

Response to the 2015 Citizens' Taskforce Report

Incentives to improve road safety

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Introduction

The challenge

The Queensland Government has committed to an ambitious road safety vision of zero deaths and serious injuries. One of the principles of *Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015-21* is that road safety is everyone's issue and everyone's responsibility. This means driving a fundamental change in the culture and attitude to road safety so that no one accepts death and serious injuries as simply 'part and parcel' of using the roads.

To help achieve this, *Queensland's Road Safety Action Plan 2015-17* identifies six areas for action on road safety. Education and engagement is one of these. It makes engaging the community, industry and other stakeholders in the solutions a priority. One initiative was to establish a taskforce of everyday citizens to independently consider and report back with recommendations about road safety and incentives.

The Taskforce

The Road Safety Citizens' Taskforce (the Taskforce) involved 25 Queenslanders including young drivers, parents of young drivers, experienced drivers and people with commercial driving experience. They were recruited from Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, Bundaberg, Mackay, Rockhampton, Cairns and Townsville.

The Taskforce was charged with considering prospects for incentive programs to encourage safe driving, and independently reporting back to government on its deliberations. It deliberated over four days on 31 October - 1 November and 14 - 15 November.

The Taskforce heard from a panel of experts, including Professor Uwe Dulleck (Queensland University of Technology), Dr Judy Fleiter (Queensland University of Technology), Dr Graham Fraine (Department of Transport and Main Roads), Assistant Commissioner Mike Keating (Queensland Police Service) and Dr Alastair Stark (University of Queensland), about road safety and the science around incentives and human behaviour.

The panel's contribution is warmly acknowledged.

The report

The Honourable Mark Bailey MP, Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, welcomed the report *Incentives to improve road safety* from the Taskforce.

The report makes six recommendations, touching on incentives for safe driving, ambitious road safety goals and drink and drug driving.

The response

In response to the report, the Queensland Government will:

- commission a scoping study with a sample of young people to identify the most effective incentive models for young drivers in Queensland, with a view to running a pilot program
- reinforce and promote a vision of zero road fatalities and serious injuries, but retain interim targets to guide and monitor outcomes in the short to medium term
- facilitate a community discussion about drink driving and place further emphasis on drug driving.

A detailed response to the Taskforce's recommendations is found on the following pages.

Minister Bailey thanks Taskforce members for the substantial time and effort they have contributed in this activity – the first of its kind for road safety in Queensland.

They have set a high standard for action on road safety, and conveyed the community's appetite for genuine efforts and challenging old ways of doing things.

Response to recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Citizens' Taskforce recommends that the Minister for Road Safety initiates the development of an incentive program for P plate drivers.

Recommendation 2: This incentive program should be linked to the progression through the licensing system from Learner to Open Licence.

Recommendation 3: The Taskforce believe there are two elements that must be considered:

- (a) the development of a lifelong learning program for road safety that is integrated and coordinated across the curriculum in Queensland schools to help instil a road safety culture within the community**
- (b) the use of in-vehicle monitoring technology that provides driving behaviour feedback to facilitate the learning process in order to achieve a pre-determined standard allowing progression through the licensing system.**

Response

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3b

The Queensland Government considers there is merit in the Taskforce's recommendations, and will take a staged approach to progressing an incentive program for P plate drivers, with a view to running a pilot program. This includes further exploring in-vehicle monitoring technologies, which could be used to link a person's actual driving performance with their progression through the licensing system.

As a first step, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) will commission a scoping study with a sample of young people to identify the most effective incentive models for young drivers in Queensland.

TMR will also undertake work to identify the scope, impact and investment required to implement the policy, system, technology and regulatory changes required.

This work is important before fully committing to a government response on Recommendations 1, 2 and 3b, because such a system would impact approximately 350,000 learner and provisional licence holders at any one time. It would also represent a considerable investment in a novel approach that has not been previously used elsewhere as part of licensing. Research is still emerging about risks, opportunities, benefits and preferences among different target groups, and most existing incentive programs have a voluntary 'opt in' design and are not mandatory. This is a promising concept, worthy of further investigation.

It is anticipated that this work will be finalised in 2017. Depending on its findings, TMR anticipates running a pilot program of a scheme with a sample of young drivers.

Recommendation 3a

The Queensland Government supports the concept of lifelong learning for road safety. Parents are usually their child's first role model for safe driving, long before they start driving. Parents often stay involved with their young drivers through the licensing phase through to driving solo. The lifelong learning approach is consistent with *Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015-21* and *Action Plan 2015-17*.

In 2015-17, TMR will:

- engage with parents and carers on how they can model good road safety behaviours and assist their learner drivers
- refresh road safety resources for teachers and students, to make available contemporary and user friendly materials
- engage with people about road safety when they do business with the Queensland Government, such as when they get a licence or register a vehicle
- help young drivers improve their road safety knowledge and skills through better online tools

- continue to engage people of all ages through ‘Join the Drive to Save Lives’, including making use of all available media channels and opportunities
- continue to encourage communities to get involved in local road safety programs through schools and other groups, including through the Community Road Safety Grants Program. For example, through the grants program to date, TMR has sponsored kindergarten safety programs, school bicycle safety programs, and learning driver mentor programs
- develop an online self-assessment tool to help older drivers and their families make safe decisions about driving.

TMR has recently conducted a youth road safety innovation challenge to engage with 16-21 year olds about the challenges that face their generation. TMR also currently provides funding for road safety awareness programs delivered to Queensland senior high school students.

Recommendation 4: The Citizens’ Taskforce recommends that Queensland adopts a target of zero road deaths – it is not acceptable that any person should be killed on our roads.

Recommendation 5: The Citizens’ Taskforce recommends that Queensland adopts a target of significant reduction in hospitalisations – it is not acceptable that any person should be injured on our roads.

Response

The Queensland Government wholeheartedly commends and supports the Taskforce’s view that it is not acceptable that any person should be killed or seriously injured on Queensland’s roads. As the first Queensland Government to commit to zero fatalities our vision will reinforce and promote **zero road deaths and serious injuries**. However, the Queensland Government will retain interim targets (to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by at least 30% between 2010 and 2020), which are designed to guide and monitor more achievable outcomes in the short to medium term.

The Queensland Government supports a stronger focus on reducing hospitalised casualties, and convened a Serious Injury Expert Panel to advise government on an impactful program of work. Analysis of road trauma trends indicates that Queensland has had success in recent decades in reducing road fatalities. However, the same trend has not been observed for hospitalised casualties, which remain persistently high.

The work of the Serious Injury Expert Panel will inform the next Queensland Road Safety Action Plan. The countermeasures in the action plan will contribute to creation of a ‘safer system’, which saves lives.

Recommendation 6: In relation to impaired driving:

- The Citizens’ Taskforce recommends that the Minister for Road Safety initiates and facilitates a community discussion about the issue of drink driving to explore options to reduce the instances of drink driving and associated road trauma. This conversation should consider the trade-offs of lowering the general alcohol limit to zero for all drivers.**
- The Citizens’ Taskforce supports a greater emphasis being placed on the issue of driving when impaired by drugs.**

Response

The Queensland Government supports the Taskforce’s recommendation to facilitate a community discussion about drink driving. It also supports further emphasis on drug driving.

Although Queensland has made significant progress in stigmatising and educating people about the dangers of drink driving, around one in every five road deaths still involves a drink driver. Drug driving is now also emerging as a significant road safety issue both locally and internationally.

Drink and drug driving are social issues that play out on our roads. Addressing them through a holistic approach is consistent with *Queensland's Road Safety Action Plan 2015-17*. The Queensland Government convened a Safer Roads, Safer Queensland Forum at Parliament House in February 2016 which included a focus on the problem of drink and drug driving. Experts put forward many great ideas and suggestions, and it was apparent that a priority for immediate attention was high risk recidivist offenders.

In 2015-17, TMR will:

- release a public discussion paper seeking views from the community about drink driving, including possible enhancements to the alcohol ignition interlock program and introducing education countermeasures. However, the discussion paper will not include the proposal to lower the general alcohol limit, which was not supported in previous consultation conducted in 2009 and in annual surveys of road safety perceptions and attitudes by TMR
- investigate options to refer drink drivers to screening and counselling services
- evaluate the effectiveness of the alcohol ignition interlock program
- continue drink driving public education campaigns
- continue high visibility policing operations
- investigate drug driving and consider the effectiveness of existing penalties and sanctions, and other countermeasures such as diversionary programs
- expand training for road police officers to better detect and deter broader criminal activities, including enhanced drug driving operations across Queensland.