

**Guidelines and Criteria**

**Driving Experiences  
(State Strategic Touring Routes and Tourist Drives)**

**February 2016**

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## 1 Introduction

The primary purpose of these guidelines is to provide assistance to applicants and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) in the application and assessment process, and administrative arrangements for the installation of drive experiences signage on state-controlled roads in Queensland. The use of these guidelines will improve road safety and lead to a major improvement in the quality and consistency of drive experiences signage throughout the state.

These guidelines deal specifically with driving experiences signage on state-controlled roads in Queensland and include:

- The criteria required for applying for and assessing signage proposals for driving experiences of both national and/or state significance and regional and/or local tourist drives
- The process under which these applications will be considered.

While this guideline is in-line with the comprehensive Australian Standards (AS 1742.6) adopting national consistency for driving experiences signage, it also covers a range of situations which relate specifically to the state of Queensland.

In the interest of consistency, TMR encourages local governments to apply similar provisions when considering signing of driving experiences on roads under their control.

### 1.1 Background

Following the first *DestinationQ* Forum, in 2012, TMR made a commitment to review:

- Its tourist signs policies to ensure they were supporting drive tourists to get safely to their destinations and Queensland.
- Processes for applicants to apply and install signage on state-controlled road network.

The review is a key deliverable of the *Queensland Drive Tourism Strategy 2013/2015*.

The following policies and guidelines were used to assess and design tourist and service signs:

- Service and tourist signing guidelines (TRUM Volume 1, Part 10, Section 4.2-2)
- Policy on road signage and tourist attractions
- Wine tourism signing guidelines (TRUM Volume 1, Part 10, Section 4.2-3)
- Policy on direction signage of theme parks and other major attractions
- Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
- Traffic and Road Use Management Manual (TRUM)
- Australian Standards (AS 1743, AS 1742)
- When TMR sought feedback from the tourism industry about their issues in relation to tourist signs, one of the greatest areas of concern was the white legend on brown background tourist attraction signs.

TMR is undertaking the review of the above policies in a number of stages, with the first two stages having been completed. The guidelines for Tourist Signs for Commercial Tourist Attractions on State Controlled Roads and the guidelines for Service Signs on State Controlled roads have been finalised with a copy available at [www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/tourism](http://www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/tourism).

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TMR is continuing to review the remaining sections of these policies and guidelines, with a view to replacing them with a more streamlined guide for tourism operators, service facilities and signing practitioners.

## **1.2 Driving experiences**

Queensland offers a wide range of driving experiences to the tourist market. Driving experiences might occur on any part of the road network, from state controlled roads through to Local Government roads. They may vary in driving time from several days to a few hours. Driving experiences are typically developed and promoted by Local Governments, regional or local tourism organisations or other tourism related industry bodies.

All driving experiences use self-drive transport and utilise a combination of sign types, including existing “white on green” direction signs, “white on blue” service signs, “white on brown” tourist signs, warning and regulatory signs. These signs, in combination, form an essential part of guidance and information for tourists. The most critical in terms of guidance is the “white on green” direction signing system in conjunction with the use of good quality road maps and other electronic devices. The entire road network can be navigated using the direction signs currently installed.

Therefore, it is not always necessary or appropriate that all driving experiences need to be identified by extra tourist signing. Reliance on printed and electronic material is considered to be a better way to promote the route and the significance of a drive experience

## **2 Eligibility for driving experiences signing**

Eligibility for signing of driving experiences assessment is based on:

- Road safety and traffic considerations
- Driving experiences tourism merit criteria

### **2.1 State Strategic Touring Routes (SSTR)**

State strategic touring routes are routes of strategic importance to the drive tourism market in Queensland. They are the primary routes tourist use to travel around Queensland, providing the main connections between tourist locations, and generally supporting high volumes of tourist traffic. SSTR's are recognised nationally through the National Tourism Signage Reference Group (NTSRG) and at the state level by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the tourism agencies.

They are identified on the ground by signs at significant points along the route and may include “Welcome to town” (TC1345) signs especially for towns that have an accredited Visitor Information Centre or “Welcome to tourist region” (TC1344) signs. Signs directing to specific natural attractions along the route may also be provided.

There are ten state strategic touring routes in Queensland (refer Appendix A for map):

- The Overlanders Way (Townsville to Camooweal to Tennant Creek (NT))
- The Matilda Way (Bourke (NSW) to Barringun to Karumba)
- The Warrego Way (Brisbane to Charleville) – (Warrego Extension has been extended to Birdsville)
- The Capricorn Way (Rockhampton to Barcaldine)
- The Great Inland Way (Sydney (NSW) to Hebel to Cairns)

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- The Leichhardt Way (Melbourne (VIC) to Goondiwindi to Rockhampton)
  - The Pacific Coast Way (Sydney (NSW) to Coolangatta to Cairns)
  - Australia's Country Way (Sydney (NSW) to Wallangarra to Rockhampton)
  - Savannah Way (Broome (WA) to Hells Gate to Cairns)
  - Adventure Way (Adelaide (SA) to Innamincka to Brisbane).

Prior to submitting an application for signage under the SSTR category, the route must first be approved and recognised as an official SSTR.

## **2.1.1 New State Strategic Touring Routes**

### **2.1.1.1 Recognition as a State Strategic Touring Route**

To be recognised as a state strategic tourist route, proposals need to be submitted to [tourist.signs@tmr.qld.gov.au](mailto:tourist.signs@tmr.qld.gov.au)

The proposal is to include:

- Details (including a map) outlining the location of the proposed State Strategic Touring Route
- Details of the tourism experiences available along the route including natural attractions
- Details to align with core criteria (refer section 2.1.1.2)
- Support of relevant State agencies and Regional Tourism Organisation (RTOs)
- If the route extends across a state border, support from the inter-state Road Authority and Tourism Body is required.

### **2.1.1.2 Core Criteria**

To be recognised as a State Strategic Touring Route and be eligible for signage, routes must comply with the following conditions:

- An active State Strategic Touring Route committee or representing body needs to be in place (membership may comprise of members from local tourism industry organisations, local council(s), regional tourism associations, TMR and road government agencies). Evidence of consultation between these parties needs to be demonstrated through meeting minutes and relevant correspondence.
- It must use roads of a significant standard of construction and traffic safety on a year round basis to justify its promotion to the international travel and tourism industry.
- Roads subject to seasonal closure (e.g. as a result of flooding) may be used, provided that the likely closure of the road conditions and the reasons for this are adequately referenced in supporting marketing material and information bays.
- Navigation by users shall primarily be by maps, electronic devices or other promotional material provided by the relevant management committee and distributed along the route.
- The theming, marketing and signing of the route shall not replace the gazetted names of roads which comprise the route.

- Information is available for driving tourists along the route to support and enhance their touring experience. Information may be located at Visitor Information Centres (VIC's), rest areas or other places of interest along the route.

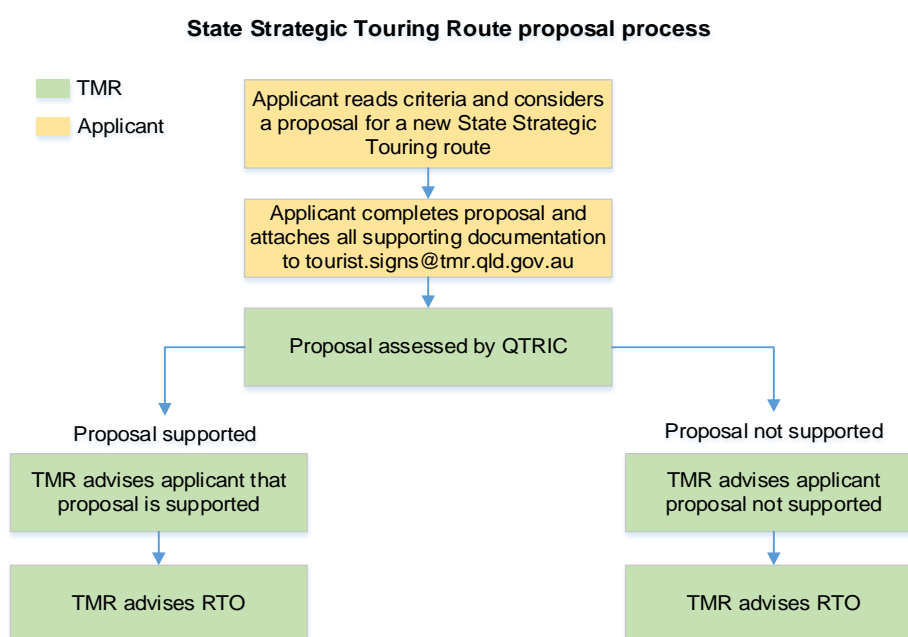
### 2.1.1.3 Assessment

- The Queensland Touring Routes Interdepartmental Committee (QTRIC) consisting of representatives from the Department of Tourism, Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTEsb), Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ), Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP) and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) will make the decision.
- TMR will advise the applicant and RTO(s) of the assessment outcome if the proposal is not approved, it may be eligible to be signed as a tourist drive (see section 2.2).

### 2.1.1.4 Approved State Strategic Touring Routes

- Following the approval of a new State Strategic Touring Route, the department of Transport and Main Roads are to:
  - Advise the departments' Corporate Mapping Unit of the new route for inclusion in the relevant mapping products.
  - Notify RACQ of the new route for inclusion on their Tourist Drive Map.

**Figure 1 – Flowchart for application SSTR application process**



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### 2.1.2 Existing State Strategic Touring Routes

To apply for additional signage such as to a natural attraction accessible along an existing State Strategic Touring Routes or a welcome to town sign, applicants must consider

- The core criteria outlined in section 2.1.1.2
- Sign design is consistent with current sign types (refer 2.1.3)
- Access roads to the natural attraction must:
  - allow for safe passage for private vehicles at all times
  - use only suitably maintained roads, preferably sealed, which are also capable of handling the volumes of traffic attracted to the attraction
  - have suitable signage for visitors to safely navigate to the attraction once they exit the SSTR, such as intersection and reassurance signage.

### 2.1.3 Signage Types

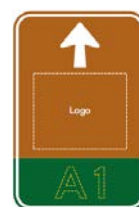
Type of signs the department will provide along state strategic routes are Welcome to Town, Natural Attraction and Route Identification.



Welcome to Town



Natural Attraction



Route ID

### 2.1.4 Costs for State Strategic Touring Route

The costs of signing state strategic touring routes is paid for by the applicant.

The costs of signs vary, depending on the location, type and number of signs required to safely direct visitors around the road network and along the route, as well as the equipment required to comply with installation standards. For example, the factors that may influence the overall costs include:

- The posted speed limits of the roads
- If signage is on a motorway or motorway standard road
- Patronage of the area and size of approved sign
- Intersection / interchange configuration and size / location / number of existing signage
- If the new sign is a stand-alone sign or a replacement to an existing sign
- If the existing sign face can support a new plate, or a complete new sign design is required
- Terrain and/or environmental conditions, offset from the road and type of footings and/or posts required
- Geometry of the road, for example mountainous road and winding alignments, may require installation of advance signing



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- The extent of traffic control required, lane closures (can works be completed during the day or night)

TMR's pre-approved sign suppliers (sign designer, manufacturer and installer) will provide a quote once a specific signage treatment (number of signs, design location etc.) has been approved.

There may be circumstances where TMR is provided with specific program funding to revitalise signage on State Strategic Routing Routes. In this case the department in consultation with tourism organisations and route committee or representatives may cover the costs of these signs (including maintenance at the TMR District level) at certain locations across Queensland.

Where an applicant (for example a Local Government) is requesting additional signage along the route, the applicant is responsible for all costs including sign design, manufacture, installation and maintenance. In this case there may be circumstances where the TMR District provides approval for the Local Government to install the signs (signs must be manufactured by TMR's pre-approved sign supplier) on state controlled roads or where a Road Maintenance Performance Contract exists

## **2.2 Tourist Drives**

Tourist Drives may be regional or local and provide travellers with an alternative route that also encompasses drive tourism features and attractions.

Typically, a tourist drive (regional or local) provides an alternative route for drivers that includes some tourism or scenic value before returning the driver either to the start point (of the tourist drive – e.g. by way of a loop) or at a point further along the major route and continue their journey.

Tourist drives may have specific roadside signage in accordance with the MUTCD (part 6 section 4). Tourist drives should provide a level of signage that will assist the driver to safely navigate the drive.

Tourist drives may (if desired and appropriate) have an overarching theme which is representative of the route and type of attractions located along the route. Themed tourist drives may honour a particular person(s), a specific product or cluster of attractions and use an appropriate logo to represent the route and attractions along the route. Examples of themed tourist drives include:

Cobb and Co Tourist Drive or Falls Drive (at Killarney) which includes a cluster of spectacular water falls.

Wine tourist drives are not an additional type of tourist drive, rather they are a type of themed drive and are subject to the same approval process, criteria and signing treatment as tourist drives. The only variation to the standard tourist drive is the potential for inclusion of the wine symbol (TC1382) on signage for the tourist drive.

Issues to be considered when developing a Tourist Drive (Regional or Local):

- The need to review all existing signing in the local area and, where possible, to rationalise signing
- Overlap with other touring routes or tourist drives should be avoided or at least well-coordinated
- The ability to review and sustain production of supporting promotional materials
- The proposed signage scheme needs to be coordinated between TMR and the Local Council where the tourist drive impacts roads under each authorities control

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- The level of stakeholder commitment to ongoing development, promotion and maintenance of the experience

### **2.2.1 Core criteria for Tourist Drives**

Signs may be provided for tourist drives that comply with the following conditions:

- The route must have significant tourism and/or scenic appeal, including a reasonable frequency of quality tourist attractions to maintain the interest of the visitor
- The route **MUST NOT** be based on attractions which are strictly seasonal or are not a permanent feature of the route
- The route must allow for the safe passage for private passenger vehicles at all times (avoiding hazardous alignments or grades, or single lane roads)
- The route must use only suitably maintained roads, preferably sealed, which are also capable of handling the volumes of traffic attracted to the route
- Promotional material (e.g. map, brochure or online material) covering the drive and attractions **MUST** be developed and made available through Visitor Information Centres and other outlets on an ongoing basis.
- The tourist drive should be listed on the Queensland Holidays website (queensland.com). Information relating to tourist drives is updated through the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) by the relevant regional tourism organisation and through the Queensland Holiday website.
- The route must have been promoted for a period of at least 12 months.
- It is expected tourist drives will not occur on motorway type roads.
- The route must have linkages to state or local government strategic priorities (for example, tourism destination plans).

#### **2.2.1.1 Regional tourist drives**

Regional tourist drives provide an alternative route which link scenic views or connects a number of regional points of tourism interest or attractions. Generally, a regional tourist drive provides travellers with an alternative route between destination points that offer a genuine tourism experience.

Tourist Drives will normally be identified either by a numbering system, or by using an approved symbol or logo e.g. the Great Bunya Drive.

#### **2.2.1.2 Local tourist drives**

Local tourist drives provide travellers with a localised alternative route that includes significant scenic views or points of local tourist interest. Generally, a local tourist drive provides travellers with relatively short detours that are of local tourism merit.

Examples include:

- Mission Beach Tourist Drive
- Canecutter Way Tourist Drive

Tourist drives are selected and promoted by regional or local authorities for the particular scenic attractions and types of visitor experiences they offer.

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Most applications for tourist attraction signs are made by individual operators. However, a tourism region or cluster of tourist attractions may apply to the relevant road authority to establish a broader-based tourist drive.

### **2.2.2 Costs for Tourist Drives**

The costs of signing tourist drives is paid for by the applicant.

The costs of signs vary, depending on the location, type and number of signs required to safely direct visitors around the road network and along the route, as well as the equipment required to comply with installation standards. For example, the factors that may influence the overall costs include:

- The posted speed limits of the roads
- If signage on motorway or motorway standard road
- Patronage of the area and size of approved sign
- Intersection / interchange configuration and size / location / number of existing signage
- If the new sign is a stand-alone sign or a replacement to an existing sign
- If the existing sign face can support a new plate, or a complete new sign design is required
- Terrain and/or environmental conditions, offset from the road and type of footings and/or posts required
- Geometry of the road, for example mountainous road and winding alignments, may require installation of advance signing
- The extent of traffic control required, lane closures (if works be completed during the day or night) may add additional costs in the delivery.

TMR's pre-approved sign suppliers (sign designer, manufacturer and installer) will provide a quote once a specific signage treatment (number of signs, design location etc.) has been approved.

The applicant is responsible for all costs including sign design, manufacture, installation and maintenance. If the Local Government is the applicant, there may be circumstances where the TMR District office provides approval for the Local Government to install the signs on state controlled roads or where a Road Maintenance Performance Contract exists.

## **3 How to apply for signs**

### **3.1 General**

TMR will support the installation of drive experience signage within the boundaries of state controlled roads where it is satisfied that:

- It meets the requirements of this guideline, and any other relevant policy / guideline (e.g. MUTCD)
- Road safety is not adversely affected
- The number of signs and messages is controlled to acceptable limits
- The proposed application for signs meets all relevant engineering standards
- It has the support of industry such as Tourism and Events Queensland, Regional Tourism Organisation and the /Local Tourism Organisation and relevant local government authorities.

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### **3.2 Who can apply**

The applicant for tourist drives or additional signage along existing state strategic touring routes could be any of the following:

- Local Government Authority
- Regional / Local Tourism Organisation
- Tourism Organisation representing a large group (for example, a group of wineries)

### **3.3 Application process**

The application, assessment, approval and installation process for drive experience signing consists of the following three stages:

- Stage 1 : Application
- Stage 2: Assessment
- Stage 3: Sign design, manufacture and installation

#### **Stage 1 – Application:**

The applicant is required to:

- Read the information guide available on [www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/tourism](http://www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/tourism) and assess whether they meet the relevant conditions and are eligible to apply for driving experience signage.
- Where the applicant decides to proceed, the applicant needs to complete the on-line application form and attach all relevant supporting documentation.
- The required supporting documentation for a new tourist drive includes:
  - An outline of the promotional activities (copy of brochures or online content)
  - Target audience and projected visitor numbers
  - Marketing plan (including route name)
  - Proposed number and types of signage
  - Projected budget (including commitment for on-going signage maintenance costs)
  - Letter of support from the relevant Local Council Authority (not required when council is the applicant)
  - Statement on how the proposed drive supports the local area.

#### **Stage 2 – Assessment:**

TMR assesses the application's potential impact on traffic safety and efficiency including:

- Crash history along the route
- Planned construction projects that may change the road environment
- The provision of existing signs and extent of information along the route or at proposed features/facilities
- Ability for motorists to absorb additional signed information at the proposed locations

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- Impact on signage and road maintenance programs
  - Traffic volumes and vehicle types travelling along route and potential impacts on road condition a change of volume and/or vehicle type may cause along proposed route.

If an application is successful in the traffic safety and efficiency assessment, a tourism assessment will be undertaken.

For tourist drives signage requests, TMR will forward the application to the Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) for tourism merit assessment based on the core criteria outlined in section 2.2.1.

The RTO will provide TMR with a recommendation regarding approval.

Where the RTO does not support the application based on the tourist criteria and/or assessment, formal written advice from TMR will be provided to the applicant outlining why the application was unsuccessful.

Where supported by the RTO, the application will progress to Stage 3.

### **Stage 3 – Sign design, manufacture and installation**

To manage the installation of approved tourist drive signage, TMR has established a pre-approved sign designers, manufacturers and installers register. Applicants must use the service providers from the pre-approved panel.

- The applicant will receive an 'approval in principal' notice along with a list of pre-approved sign designers, manufacturers and installers and a Road Corridor Permit (RCP) application form to confirm the signage location(s) and timeframe for installing the sign(s).
- The applicant submits a sign design scheme prepared by the service provider, along with the RCP application form to TMR for formal approval. The signing scheme must include sign face and sign structure designs, final location and clearance heights.
- To ensure a consistent application across the state, TrasiCad will be used to design all sign faces and TraSiS to calculate sign structures or supports, based on sign parameters, terrain profiles and environmental conditions.
- TMR will review the proposed signs against current departmental standards and guidelines. The applicant will be required to arrange necessary changes where non-conformances are identified.
- Where proposed signs meet departmental requirements, TMR will issue an 'approval to proceed' notice, along with a RCP (including conditions)
- It is essential that signs be supplied and installed only from pre-approved manufacturing companies, as retro-reflective sheeting used in sign manufacturing requires specialised equipment and handling.
- Once manufactured, the sign installer engaged by the applicant maybe required to apply for a Traffic Control Permit to carry out works on certain roads during sign installation process.
- Upon completion of installation, and as a condition of the RCP, the applicant where practical, will ensure the installer is present when inspected by a TMR appointed delegate. The sign installer will be required to arrange rectification of any identified non-conformances.

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### **3.4 Timeframes**

- **State Strategic Touring Routes** - Timeframes for the assessment of SSTR's is dependent on the complexities of the route and the consultation activities required.
- **Tourist Drives** - TMR will provide a written response regarding the outcome of an application within 90 days of the receipt of the application. This timeframe is subject to the applicant supplying all the necessary information.

### **3.5 Approval or refusal of application (Tourist Drive)**

Written consent or approval of an application for a tourist drive signage will take the form of a road corridor permit (RCP).

A RCP will detail a number of conditions including:

- Standards and specifications relating to sign construction, installation and maintenance
- Responsibilities in relation to cost, maintenance and removal
- Conditions under which TMR may remove any sign
- Conditions relating to the continuing relevance of the route and continuing operation of attractions along the route
- The RCP is non-transferrable

TMR may also impose special conditions on a permit if required.

Where an application is not approved TMR will advise the applicant in writing and detail the reasons why the application was unsuccessful.

### **3.6 Dispute resolution (Tourist Drives)**

TMR will make reasonable attempts during the assessment process to explain why an application may not be approved.

If an applicant feels aggrieved with the outcome of an application, they may formally submit their concerns in writing requesting the matter be reviewed by TMR.

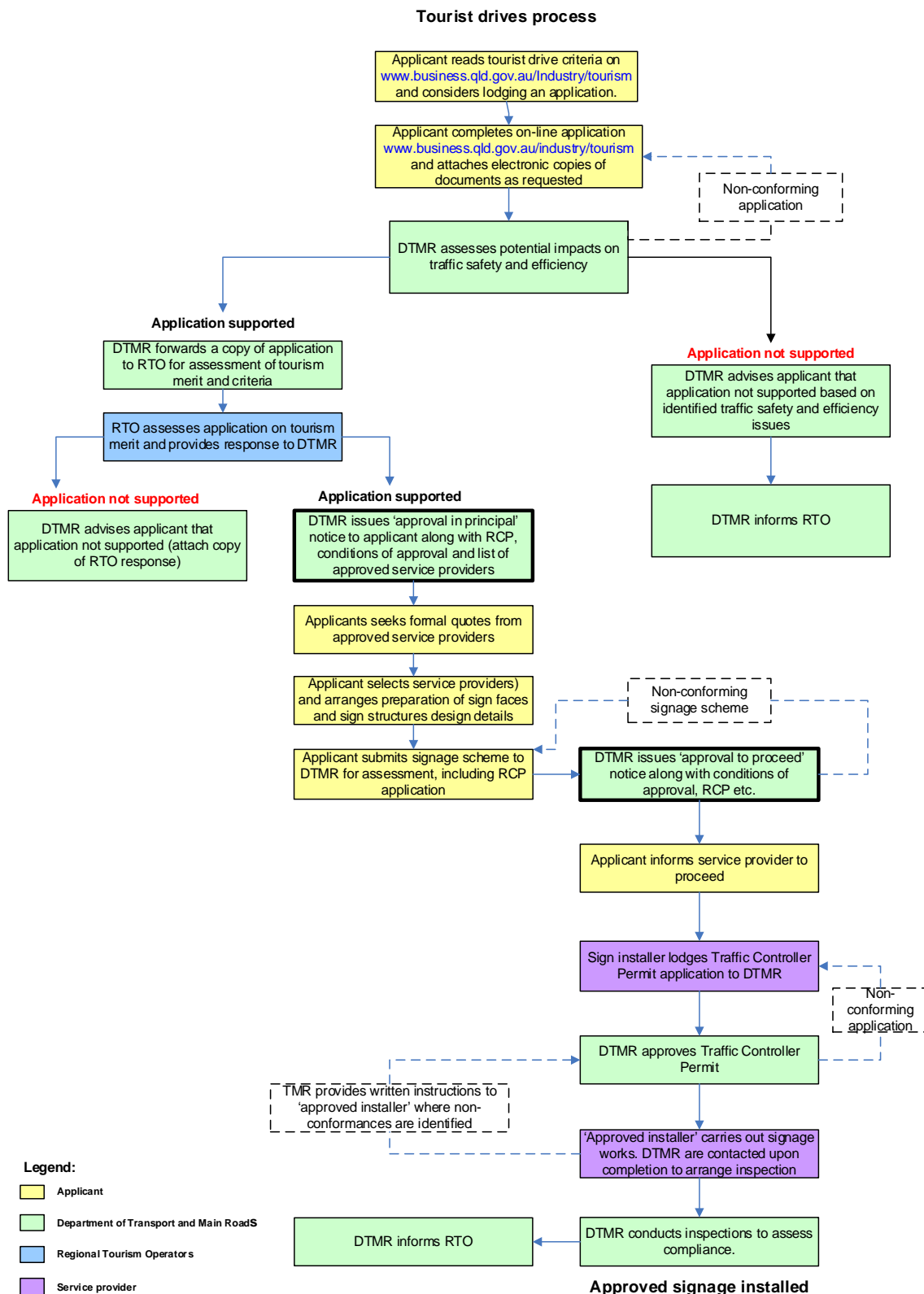
Requests to review unsuccessful applications will be escalated to TMR Senior Management for consideration. TMR may elect to further discuss and/or review the matter in consultation with the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games and the Department of State Development.

As required under current Queensland legislation, TMR is the final arbiter in decisions to approve road traffic signs within the state-controlled road reserve.

### **3.7 Flowchart for application process**

A flow chart of the application and approval process for tourist drives is illustrated below.

Figure 2 – Flowchart for application process



# Appendix A – State strategic touring routes map





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## Appendix B – Glossary of terms

**ATDW** – Australian Tourism Data Warehouse is a central database made up of tourism product listings for the Australian tourism industry.

**Australian Standards (AS)** – are prepared by committees made up of experts from industry, government, user groups and other sectors. The AS reflects latest technical and industry experience and ensures consistency through Australia, embracing national and international standards.

**DSD** – Department of State Development

**DTEBS** – Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games

**LGA** – Local Government Authority

**LTO** – Local Tourism Organisation

**MUTCD** – Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

**QTRIC** – Queensland Touring Routes Interdepartmental Committee

**RCP** – Road Corridor Permit

**RTO** – Regional Tourism Organisation

**Sign service provider** – a business selected by the Department of Transport and Main Roads who is responsible for delivering a high quality of sign design, manufacture and installation in line with Australian Standards, MUTCD and TMR manuals and guidelines.

**State-controlled roads** – are generally the major traffic carrying roads that provide strategic links between towns, cities or other major destinations. TMR are the managing authority for all state-controlled roads throughout Queensland.

**State Strategic Touring Route** – are routes of strategic importance to the drive tourism market in Queensland. They are primary routes tourist use to travel around Queensland, providing the main connections between tourist locations, and generally supporting high volumes of tourist traffic. These routes are recognised nationally through the National Tourism Signage Reference Group (NTSRG) and at the state level by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and state tourism agencies.

**TEQ** – Tourism and Events Queensland

**TMR** – Department of Transport and Main Roads

**Tourist Drive** – tourist drives may be regional or local and provide travellers with an alternative route that also encompasses drive tourism features.

**TC signs** – are a collection of non-standard traffic control (TC) signs that have been 'officially approved' (as required by the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*). These signs have been designed for specialised use and designed to comply with the guidelines set out in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

**VIC** – Accredited Visitor Information Centre

Appendix C – example of approved signs

Sign Design	Example image
<p>State Strategic Touring Route – Welcome to town</p>	
<p>State Strategic Touring Route – Natural attraction</p>	
<p>State Strategic Touring Route – Route marker</p>	
<p>Tourist Drive</p>	

