

The logo for the Youth Coalition of the ACT features the text "youth coalition" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a dark red rectangular background. Below this, the text "of the ACT" is written in a smaller, white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a lighter red, trapezoidal background that tapers to the right. The entire logo is centered and framed by thin white lines.

## MEDIA RELEASE

12<sup>th</sup> January 2007

### **‘Designated Drivers’ to Become Law Breakers?**

The Youth Coalition of the ACT strongly opposes the new NSW rules for P Platers as they are not the most effective method of reducing the road toll and could lead to increased risky behaviour by young people by mixing alcohol and driving.

The Youth Coalition is highly concerned that young people often use ‘designated drivers’ and go out to licensed venues in groups with one friend who will not consume alcohol and drive their friends home - preventing drink driving. This strategy will not be practical under the new NSW rules for P Platers limiting them to one passenger only between 11pm and 5am and could increase the instances of youth drink driving.

Carrie Fowlie from the Youth Coalition of the ACT says “A typical case is that a group of 4 friends from Queanbeyan going out on Saturday night will come to Civic and stay out till 3am. There is no public transport at that time of day so they would have a designated driver who wouldn’t drink and drive their mates home.

“Under the NSW plan, that designated driver can only take one passenger home. The reality is that taxis are too expensive and the chances are that young people will either choose to ignore these new rules, or even worse, may drive after consuming alcohol. This puts our residents in the ACT at risk of accidents with young people on NSW P Plates who can no longer have ‘designated drivers’ and get home safely.

**“We know already from research by organisations like AAMI that young drivers are less likely to drink drive and more likely to think about whether they are over the limit the morning after than older drivers. This is very positive and something we should build on, not take away from.”**

The Youth Coalition supports the position of both the ACT Government and Opposition that restrictions on young drivers are not an effective way to combat the current problem. Focusing on restrictions is not the most effective way of reducing road fatalities, rather, through better education and more accompanied experience, young drivers will be better equipped on our roads.

The Youth Coalition calls upon the ACT Government to:

- Provide funding for at risk young people to receive driving lessons through either a voucher system to access private driving instructor providers or by adequately funding community based youth services to deliver driving lessons.

**For further information or comment contact Carrie Fowlie on 6247 3540 or 0406-585-020**