



## Student Driver Education?

Hooning continues to be a high profile topic around Australia, and our research on the subject recently discovered a Victorian Student Driver Education program that included a section devoted to the subject. While we fully support the need for added education for young road users (this package being aimed at Year 10 students of age 15) it is a concern if the education does not portray motoring enthusiasts positively. Unfortunately, that is what we found here.

Traffic Safety Essentials (TSE) aims to assist young people in improving their decision making skills, develop an understanding of consequences and improve the safety of themselves and their peers. A minimum of 12 hours class time is required to cover 6 units. Unit 5 is titled 'Hoons or harrassed?'

The content of this unit aims to make students understand that a) using the road as a hoon is illegal and unsafe b) serious consequences can result and c) modifying vehicles can be illegal and dangerous. The TSE program is not purely theory, but relies on a participation by the students in order to ensure comprehension. For example, it requires a class debate to be arranged on the following topics:

- Hoon laws unfairly target young males
- Hoon laws are an over-reaction to drivers displaying their skills
- Motorsport promotes and encourages hooning
- Computer games that involve racing on the street encourage hooning

They are also asked to survey members of the public on their attitudes to hooning, research the hoon laws, and discuss ways to overcome the problem.

As an 'enrichment activity', each student is to design a car that reflects who they are or how they would like to be viewed by others. They should also design a 'swing tag' or label that describes what the components of the vehicle are and its selling points. In turn, have students present their final design and the accompanying swing tag. **The class should decide:**

- Would the vehicle be considered a 'hoon's car'?
- Are the design features related to performance, cosmetic/ appearance or both?

Unfortunately, it is clear from the content that the writers view any interest in cars, or motorsport, as 'strange' and even a threat to the community, with absolutely no mention being made of the many positives achieved through motorsport and motoring enthusiasts in general. We'll be lucky if any of the younger generation join the hobby after this brain-washing, but as often happens, it may have the reverse effect and actually get more involved! I'm sure you'll agree that it is time for a more balanced view rather than 'labelling' based on appearance alone, and for content to be included from the enthusiast community.

You can download the Unit here:

[http://www.tac.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/66430/TSE\\_Unit\\_5\\_Hoons\\_or\\_Harrassed.pdf](http://www.tac.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/66430/TSE_Unit_5_Hoons_or_Harrassed.pdf)

All of the units in the TSE program can be downloaded in either Word or PDF form from the Transport Accident Commission website at :

<http://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/schools/school-resources>



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29 April 2015



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