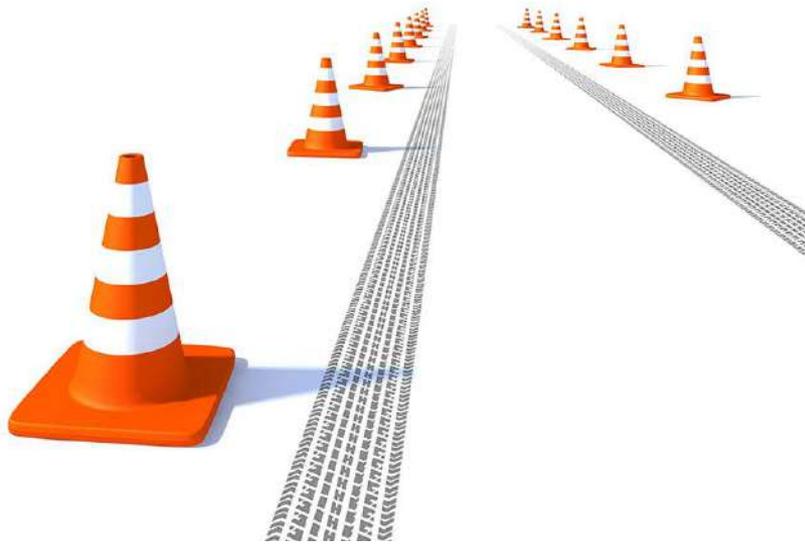
Many people in the reluctant rule-breaker group lack a driving coach or mentor in their family. Some parents do not have their full licence, so are not qualified to supervise their young people learning to drive. Some young women we spoke to reported learning to drive by watching their parents or other family members, and several of the young men said they taught themselves to drive between the age of 12 and 14 years.

Some of the young people interviewed for this research did not have the permission or support of their family to drive. The insight gatherers suggested that some Pacific families were less likely to support their daughters to drive, for instance. Among the young people without family consent to drive, some drove secretly and others followed their families’ wishes and did not learn to drive.



**6. Cost and confidence are the biggest barriers to licensing**





***“I have no money to get a licence.”***

*Young person*

***“We are currently under the living wage... would rather have food than get licence.”***

*Mother*

The cost of a driving test is the biggest barrier to young drivers in Māngere progressing through the licensing system. This was highlighted by the insight gatherers as well as other researchers (Waldron and Field 2013) and stakeholders who objected to licensing fee increases in 2010 (Ministry of Transport and NZTA 2010, 16).

The cost of completing each stage successfully to obtain a full licence, including application and testing fees, is now \$345. Since almost half of New Zealanders (45%) who sit the restricted licence test now fail (Mitchell 2015), the costs are often higher, with increasing numbers of young people having to re-sit tests. Some young people and their families struggle to access the minimum resources required to pass. This could include a copy of the New Zealand Road Code and a roadworthy vehicle for the driving test, not to mention additional support such as driver education courses. The comparatively low levels of income, educational achievement and Internet access in Māngere make it even more difficult to successfully progress through the licensing system.

Financial concerns are compounded by a lack of confidence. Many of the people interviewed by the insight gatherers lacked confidence in the young person’s ability to drive well, to navigate the licensing system, or felt nervous and uncertain about “difficult questions”, “new rules” or “frightening testing officers”. All of this feeds into a fear of failure and a concern that the test ends up being “a waste of money”.

These barriers are exacerbated for young people over the age of 20. Whereas the parents of 16 to 19 year olds are more likely to pay for driving lessons and tests, 20-24 year olds generally have to find the money themselves and also often feel they have less time, especially due to study, work or childcare commitments (UMR 2013b; UMR 2014).

Receiving financial support to get a licence or being able to access free driving courses or workshops made the difference for some young people, according to the insight gatherers and UMR research. Some training providers and community groups in Māngere already offer free driver education programmes, however there is no clear way for community members to find out about these programmes.

## 7. Pressure from family and friends is the biggest motivator to get a licence





***“I told [my kids] to get [a] driver licence before getting pulled over by the cops.”***

*Father*

***“My Dad keeps nagging me to get a licence.”***

*Young person*

Among the young people interviewed by the insight gatherers, pressure from family and friends was identified as the strongest motivator for getting a driver licence. Being a driver is a desirable status for young people, and a driver’s licence offers freedom and independence, as well as social and employment opportunities.

Young people often experience familial and social pressure to avoid breaking the law and to benefit from having a licence. Young people participating in this research as well as various other studies have often reported “being nagged by relatives” and “feeling increasingly embarrassed to have to rely on friends and relatives for lifts.” (UMR 2013b). As one of the young people interviewed by an insight gatherer put it, “I dislike asking my parents for a ride.” According to Waldron and Field (2013), who interviewed 24 Māngere people, “Being able to offer lifts to others is seen as a valued currency in gaining respect and kudos among peers”.

Many of the 20 to 24 year old learner drivers who took part in research for ACC said they were embarrassed to admit it if they did not have their restricted or full licence, to the extent that some of them hid that fact from friends and relatives (UMR 2013b). A parent participating in the insight gatherer research also commented that his son lied to his girlfriend about having a licence. Peer pressure might be less relevant for the 20-24 year age group than for 16 to 19 year olds, however (UMR 2013b).

Some young people are motivated to get a licence to increase their employment prospects. For the insight gatherers, this was especially true when having a licence was a requirement of a specific career they desired, such as a police officer or flight attendant. Comments from young people interviewed by the insight gatherers included:

- “I needed to get my licence if I wanted to find a job,”
- “I can easily get a job now that I’m on my full licence,”
- “Becoming a social worker involves travelling to further suburbs and it would be compulsory that I should have my licence.”



# insights on the role of family







***“I taught my sons and had to watch my temper.”***

*Father*

***“To drive Nanny around, very important to get a licence and know the rules. No licence - no drive Nanny’s car.”***

*Grandmother*

Parents and whānau play an important role in young people’s driving and licensing. The majority of parents and caregivers interviewed by the insight gatherers actively supported their young people to learn to drive. Not all of them actively encourage their young people to get a licence, but many support their children in various ways to become licensed drivers.

Safety is often a big concern for families, and this is a common reason for encouraging young people to get a licence. As well as teaching young people to drive and providing access to a car, paying for and encouraging them to sit the licence tests are key ways in which parents and families support young people to become licensed drivers. Explaining the reasons and process for getting a licence, offering incentives as motivation (such as the use or purchase of a car if licensed), leading by example, and paying for driving courses and lessons were other ways in which the families we spoke to supported their young people to get a licence.

Parents and families can also ensure compliance with the licensing system by limiting vehicle ownership and by modelling safe driving behaviours (Brookland et al. 2014). As one young person said in an interview, “I can only drive my Mum’s car when she’s in the front seat with me.”

Some parents actively discourage their young people from driving, often thinking they are not ready to learn (UMR 2013a). One mother told an insight gatherer, “As parents we decided to wait until [our son] was a bit older [to learn to drive]... I would prefer he’s an observer til he’s at least 18 years old.”

Being a responsible caregiver or role model can be particularly challenging for families facing other pressures and when relationships between parents and their young people may be fraught. Some parents and family members told us it is easy to get frustrated and lose their patience when teaching young people to drive. This is especially complicated for parents who do not themselves hold a full licence, and whose children often point this out to them in conversations about driver licensing.

**9. Some families see the  
licensing system as a  
significant barrier**





***“The AA is too daunting.”***

*Mother*

***“AA contact [is] very important - they have all the knowledge and experience to help people access correct information and licences.”***

*Father*

Parents and families experience many barriers to helping young people become fully licensed drivers. Participants in insight gatherer interviews often complained of the cost and time required to progress through the licensing system.

For some families, the licensing system is overly difficult to access and navigate. This was a barrier expressed by parents and other whānau but not by young people in the insight gatherer interviews. This dissonance between what young people say and what their caregivers say, which occurred at other times in the research too, is something that should be taken into account in the design of the social marketing programme.

Family members described the following problems with the licensing system:

- unhelpful and unfriendly staff and testing officers
- culturally inappropriate testing service
- booking delays and long waits to get a test
- long queues at AA service centres
- lack of translation and interpretation services
- language used is not user-friendly

Participants in other studies have also expressed dissatisfaction with what they see as a flawed driving system, with an unfriendly process that does not provide motivation to progress through to the next level (Waldron and Field 2013).

Nonetheless, the majority of people participating in the insight gatherer research knew where to find information about the licensing system. The AA and Google were often the first port of call for people wanting information about getting a license. A number of parents and family members also mentioned the Citizens Advice Bureau or specific community groups as useful sources of information.



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