Results of Consultation:
Q-SAFE Review Final Report
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Executive Summary

Road safety is considered one of the nation’s most serious public health issues. Over the years the Queensland Government has introduced numerous initiatives aimed at reducing the road toll and making the roads safer for all who use them.

The Q-SAFE (car) practical driving test is undertaken by novice drivers to obtain their provisional licence, allowing them to access our roads as a solo driver. As the existing Q-SAFE test was developed well before introduction of the strengthened graduated licensing scheme (GLS), it is timely to review the test to ensure that it can adequately assess candidates who are now expected to have more supervised driving experience and is better aligned, generally, with new GLS.

The Expert Panel was formed in late 2010 to oversee an independent review of the Q-SAFE test to examine whether Queensland’s current Q-SAFE test could be strengthened for the benefit of current and future generations of Queensland novice drivers – and for the safety of all road users. Following the review process, the Panel made the following eight recommendations relating to:

- Revising the Q-SAFE test, to enhance its validity, reliability and fairness.
- Ensuring crash statistics, practices best suited to Queensland, extensive piloting, ongoing consultation, and an evaluation are considered in a redesigned Q-SAFE test.
- Reviewing current testing locations to ensure a minimum level of complexity.
- Introducing a staged waiting period between failed tests.
- Developing an accredited and transferable qualification for driving examiners.
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation system.
- Developing and implementing a communication strategy to accompany any changes to the test.
- Considering the recommendations from the consultancy report, following the outcome of the independent GLS evaluation by the Monash University Accident Research Centre.

The Final Report was released publicly via the Queensland Government’s Get Involved website. The general public were invited to complete an online survey to indicate whether they supported the recommendations (feedback was not sought on recommendations six and eight as they relate to an internal process and a future review respectively). With one exception (recommendation four), the recommendations were strongly or very strongly supported.

Table A summarises this report with a list of the Panel’s recommendations, and proportion of survey respondents who indicated they supported the recommendation.

Table A: Recommendations and results of consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Public Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Test format and content</strong></td>
<td>Strong Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesign the Q-SAFE practical driving test, building on the existing platform, to enhance the validity, reliability and fairness through: (a) greater emphasis on the assessment of the safe driving skills and behaviours that could be reasonably expected with 100 hours supervised driving experience; (b) the introduction of multiple standardised test routes of sufficient complexity to test core safe driving competencies; and (c) making information on what the test entails more accessible to learner drivers and their supervisors, and providing better feedback from driving examiners following the test.</td>
<td>(74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Developing the new test</strong></td>
<td>Strong Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process of developing and implementing the redesigned Q-SAFE test should involve: (a) a review of the crash statistics involving newly licensed drivers to identify the types of driving behaviours and traffic conditions that should be assessed in the test; (b) identification of testing practices that best suit Queensland conditions; (c) extensive piloting of the new test in a variety of regions; (d) ongoing consultation with the driving examiners and driver instruction industry; and (e) a thorough evaluation approximately 12 months after its full implementation.</td>
<td>(71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Test locations</strong></td>
<td>Strong Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Public Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct a review of all current testing locations to ensure test routes meet the minimum level of complexity to adequately assess safe driving skills and behaviours.</td>
<td>(73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Cooling-off / waiting period</strong></td>
<td>Moderate Support (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce a staged waiting period between failed tests to encourage candidates to address identified deficiencies through further supervised driving, as follows: (a) first fail – candidate not able to re-sit the test on the same day; (b) second fail – candidate must wait at least seven days before they can re-sit the test; and (c) third and subsequent failures – candidate must wait at least 28 days before they can re-sit the test.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Driving examiner qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Very Strong Support (81%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 INTRODUCTION

The current Q-SAFE test was developed prior to the introduction of changes to the graduated licensing scheme (GLS) in 2007, which introduced restrictions and conditions designed to help learner and provisional drivers under the age of 25 develop safe driving skills and behaviours. It was developed following research and consultation with the driver training industry and other road safety stakeholders, and was tailored to learner drivers with the levels of on-road experience expected at that time.

As a result of the GLS changes, in particular the requirement to obtain 100 hours of supervised driving, learner drivers will on average have more driving experience when taking the Q-SAFE test than those drivers who obtained a learner licence prior to 2007. As the existing Q-SAFE test was developed well before the introduction of the strengthened GLS, it is timely to review the test to ensure that it can adequately assess candidates who are now expected to have more supervised driving experience and is better aligned, generally, with new GLS.

This report summarise recommendations and results of the community consultation via the Get Involved website.

1.2 Work of the Q-SAFE Review Expert Panel

The Expert Panel was formed in late 2010 to oversee an independent review of the Q-SAFE test, with the objective of reducing deaths and injuries involving young drivers, who continue to be tragically over-represented in Queensland’s road trauma statistics.

The Panel was convened to act as an advisory group to provide subject matter expertise and advice to the Minister for Transport on the review of the Q-SAFE test, qualifications for driving examiners and a review of the penalties and sanctions for learner and provisional licence holders.

The Panel was chaired by Di Farmer, Member for Bulimba, and comprised the following membership:

- Gary Fites (independent road safety consultant)
- Professor Barry Watson (Director, CARRS-Q) and Professor Narelle Haworth (CARRS-Q)
- Mike Stapleton, General Manager (Road Safety, Registration and Licensing), Transport and Main Roads
- Dr Judith Lloyd, General Manager (Transport Services Division), Transport and Main Roads
- Brett Pointing (Assistant Commissioner, Queensland Police Service) and Bob Gee, (Officer in Charge State Traffic Support, Queensland Police Service)
- Dr Anne Tiernan, (Centre for Governance and Government Policy, Griffith University)*

* Dr Tiernan withdraw from the Panel on 24 February 2011 due to other pre-existing commitments.

To assist the Panel independent road safety researchers were commissioned to examine the development of better practice in practical driving assessment; appropriate waiting periods between test attempts; best practice qualification requirements for driving examiners; and current penalties and sanctions applicable to learner and provisional licence holders.

In addition to this research consultancy, an extensive public consultation process was undertaken. This process included targeted workshops with key stakeholder groups, community forums and an on-line discussion paper that invited the public to comment on the potential initiatives.

The result of the Panel’s work was the ‘Q-SAFE Review Final Report’, which acknowledges the many strengths of Q-SAFE and offers recommendations for improvement.

1.3 Community consultation process for the Final Report

The Final Report was released publicly via the Queensland Government’s Get Involved website during August and September 2012. The general public were invited to review the report and complete an online survey to indicate whether they supported or did not support the recommendations, with an option of providing comments to explain their responses throughout. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix.

During this time interested members of the public were also invited to provide comment to the Department of Transport and Main Roads by emailing the Q-SAFE email address.

In total, 113 survey responses were received from the Get Involved website and 14 responses from the Q-SAFE email address.
2 Q-SAFE REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS FEEDBACK

The Final Report was released publicly via the Queensland Government’s Get Involved website. The general public were invited to complete an online survey to indicate whether they supported the recommendations (feedback was not sought on recommendations six and eight as they relate to an internal process and a future review respectively). With one exception (recommendation four), the recommendations were strongly or very strongly supported. The feedback with the results and major themes for each question are outlined below.

The figure below shows a summary of the respondents for each recommendation, and whether they supported each recommendation.

**Question 1. Do you support redesigning the Q-SAFE driving test?**
This recommendation received strong support; 74 percent. The figure below shows the proportion of respondents who did and did not support this recommendation.

Of the 86 respondents who supported redesigning the Q-SAFE test:
- 16 support consistent test routes with sufficient complexity to ensure a driver is appropriately skilled
- 7 would like to see more consistency when assessing driver skill
- 7 suggested the inclusion of driver education or defensive driver courses
- 6 identified that test skills need to be relevant to everyday driving
- 5 commented that there must be changes to driver behaviour and attitude
- 4 suggested implementing competency based driver training
Question 2. Do you support the proposed process for developing and monitoring the redesigned Q-SAFE test?

This recommendation received strong support; 71 percent. The figure below shows the proportion of respondents who did and did not support this recommendation.

Eight three respondents agreed that developing and implementing a redesigned Q-SAFE test should involve:

- reviewing crash statistics to identify driving behaviours and traffic conditions for assessment;
- identifying testing practices that best suit Queensland conditions;
- extensively piloting the new test in a variety of regions;
- ongoing consultation with the driving examiners and driver instruction industry, and
- a thorough evaluation approximately 12 months after full implementation.

Further suggestions were quite varied with no clear identifiable themes however; suggestions included testing more manoeuvres, making the test more difficult and test content needing to be relevant to and reflect real life driving experience.

Question 3. Do you support a review of testing locations?

This recommendation received strong support; 73 percent. The figure below shows the proportion of respondents who did and did not support this recommendation.

Of the 85 respondents who indicated support for reviewing testing locations:

- 34 supported that the complexity of test routes should be consistently applied across testing locations
- 5 requested test route variance
Question 4. Do you support introducing staged waiting periods between failed test attempts?

This recommendation only received moderate support; 65 percent. The figure below shows the proportion of respondents who did and did not support this recommendation.

Of the 76 respondents who indicated support for the introduction of waiting periods:
- 40 felt that staged waiting periods between failed practical driving tests would result in further education or training of the individual
- 9 felt that learner drivers would take the test more seriously

However, 6 of the respondents who indicated they did not support this recommendation believed introducing staged waiting periods would cause financial disadvantage to some drivers who needed a licence for work.

Question 5. Do you support developing an accredited driving examiner qualification?

This recommendation received very strong support; 81 percent. The figure below shows the proportion of respondents who did and did not support this recommendation.

Ninety five respondents indicated support for developing an accredited driving examiner qualification with:
- 30 stating that this would ensure competence of driving examiners
- 16 responding that they felt a driving examiner qualification would create consistency

However, 5 respondents were not in favour and felt the introduction of an accredited qualification would inflate the cost of testing, disadvantaging learner drivers.
Question 6. Do you support communicating the changes made to the test to the wider community?

This recommendation received very strong support; 87 percent. The figure below shows the proportion of respondents who did and did not support this recommendation.

Of the 102 respondents who indicated support for communicating changes:
- 38 felt that to facilitate education, the general public should be made aware of the changes
- 13 thought that the message should be targeted to individuals involved in the test process (learner drivers, supervisors/parents, and driver trainers).
- 4 respondents thought that communicating changes to the wider community would create transparency and instil confidence that the government was serious about improving road safety.
Appendix – Copy of the Survey

Review of the Q-SAFE practical driving test — have your say

We’re calling for feedback on the recommendations made by the Expert Panel to Government in the Q-Safe Review Final Report. The Expert Panel was asked to provide advice on the Q-Safe driving assessment and qualifications for driving examiners. Feedback is sought from the public and industry to help determine whether the recommendations should be adopted.

1. Do you support redesigning the Q-Safe driving test? Explain why?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Do you support the proposed process for developing and monitoring the redesigned Q-Safe test? Explain why?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Do you support a review of testing locations? Explain why?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Do you support the introduction of staged waiting periods between failed test attempts? Explain why?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Do you support the development of an accredited driving examiner qualification? Explain why?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Do you support communicating the changes made to the test to the wider community? Explain why?
   - Yes
   - No