

Who does this target?



Potential impacts:

- Promotes road safety and public health messages
- General public may not perceive driving with a low blood/breath alcohol concentration (0.001 to 0.049) as a serious offence
- Drivers may be unable to have one drink at social functions and then drive
- Lowering the general alcohol limit may increase drinking in the community as more people may choose to leave their cars at home and have no restraints on the amount they can drink
- Liquor industry may be affected due to changes in amount of liquor sales at venues (pubs and clubs)
- Likely to impact on those in rural communities due to the limited availability of alternative transport options/public transport in these areas
- Lowering the general alcohol limit may divert enforcement attention from the high BAC drink drivers that pose a greater crash risk
- A possible increase in the number of people caught drink driving would increase the workload of the police and court system
- May decrease the number and severity of drink driving related crashes.

Have your say

Question 5: Do you support a review of the general alcohol limit?

Question 5a: What are your comments, concerns and ideas about lowering the general alcohol limit?

Have your say on page 57.

Designated driver programs

Discussion point: The Queensland Government could promote the use of designated driver programs across Queensland for improved anti drink driving outcomes in our communities.

The general aim of designated driver programs is to reduce the level of drink driving by encouraging potential drink drivers to travel with a driver who has abstained from consuming alcohol¹²³. The primary target group for these programs are those potential drink drivers who travel to and from public drinking venues. Free soft drink is usually provided by venues to the designated driver who registers at the bar upon arrival.

Having a person with no alcohol in their system within a drinking group may have positive impacts on other alcohol related social behaviours, such as a reduction in disorderly conduct and damage of property, because the non-drinker may be able to diffuse any inappropriate behaviour in the group. However, the expectation to undertake this 'mediator' role places additional pressure on the designated driver and may deter individuals from wanting to act in this role¹²⁴.

A limited number of designated driver programs have been effectively evaluated ¹²⁵. The available evidence is insufficient to make any conclusions on the effectiveness of designated driver programs in regards to: the self reported frequency of designated driver selection before drinking began; the observation of self-identified designated drivers in drinking venues; and, self reports of driving with an alcohol impaired driver ¹²⁶. No studies have been identified that assessed the effects of designated driver programs on the incidence of alcohol related crashes ¹²⁷.

Do other Australian jurisdictions have designated driver programs?

The Northern Territory, Western Australia, Victoria, and some local governments in Tasmania and New South Wales have designated driver programs. Designated driver programs appear to be quite widespread around the world, however a limited number have been effectively evaluated to show a reduction in drink driving.

The Queensland Government developed a designated driver program named Skipper in 2006–07 (outlined in *Part Three*). The Skipper program is currently operating as a pilot in the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Mackay and Gympie areas. An evaluation of the program is currently being completed ¹²⁸. However, further promotion and support of designated driver program/s in collaboration with licensees and interested community groups (and liquor accords) could have a positive impact on a person's decision to drink and drive, providing an alternative option for getting home from drinking venues.

The Queensland Government could provide assistance to community groups by developing and supporting designated driver programs. This could be undertaken by developing a guideline and key principles for interested parties.

Who does this target?

General
Population

Potential Impacts:

- Promotes road safety and public health messages
- Assists the community in developing local programs to combat drink driving and/or promote the anti drink driving message
- Provides drinkers with an alternative transport option
- Provides an incentive for a person to become a designated driver.

Have your say

Question 6: Would you support the Queensland Government developing and providing guidelines and principles to assist community groups to develop designated driver programs?

Question 7: Do you support the Queensland Government promoting the use of designated driver programs?

Have your say on page 58.

Alternative transport options

Discussion point: Research and develop a guideline for community groups to investigate and sustain alternative transport options through appropriate collaboration between industry, community groups, and government agencies.

One transportation based approach for reducing drink driving crashes is to provide both vehicles and drivers for intoxicated individuals who would otherwise drive themselves or ride with an intoxicated driver. This approach is usually referred to as ‘safe rides’. Safe ride programs encompass a wide variety of transportation alternatives, such as taxis, limousines, buses, and cars with designated drivers. Typically, when transport is needed by an intoxicated person, either that person or someone such as a server or host, obtains transport from outside the drinking environment ¹²⁹.

Alternative transport options can also be considered for major events such as music festivals, sporting events and schoolies. Providing transport to and from these events could minimise the possible harmful effects of drink driving as a risky behaviour stemming from risky drinking behaviour.

How do alternative transport options work in other Australian jurisdictions?

Governments in Australian states and territories support a wide variety of alternative transport programs and initiatives at both state and local levels.

In Australia, courtesy buses and other safe ride services are regularly provided by a number of service clubs, pubs and other licensed premises in both urban and rural areas. However, their use and potential for preventing drink driving in rural areas has not been well researched.

Researchers typically note that there are a number of barriers to the successful use of courtesy buses in rural or remote areas such as the ‘reliance on private vehicles, large geographical distances and small communities suffering cutbacks in rural services and resources’ ¹³⁰.

It is also common practice for sporting and service clubs in Queensland to provide a courtesy bus for the pick up and/or drop off of patrons. Alternative transport options could also be made available using these resources under share-use agreements between agreeable licensees (that may be owners of such vehicles) and interested community groups willing to assist and provide in-kind volunteer services.

The Queensland Government could research and develop a guideline for community groups to assist them to investigate and sustain alternative transport options. Developing standard material though may not meet the needs of individual communities.

Who does this target?

General
Population

Potential impacts:

- Creates options for people drinking to utilise alternative transport where other public transport may be unavailable
- Alternative transport options may not be feasible or sustainable for communities in rural and regional areas with large travelling distances between places of drinking and home.

Have your say

Question 8: Do you support the development of a guideline for community groups to assist them to develop, provide and sustain alternative transport options?

Question 9: Do you have any other ideas for alternative transport options that could assist your community?

Have your say on page 58.

Liquor accords and responsible service of alcohol (RSA)

Discussion point: Research and develop guidelines for assisting liquor accords and community groups to promote the anti drink driving message.

Liquor accords are community-based voluntary codes of practice that involve licensees, other businesses, local government authorities, community representatives and police. Liquor accords promote a cooperative approach to developing safe and well managed environments in and around licensed premises. These accords may address a number of issues, such as RSA policy including drink discounting bans, trained security personnel, provision of food, use of safe glassware and alcohol containers, and environmental modifications to reduce potential conflict and thereby reduce the risk of violence¹³¹. As at 30 August 2009, there were over 60 liquor accords operating in Queensland¹³². To further enhance existing and future liquor accords, research could be conducted and guidelines developed to include anti drink driving messages into liquor accords.

Liquor accords in other Australian jurisdictions

Liquor accords operate in a number of Australian states and territories to resolve local alcohol related harm issues. Like Queensland, most liquor accords include members from the local business community, local councils, police, government departments and other community organisations.

Who does this target?

General
Population

Potential impacts:

- Promotes road safety and public health messages
- Aims to ensure liquor is served, supplied and promoted responsibly
- Encourages the creation of safe, secure and social environments for patrons of licensed premises to minimise harm to individuals and the broader community.

Discussion point: Improve RSA training curriculum and standards to include appropriate educational content on drink driving.

RSA programs have evolved in many countries alongside a general increase in the availability of alcohol in society and a greater focus on the prevention of alcohol related harm. RSA programs recognise the reality that a great deal of high-risk drinking and preventable harm occurs in and around licensed premises or as drinkers make their way home¹³³.

RSA is the responsibility of licensees and bar staff and mostly aims to reduce the chance that patrons will become intoxicated. These include ‘house policies’ such as promoting food and non or low-alcohol alternatives, as well as training staff to identify early signs of intoxication and delay or stop service to intoxicated patrons.

In Queensland, the Liquor Licensing Division of the Office of Liquor, Gaming Regulation (OLGR) has a Code of Practice for the Responsible Service, Supply and Promotion of Liquor¹³⁴, which provides a proactive whole-of-industry approach to ensure liquor is served, supplied and promoted responsibly and in compliance with the *Liquor Act 1992*. Since 1 January 2009, all staff and managers responsible for the service and supply of liquor must have a current responsible service of alcohol certificate within 30 days of the commencement of such employment¹³⁵.

RSA training curriculum could include educational content on drink driving as a mandatory element. While this content may be included, research may be needed to determine whether there are any road safety benefits from such a requirement. Alternatively, this may help promote the anti drink driving message.

RSA in other Australian jurisdictions

RSA policy exists in all Australian states and territories. However, each state or territory has its own legislation and policy for managing safe liquor serving practices and training requirements for staff.

Have your say

Question 10: Would you support the Queensland Government researching and developing a guideline to assist community groups and liquor accords to promote the anti drink driving message?

Question 11: Do you support responsible service of alcohol training curriculum and standards including appropriate educational content on drink driving?

Have your say on page 58.

Restricted licences (work licences)

Restricted licences, also commonly referred to in Queensland as work licences, may be granted on application to licence holders who have been convicted and disqualified for certain drink driving offences. A work licence authorises the holder to drive only in stated circumstances directly connected with the holder’s means of earning a living.

Drink drivers eligible to apply to the court for a work licence must be first time offenders within the previous five years, had a BAC reading of ≤ 0.149 and held either a current open or provisional Queensland driver licence immediately prior to the disqualification. Additionally, provisional licence holders applying for a work licence must be aged 25 years or older at the time of the offence.

Some of the eligibility criteria include:

- the person must satisfy the court that they are a fit and proper person to hold a restricted licence having regard to the safety of other road users and the public generally
- a refusal of their application for a work licence would cause extreme hardship to the applicant or the applicant’s family by depriving the applicant of their means of earning a living.

Do other jurisdictions have work licences?

Special licences for offenders facing special hardship as a result of disqualification also currently exist in the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, and Western Australia. In Queensland, work licences are generally issued for twice the length of the disqualification period for the offence committed. For example, if a driver is disqualified for three months and the court grants an order directing the issue of a work licence, this licence will be issued by the Department of Transport and Main Roads for six months.

Discussion point: Abolishing restricted licences (work licences) in Queensland.

Abolishing work licences in Queensland may improve the overall general deterrent effect of disqualification as the certainty of licence loss for drink drivers would remove any opportunity for a convicted drink driver to continue driving legally.

From 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2009 there were approximately 26 000 work licences issued to convicted drink driving offenders in Queensland¹³⁶. A concern is that work licences may be regarded as a soft option. If a person is allowed to re-enter the licensing system without full punishment (licence disqualification) this could undermine the certainty and effectiveness of licence loss as a general and specific deterrent to drink driving^{137,138}. Currently work licences are only available to Type One drink driving offenders. Therefore, if a person's licence is disqualified for speeding or dangerous driving they are not eligible to apply for a work licence.

As discussed, abolishing work licences could result in extreme hardship to a person who has been convicted of a drink driving offence or a person's family, by depriving them of a means of earning a living. With consideration to this issue, there is scope for the restricted licence scheme to be further enhanced rather than abolished completely.

Who does this target?

General
Population

Type
1
Offenders

Potential impacts:

- May further reinforce the seriousness of committing a drink driving offence as there are no further opportunities to continue driving legally
- May further enhance licence disqualification as a means of deterring licence holders from drink driving
- Convicted drink drivers and their dependents may experience severe financial hardship as they are potentially deprived of a means to earning a living
- May encourage a higher rate of unlicensed driving as convicted drink drivers who no longer have an opportunity to apply for a work licence may continue to drive despite being disqualified.

Have your say

Question 12: Do you support abolishing work licences in Queensland?

Have your say on page 59.

Retain and enhance the existing work licence scheme in Queensland with additional eligibility criteria, conditions and restrictions.

Discussion point: Exclude all provisional licence holders (regardless of age) from being eligible for a work licence.

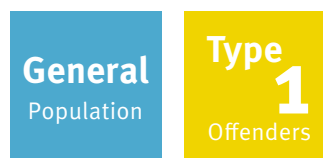
Provisional licence holders under the age of 25 are not eligible to apply for a restricted licence but provisional licence holders over the age of 25 are eligible. All provisional licence holders regardless of age are deemed novice drivers, as they have not had the extensive driving experience that has been attained by the holder of an open licence, and represent a higher risk group as their driving skills are underdeveloped when compared to more experienced drivers.

A number of research studies have identified inexperience as a significant contributing factor of novice driver crash involvement¹³⁹. Inexperience is not an attribute that is exclusive to newly licensed young drivers. Older drivers entering the licensing system for the first time are also regarded as novice drivers, as they too are required to develop basic vehicle operation and cognitive skills (for example, hazard perception). Research¹⁴⁰ has demonstrated that age and experience have independent effects on crash risk.

Consumption of alcohol by novice drivers, who are still in the process of developing their driving-related skills, can inevitably result in a higher crash risk for these drivers. Investigations on novice driver crash rates in Austria¹⁴¹, has shown a positive correlation between alcohol consumption and crash rates of novice drivers.

All novice drivers (regardless of age) that have committed a drink driving offence pose a higher risk to the community. Analysis of Queensland data shows that provisional licence holders are 1.24 times more likely to be drink drivers when involved in a serious casualty crash when compared to open licence holders¹⁴² even after accounting for age and gender. Based on this data there are grounds to exclude all novice and inexperienced drivers, regardless of age, from entry into the restricted licence scheme.

Who does this target?



Potential impacts:

- Work licences may no longer necessarily be regarded as a soft option
- Some convicted drink drivers and their dependents may experience severe financial hardship as they are potentially deprived of a means to earning a living
- May reduce the number of convicted drink drivers eligible to apply for a work licence
- May further deter inexperienced novice drivers (including those aged 25 years and older) from drink driving.

Discussion point: Exclude all drink driving offenders who have been convicted of a drink driving offence ≥ 0.10 from being eligible to apply for a work licence.

Studies show that at 0.10 the relative risk of being involved in a crash is increased by almost five times¹⁴³. Queensland crash data shows that drivers and riders who drive with a higher BAC are significantly represented in severe crashes¹⁴⁴. Further, Queensland crash data highlights that:

- from 2001/02–2007/08 approximately a quarter (22.4 per cent) of drink driving related fatal crashes involved offenders who were significantly over the general alcohol limit with a BAC from 0.10 to 0.149
- from 2001/02–2006/07 approximately a third (28.7 per cent) of drink driving related crashes that resulted in hospitalisation involved offenders who were significantly over the general alcohol limit with a BAC from 0.10 to 0.149¹⁴⁵.

Applying tougher penalties and sanctions to those drink drivers who have higher BACs is justified based on the evidence of crash statistics. Tougher penalties that prevent convicted drink drivers from being able to apply for a work licence if detected with a BAC of 0.10 or more may have some deterrent effect and road safety benefit.

Who does this target?

General
Population

Type
1
Offenders

First time offenders (within a five year period) convicted of an offence where the BAC was ≥ 0.10 and ≤ 0.149 .

Potential impacts:

- Work licences may no longer necessarily be regarded as a soft option
- Some convicted drink drivers and their dependents may experience severe financial hardship as they are potentially deprived of a means to earning a living
- May reduce the number of convicted drink drivers eligible to apply for a work licence
- May enhance licence disqualification as a means of deterring drink drivers with a BAC ≥ 0.10 from committing further drink driving offences.

Discussion point: A requirement to fit an alcohol ignition interlock device prior to being issued with a work licence.

An alcohol ignition interlock is a device that is fitted to a motor vehicle that prevents the vehicle from starting if the driver has been drinking. Participation in an interlock program also reduces further drink driving offences and alcohol related crashes.

The interlock could also be used as a technological device to ensure that the work licence holder is compliant with the restrictions outlined in a court order. For example, a driver may be permitted to drive a vehicle between certain hours of the day, Monday to Friday to travel to work. The interlock can be programmed to these requirements, and would prevent a driver from being able to drive their vehicle outside of those restrictions.

The interlock device would be fitted to the motor vehicle for the duration that a person has the work licence and would be removed at the end of the period.

It should be noted that the general deterrent impact on the wider community of the threat of being required to install and use an interlock is not well known, however, this initiative may provide some deterrent impact on potential drink drivers.

Who does this target?

General
Population

Type
1
Offenders

Potential impacts:

- Work licences may no longer necessarily be regarded as a soft option
- Additional costs shall be incurred for a person to enter into the work licence scheme due to having to install an alcohol ignition interlock device
- A requirement to install an interlock may have implications for other persons who share the use of a motor vehicle with a person who has been issued with a work licence
- Employers may be required to install an interlock in work vehicles for employees that have sought a work licence.

Have your say

Question 13: Do you support retaining work licences in Queensland?

If work licences are retained, would you:

- 13a. support excluding all provisional licence holders (regardless of age) from being eligible for a work licence?
- 13b. support the exclusion of offenders who have been convicted of a drink driving offence of ≥ 0.10 from being eligible to apply for a work license?
- 13c. support a requirement for work licence holders to install an alcohol ignition interlock?

Have your say on page 59.

Immediate licence suspensions

Discussion point: Immediate licence suspension could be extended to drink driving offenders with a BAC of ≥ 0.10 .

Currently a person has their authority to drive on Queensland roads immediately suspended if they are charged with driving a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol content of 0.15 or more and other serious offences. Increases in fatal crash risk have been found to be associated with increases in BAC levels ^{146, 147, 148}. At a BAC of 0.10 a drink driver is almost five times ¹⁴⁹ more likely to crash. Based on crash risk, immediate licence suspension at a lower threshold would provide a swift and certain penalty that will protect the public by restraining offenders that pose a risk, with the potential to prevent a repeat drink driving offence while the immediate suspension is in effect ¹⁵⁰.

An analysis of Queensland crash data highlights that drivers with a BAC of ≥ 0.10 accounted for approximately 80.3 per cent of the total number of drink driving related fatal crashes from 2001/02–2007/08 and 77 per cent of the total number of drink driving related crashes that resulted in hospitalisation from 2001/02–2006/07.

Additional analysis of offence data shows that approximately 46.5 per cent of drink driving offenders had a BAC of at least twice the general alcohol limit; that is a BAC of ≥ 0.10 ¹⁵¹.

Under current legislation, offenders who have been immediately suspended may apply to the court for an order to allow them to continue to drive until their drink driving charge is heard if the immediate licence suspension would cause hardship. This existing arrangement would be retained for eligible offenders if there was a decrease in the BAC threshold for immediate licence suspension to 0.10.

What does the research say?

Research indicates that licence suspension is a very effective strategy for minimising crash risk for offenders in the short term and the application of the suspension as soon as is possible following the offence is the most effective aspect ¹⁵². Applying immediate suspension to a high risk group of offenders (those with a BAC of 0.10 or more) would provide the potential to improve the general and specific deterrent effect of the existing penalties and sanctions while increasing the number of offenders subject to immediate licence suspension.

An evaluation of immediate licence suspension laws for all drink drivers detected over the legal limit in California reported a nine to 13 per cent reduction of alcohol involved crash fatalities and injuries after their implementation ¹⁵³. In Nevada, implementation of immediate licence suspension laws was associated with a 41 per cent reduction in alcohol involved fatalities ¹⁵⁴. As such, there is evidence that immediate licence suspension sanctions are an effective sanction to influence a reduction in drink driving crashes.

Do other jurisdictions have immediate licence suspensions for drink driving offences?

A number of Australian jurisdictions have immediate license suspension laws for a range of traffic offences. Primarily the laws are applied to high-range drink driving offences. In some states, immediate license suspension sanctions also apply to high range speeding offences and dangerous driving charges. Victoria has immediate licence suspension for drink driving offences of 0.10 or above and for second or subsequent offences. In South Australia, an offender receives an immediate loss of licence for six months if their BAC is 0.08–0.149 and immediate loss of licence for 12 months if their BAC is 0.15 or more. New South Wales also has provisions in their legislation to permit police to immediately suspend a person's driver licence for middle or high range drink driving offences ¹⁵⁵.

Who does this target?



Offenders charged with a drink driving offence where the BAC was ≥ 0.10 .

Potential impacts:

- May have a specific deterrence effect on drivers detected with a BAC of 0.10 per cent or above
- Will subject an estimated additional 6 000 drink drivers to immediate licence suspension sanctions per annum
- May remove high risk drink driving offenders from our roads while the suspension is in effect
- May result in more licence holders (who have been immediately suspended) driving unlicensed
- May result in severe and undue hardship suffered by the dependants of convicted drink driving offenders
- May result in increased workload and administrative burden for the QPS and the courts.

Have your say

Question 14: Do you support extending immediate licence suspension to offenders with a BAC of ≥ 0.10 ?

Have your say on page 59.

Drink driving rehabilitation programs

Currently in Queensland there are several drink driving rehabilitation and offender programs available that range from simple educational style formats to programs combining educational/therapeutic treatment. These programs include the Under the Limit program, Attitudinal Driving Workshops, Driving with Care, and the Gold Coast Traffic Offender Program. A further description of these programs is provided in *Part Three*.

Participation in drink driving rehabilitation programs in Queensland can occur either through a person volunteering to enter a program, usually before attending court, or through the discretion of a magistrate who may order an offender to attend a program as part of their sentence. Often this voluntary or court ordered participation will result in reduction of the monetary fine imposed on the offender during sentencing. Several other jurisdictions have moved to introduce mandatory participation in drink driving rehabilitation programs for certain drink drivers. In these jurisdictions the courts are required to order convicted drink drivers to attend a rehabilitation program as part of their sentence.

Drink driving rehabilitation programs are an alternative or additional approach to punitive measures, which aim to prevent reoffending through reforming an individual rather than punishing them¹⁵⁶. The use of rehabilitation to treat drink drivers is an approach that has been used for several decades in a number of Australian and international jurisdictions and is often used in combination with other sanctions such as licence disqualifications and fines.

Rehabilitation programs can take a number of forms depending on the type of drink driver being targeted, the objectives of the treatment, content and style, program length and where the program is delivered¹⁵⁷. Generally rehabilitation programs for drink drivers can be classified as either the provision of education (education based

programs), the therapeutic treatment of alcohol problems (psychotherapy/counselling based programs), or a combination of both ¹⁵⁸.

Educational programs assume that offenders drink and drive because they lack appropriate knowledge to make correct decisions about the combination of their drinking and driving. Therapeutic programs such as counselling and psychotherapies focus more on the participants' drinking behaviour, the role it plays in their life and how they may be able to reduce their alcohol consumption. Combination programs incorporate both educational and therapeutic approaches, often using group work to impart drinking/driving knowledge and individual sessions for therapeutic measures.

There are a number of factors that may contribute to a person's drink driving behaviour such as attitudes or personality traits, family history, alcohol and other drug use, situational circumstances and health disorders (e.g. depression) ¹⁵⁹. As a result, it is important that rehabilitation programs for problem drink drivers are tailored to the needs of the individual to treat underlying issues that are contributing to a person offending. In order to achieve this, an initial screening and/or assessment process should be completed to guide the type, length and intensity of the treatment that a person may require ¹⁶⁰. This will allow programs to vary from simple educational style treatment for social drinkers to more intensive and/or therapeutic programs to treat problem drinkers who represent a much higher risk of reoffending ¹⁶¹.

Research into the effectiveness of mandatory attendance at drink driving rehabilitation programs has shown mixed results. For example some research has found that unmotivated participants coerced into drink driving rehabilitation are resistant to change and are likely to reoffend ¹⁶². Recent studies into court mandated treatment for convicted drink drivers have found that the use of motivational enhancement therapy could potentially be applied to increase the effectiveness of rehabilitation for involuntary participants ¹⁶³. Other academic research into the effectiveness of mandated treatment has shown

that coerced rehabilitation has had positive effects on reducing drink driving in offenders who have received the treatment ¹⁶⁴. The use of mandated treatment has also been shown to be an effective strategy to ensure higher program completion rates ¹⁶⁵.

Discussion point: Mandatory referral to a brief educational intervention for first time offenders with a BAC ≤ 0.149 .

Educational interventions have widely been used as an intervention for first time drink drivers ¹⁶⁶. These programs assume that offenders do not have adequate knowledge to make correct decisions to avoid drink driving and as such aim to provide information on why people drink and drive, the effects of alcohol, consequences of drinking and driving, and how to avoid repeat offences ¹⁶⁷. It is important to note that these brief educational interventions are not intended to be treatment programs designed to address underlying alcohol related problems.

In the health care profession brief intervention style programs play an important part of the overall approach to dealing with risky drinking in Australia ¹⁶⁸. These interventions are usually targeted towards drinkers who have not reached the stage of being classified as having alcohol abuse or dependency problems ¹⁶⁹. It is intended that through the use of these interventions individuals will be provided with advice, encouragement and skills to prevent the development of more serious alcohol related problems ¹⁷⁰.

What does the research say about brief interventions?

Research into the effectiveness of educational programs has shown positive results for this type of treatment ¹⁷¹. For example, studies have found that when education was compared to 'no remediation' on tests of short-item knowledge which relates to information on alcohol consumption and driving, results favoured the use of education ¹⁷². The use of brief interventions in the health care profession as a technique for addressing risky and high alcohol consumption has also shown positive results

in a large body of academic research^{173,174}. Research in this field has also found that brief interventions are more effective than no treatment at all, and are often as effective as more extensive treatment¹⁷⁵.

Brief educational interventions have previously been considered for Queensland. In 2006, the Queensland Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee conducted an inquiry into drink driving. This inquiry canvassed a number of issues relating to rehabilitation of offenders with the outcomes and recommendations released in their report *Getting Tough on Drink Drivers: Report No. 46, October 2006*.

In Queensland a mandatory brief educational style intervention could be used for all first time drink drivers under the high alcohol limit (0.15). This intervention would be a short course (possibly for several hours) that is designed to provide individuals with information and advice on how to break the link between drinking and driving to prevent the occurrence of future drink driving offences. Participation in this program would be in addition to current licence disqualification periods and monetary fines applied to this category of drink drivers in Queensland. Offenders may be required to show evidence of their completion of the brief educational intervention to be eligible to re-enter the licensing system, following their period of disqualification.

Similar to existing alcohol and drug treatment services offered in Queensland¹⁷⁶, these brief interventions could be offered through either government agencies or through non-government private organisations. Programs delivered by non-government or private service providers may be required by law to deliver services according to a specified set of standards. Benefits of using non-government organisations to deliver drink driving assessment and rehabilitation programs include the potential to reduce demand on existing government administered public health services and create further opportunities for community based delivery of services.

To limit the impact on people living in rural/remote areas or those that have employment or family commitments that restrict their ability to attend face-to-face sessions, interventions could utilise technology to enhance their delivery. For example brief interventions in the health setting have previously utilised computer programs and the internet to successfully deliver programs¹⁷⁷. Alternatively participants could be forwarded materials through the post containing DVDs, workbooks, CDs and so on.

Attendance at brief intervention programs will potentially be on a user-pays basis. This may be problematic especially for low-income earners and unemployed individuals who are required to complete this program. To reduce the financial impact on these offenders, magistrates would be able to continue to take into consideration a person's individual circumstances in determining the monetary fine imposed for the drink driving offence. Further investigation of options to make programs affordable for low-income participants would be required prior to the possible introduction of any program.

Do other Australian jurisdictions have brief intervention programs?

All Australian jurisdictions offer drink driving offenders some form of brief intervention and/or rehabilitation program. The types of programs offered vary significantly. For example the target groups may vary, whether or not the programs are mandatory or voluntary, program styles (education/therapeutic) and much more.

Who does this target?

Type
1
Offenders

Potential impacts:

- Potential to provide first time drink drivers with knowledge to avoid further incidents of drink driving
- Failure to comply with a court order and/or the requirements of the program may have an impact on the prevalence of unlicensed driving
- Low-income earners and the unemployed may find it difficult to pay for the brief educational intervention and may drive unlicensed
- Has the potential to reduce drink driving over the longer term, particularly for that proportion of the population that continue to drink and drive despite punishment.

Have your say

Question 15: Do you support a mandatory brief educational intervention for first time offenders with a BAC ≤ 0.149 ?

Have your say on page 59.

Discussion point: Mandatory referral to an accredited assessment and rehabilitation program could be introduced for high level and repeat drink driving offenders.

Research has consistently shown that some repeat drink drivers are unreceptive to the threat and application of legal sanctions (for example, fines and licence disqualifications), suggesting that additional interventions that treat underlying alcohol related problems are required¹⁷⁸. Although there is large variation in the content and objectives of rehabilitation for problem drink drivers, research suggests that programs should allow for the use of both educational and/or therapeutic components to treat drink drivers¹⁷⁹. That is, the provision of knowledge to separate the link between drinking and driving and/or therapy to address a person's underlying alcohol related problems.

What does the research say about rehabilitation programs?

There is a growing body of academic research showing that rehabilitation programs are effective in reducing drink driving reoffending, especially when focussed on repeat drink drivers¹⁸⁰. Research also notes that the most effective rehabilitation programs occur as part of a mix of drink driving interventions such as disqualification periods and vehicle restrictions (including alcohol ignition interlocks)¹⁸¹. Evaluations of Queensland's Under the Limit (UTL) rehabilitation program (see *Part Three* for more details on UTL) have shown positive results in reducing repeat drink driving. For example, one evaluation found reoffence rates of drink drivers who completed the program were 15 per cent lower compared to a matched sample and 55 per cent lower for repeat offenders with a BAC above 0.15¹⁸².

As a result of these positive research outcomes, the use of rehabilitation for drink drivers could be extended as a mandatory requirement for all Type Two offenders. These programs would move beyond the basic educational information provided in drink driving brief interventions as they would provide

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a more in-depth approach to treating problem offenders. Offenders would be ordered to complete a drink driving assessment for the purposes of determining the type of rehabilitative treatment that they may require. This assessment would then determine the type, length and intensity of rehabilitation that an offender would mandatorily be required to complete.

Similar to existing alcohol and drug treatment services offered in Queensland¹⁸³, mandatory rehabilitation could be offered through either government agencies or through non-government private organisations. Programs delivered by non-government service providers may be required by law to deliver treatment according to a specified set of standards. Benefits of using non-government organisations to deliver drink driving assessment and rehabilitation programs include the potential to reduce demand on existing government administered public health services and create further opportunities for community based delivery of services.

Introducing mandatory rehabilitation for problem drink drivers may result in some access and equity issues for people living in rural/remote areas or those that have employment or family commitments that restrict their ability to attend sessions. This issue may be further compounded where a disqualified drink driver does not have access to alternative transport options. The current UTL program attempts to address these issues through the use of distance education provided through the Open Learning Institute of TAFE. Similar approaches could be adopted for any new mandatory assessment and rehabilitation programs developed where participants could utilise a range of resources such as DVDs, CDs, videos, computer programs and internet technology, such as virtual classrooms and internet forums, to complete the treatment.

Attendance at these programs will potentially be on a user-pays basis. The cost may vary depending on the intensity and length of rehabilitation required by the individual. Currently drink drivers participating in the UTL program may have their fine reduced, however they are still required to pay the program fees in full (currently \$750) prior to commencement of the program.

Do other Australian jurisdictions have rehabilitation programs?

All Australian jurisdictions offer drink driving offenders some form of brief intervention and/or rehabilitation program. The types of programs offered vary significantly. For example the target groups may vary, whether or not the programs are mandatory or voluntary, program styles (education/therapeutic) and much more.

Who does this target?



Potential impacts:

- Low-income earners and the unemployed may find it difficult to pay for the rehabilitation program
- Failure to comply with a court order and/or the requirements of the program may have an impact on the prevalence of unlicensed driving
- Has the potential to reduce drink driving over the longer term, particularly for that proportion of the population that continue to drink and drive despite punishment and incapacitation
- May have other positive health benefits including reduced levels and/or dependence on alcohol for certain drivers.

Have your say

Question 16: Do you support the introduction of mandatory referral to an accredited assessment and rehabilitation program for high level and repeat drink driving offenders?

Have your say on page 60.

Vehicle impoundment

Vehicle impoundment temporarily denies an offender the use of a vehicle. The vehicle is stored at a holding facility and, following a specified period, it is returned to its owner. Vehicle forfeiture entails the permanent surrender of the vehicle to the state.

The primary aim of vehicle impoundment and forfeiture is to physically separate the offender from their vehicle thereby reducing the risk that they will continue to endanger themselves or other road users. Those subject to vehicle impoundment are also deterred from further offending due to the financial cost and inconvenience associated with the loss of the vehicle including restrictions on mobility.

In Queensland, vehicle impoundment and forfeiture were introduced in 2002 for 'hoon' behaviour and extended to an array of additional repeat offences (Type Two vehicle related offences) in 2007 including some drink driving related offences such as drink driving over the high alcohol limit (BAC ≥ 0.15); failing to provide a sample of blood/breath for analysis or driving whilst under a 24 hour suspension; and, driving while disqualified or unlicensed.

Vehicle impoundment is graduated which means it increases in severity with each offence:

- For first offences (called the 'zero' offence), no action is taken against the vehicle but existing sanctions (for example, immediate licence suspension for drink driving over the high alcohol limit) and court imposed penalties apply

- A second offence of the same kind in the following three years (referred to as the first repeat offence), may result in the vehicle being impounded immediately by a police officer for a 48 hour period
- Following a third offence of the same kind in a three year period (referred to as the second repeat offence), a police officer may immediately impound the vehicle for 48 hours and also apply to a magistrate to impound the vehicle for up to three months
- For further repeat offences, the vehicle may be immediately impounded for 48 hours in addition to an application to a magistrate for forfeiture of the vehicle.

The driver is responsible for costs associated with the towing and initial impoundment of the vehicle for 48 hours and the owner (even if they are not the driver) is liable for all costs associated with the storage of the vehicle beyond the initial impoundment period. Advice from the QPS is that most tows are charged at the *Tow Truck Regulation 1999* fee of \$263.65. Storage fees are up to as much as \$44 per day for three month impoundments or if owners are unable to collect the vehicle immediately after the impounding period ends. If the motor vehicle is stolen or rented, the vehicle must be released to the owner as soon as possible.

The QPS has undertaken a review to evaluate the implementation of vehicle impoundment for Type Two vehicle related offences. This review primarily examined the legislation, policy and procedures associated with impoundment in order to inform the ongoing operation of the program. Government consideration of potential changes to the use of vehicle impoundment as a sanction would take into account the outcomes of this review.

What does the research say?

Research from North America^{184,185,186,187,188}, demonstrates that vehicle impoundment and forfeiture reduces further drink driving offences, total traffic convictions and crashes both while access to the vehicle is denied and, to a lesser extent, following the return of the vehicle to its owner. However, this research has only studied programs where the vehicle was impounded for a period of

at least 28 days. Programs where vehicles are impounded for a shorter period have not been studied.

Do other jurisdictions have vehicle impoundment?

Vehicle impoundment and/or forfeiture legislation has been introduced in all Australian states and territories, primarily as a sanction against hoon behaviour. Few Australian jurisdictions currently have vehicle impoundment and forfeiture programs that specifically target drink drivers. South Australia currently impounds the vehicles of drink drivers and Victoria announced in June 2009 that it will extend vehicle impoundment to repeat drink drivers¹⁸⁹.

Discussion point: Vehicles could be initially impounded for longer than 48 hours.

In Queensland, vehicles are initially impounded by police for a period of 48 hours. The impoundment period is generally much longer in other jurisdictions. Most places in the United States of America and Canada that impound vehicles can do so for at least 28 days for a first eligible offence¹⁹⁰. Depending on the offence, vehicles in some places can be impounded immediately for up to six months.

How does Queensland compare to other Australian jurisdictions?

Some states in Australia have longer initial impoundment periods for a range of eligible offences. For example, in Western Australia, those caught driving after they have lost their licence have the vehicle they are driving immediately impounded by police for 28 days. Western Australia has also introduced a 28 day impoundment period for a first hoon offence. South Australia will also extend the initial impoundment period in that state so that vehicles will be able to be impounded for up to 28 days for a first offence. Tasmanian police have the authority to clamp or confiscate vehicles for 28 days for a first hoon offence or an attempt to evade police. In contrast, Victoria has a 48 hour initial impoundment period.

Who does this target?



Repeat offenders (within a three year period), that is, a person convicted of two or more drink driving offences of any kind (refer to next discussion point).

Repeat high level offenders (within a three year period), that is, a person convicted of two or more high level offences (including an offence ≥ 0.15 , driving under the influence or fail to supply specimen).

Potential impacts:

- Longer periods of impoundment have a proven road safety benefit
- Longer impoundment periods would be likely to have a greater impact on the offender's and offender's family's mobility and access to employment, education, medical care and other essential activities
- Longer impoundment periods would increase the cost to the drink driver/owner as storage fees are generally based on a daily fee. As a result, more vehicles are likely to remain unclaimed when the impoundment period ends, especially vehicles that are of low value.

Have your say

Question 17: Do you support increasing the initial impoundment period (currently 48 hours)?

Question 17a: Do you support increasing the initial impoundment period to seven days?

Question 17b: Do you support increasing the initial impoundment period to 28 days?

Have your say on page 60.

Discussion point: Vehicle impoundment and forfeiture could be extended to any repeat drink driving offence.

Vehicle impoundment in Queensland is currently reserved for certain drink driving offences, particularly serious offences such as repeatedly drink driving when the driver is over the high alcohol limit (≥ 0.15). Drink drivers who offend at BAC levels below the high alcohol limit currently receive fines and licence disqualifications. However, these actions are not deterring a significant proportion of drink drivers from offending again. Over a quarter (26.9 per cent) of offenders in the 2007/08 financial year had one or more drink driving offences in the previous five years¹⁹¹. Extending vehicle impoundment to repeat drink driving offences at any BAC level may assist in conveying the seriousness of repeatedly drink driving, whatever the BAC level.

How does Queensland compare to other Australian jurisdictions?

South Australian police are able to impound a vehicle for any drink driving offence. Victoria announced in 2009 that it will extend its program to target repeat drink drivers¹⁹².

Who does this target?

Type 2
Offenders

Repeat offenders (within a three year period), that is, a person convicted of two or more drink driving offences of any kind.

Potential impacts:

- More drink drivers would have the vehicle they are driving impounded which would be expected to improve road safety by reducing further drink driving offences and alcohol related crashes
- Vehicle impoundment would apply to a greater number of offenders and affect the offender's family's mobility and access to employment, education, medical care and other essential activities
- More vehicles would be impounded so the administrative and operational workload of the police and the courts would be increased.

Have your say

Question 18: Do you support impounding the vehicle of drink drivers who commit two or more drink driving offences of any kind? For example, should drivers who commit one offence at 0.093 BAC and one offence at 0.072 BAC have their vehicle impounded?

Have your say on page 60.

Discussion point: The time period used to determine a second or subsequent offence, for the purposes of vehicle impoundment or forfeiture, could be extended from three years to five years.

Currently, in order for a vehicle to be impounded or forfeited, a person must have committed other offences of the same kind within the previous three years. The action taken against the vehicle (for example, whether the vehicle is impounded or forfeited) also depends on the number of offences in the previous three years.

Other drink driving penalties and sanctions in Queensland, for example, for the purposes of fines or licence disqualification consider the offences that have been committed by the person in the previous five years. Considering the offender's drink driving history over the previous five years, rather than three years, would make vehicle impoundment consistent with these other drink driving penalties and sanctions.

Have your say

Question 19: Do you support extending the time period for counting previous offences for impoundment and forfeiture from three years to five years?

Have your say on page 60.

Who does this target?



Repeat offenders (within a five year period), that is, a person convicted of two or more drink driving offences of any kind (refer to previous discussion point).

Repeat high level offenders (within a five year period), that is, a person convicted of two or more high level offences (including an offence ≥ 0.15 , driving under the influence or fail to supply specimen).

Potential impacts:

- Would make vehicle impoundment consistent with other drink driving penalties and sanctions in the time frame it employs for considering previous drink driving offences
- More drink drivers would have the vehicle they are driving impounded which would be expected to improve road safety by reducing further drink driving offences and alcohol related crashes
- More vehicles would be impounded so the administrative and operational workload of the police and the courts would be increased.

Part Six

Next Steps

The feedback received through the on-line survey, written submissions and other community consultation activities will be compiled into a report which will summarise the views expressed by the community on various options to address drink driving.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads will publish the results of the consultation on its website. Members of the community will be able to access this information by visiting www.tmr.qld.gov.au.

The views of the community gathered through the consultation process will be used to inform the Queensland Government's future direction in addressing drink driving and reduce the number of crashes, injuries and fatalities caused by drink drivers on Queensland's roads.

Part Seven

Community feedback form

We would appreciate your feedback and comments on the discussion points raised throughout this paper. For each statement below please indicate your level of support by circling the appropriate number:

1 – Strongly oppose

2 – Oppose

3 – Neutral

4 – Support

5 – Strongly support

After each statement please write any additional comments you may have. If you need more space please use the back of the comment sheet. After completing the feedback sheet detach and return to:

Drink Driving Review Team
Department of Transport and Main Roads
PO Box 673 Fortitude Valley Qld 4006
Fax: (07) 3253 4960

Alternatively you may access this form electronically on the Get Involved website www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au

		Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Neutral	Support	Strongly Support
1	Do you support extending the maximum time allowed to obtain a breath/blood specimen for drink driving offences from two to three hours?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
2	Do you support the arresting/detaining officer also being allowed to conduct the breath analysis for drink driving offences?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
3	Do you support all driver licence holders being required to carry their licence while driving and to produce their licence for inspection to a police officer, unless the person has a 'reasonable excuse'?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
4	Do you support the introduction of compulsory blood testing of drivers who attend hospital for examination or treatment as a result of a motor vehicle crash?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
5	Do you support a review of the general alcohol limit?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
5a	What are your comments, concerns and ideas about lowering the general alcohol limit?					

		Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Neutral	Support	Strongly Support
6	Would you support the Queensland Government developing and providing guidelines and principles to support community groups to develop designated driver programs?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
7	Do you support the Queensland Government promoting the use of designated driver programs?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
8	Do you support the development of a guideline for community groups to assist them to develop, provide and sustain alternative transport options?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
9	Do you have any other ideas for alternative transport options that could assist your community?					
10	Would you support the Queensland Government researching and developing a guideline to assist community groups and liquor accords to promote the anti drink driving message?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						
11	Do you support responsible service of alcohol training curriculum and standards including appropriate educational content on drink driving?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>						

	Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Neutral	Support	Strongly Support
12 Do you support abolishing work licences in Queensland?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
13 Do you support retaining work licences in Queensland?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
<i>If work licences are retained, they could be strengthened with tougher eligibility criteria or conditions. Please provide your level of support to:</i>					
13a Excluding all provisional licence holders (regardless of age) from being eligible for a work licence.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
13b Excluding offenders who have been convicted of a drink driving offence with a BAC of ≥ 0.10 from being eligible to apply for a work licence.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
13c A requirement for work licence holders to install an alcohol ignition interlock.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
14 Do you support extending immediate licence suspension to offenders with a BAC of ≥ 0.10 ?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
15 Do you support the introduction of a mandatory brief educational intervention for first time offenders with a BAC ≤ 0.149 ?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					

	Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Neutral	Support	Strongly Support
16 Do you support the introduction of mandatory referral to an accredited assessment and rehabilitation program for high level and repeat drink driving offenders?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
17 Do you support extending the initial impoundment period (currently 48 hours)?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
17a Do you support increasing the initial impoundment period to seven days?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
17b Do you support increasing the initial impoundment period to 28 days?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
18 Do you support impounding the vehicle of drink drivers who commit two or more drink driving offences of any kind? For example, should drivers who commit one offence at 0.093 BAC and one offence at 0.072 BAC (within a three year period) have their vehicles impounded?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					
19 Do you support extending the time period for counting previous offences for impoundment and forfeiture from three years to five years?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Comments:</i>					



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