



Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PET43142
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11 November 2021

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3604-21, lodged with the Legislative Assembly on 12 October 2021 about lives lost on Queensland roads and improving driver training.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to ensuring the safety of all road users travelling on Queensland roads. Safety on our roads depends on everyone acting responsibly, including sharing the roads, obeying the laws and considering the rights and safety of others. Our vision for zero deaths and zero serious injuries drives everything we do.

While I acknowledge that some drivers may benefit from defensive or advanced driver training, this is not a compulsory component of Queensland's Graduated Licensing System (GLS). The current GLS is the result of significant work over a number of years to ensure that Queensland's driver licensing system assists in developing safe and proficient drivers. This includes supporting novice drivers to gain the skills and experience to drive safely on the road and to develop life-long safe driving attitudes and behaviours. For this reason, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) does not support additional compulsory driver training, such as the use of closed-circuit training facilities, outside of the GLS.

Queensland's GLS is an effective countermeasure to reduce crash risk for new drivers. It requires all new drivers to gain driving skills and experience in lower risk situations before graduating to higher risk situations. The requirements of the GLS benefits all new drivers in everyday driving, rather than seeking to reduce the crash risk that an individual driver may face in less common circumstances. Studies by the Monash University Accident Research Centre have found that since the introduction of the GLS, fatal and casualty crashes involving young novice drivers have significantly reduced over time.

Traditionally, defensive driving programs have focused on the knowledge or skills relevant to crash situations or on vehicle handling skills. Evidence shows that these types of programs have failed to reduce crash risk among young novice drivers. The skills and knowledge relevant to crash situations are not often applied and when not practised, are forgotten. Courses that focus on car control, such as skid recovery, cornering and braking, have been shown to increase new drivers' confidence which can lead them to feel overly confident in their skills. This may encourage them to try risky manoeuvres which puts themselves and others in dangerous situations on public roads.

It is considered that the best learning environment for a novice driver is on-road driving practice under the direction of an experienced driver or professional driver trainer. The mandatory 100-hour supervised driving requirement in the learner phase—including supervised driving in a wide variety of on-road situations and professional on-road driving instruction by accredited driver trainers—are considered more beneficial to novice drivers than undertaking a defensive driving course in a closed circuit environment.

In addition, drivers typically develop skills that are more important for day-to-day driving through this on-road experience. This includes hazard perception and the ability to safely manage on-road distractions arising from traffic and other road users.

However, TMR continues to be involved in ongoing discussion and research into best practice driver training, both domestically and overseas. It is recognised that while learner drivers have the lowest crash involvement of any driver group, provisional drivers are at the greatest risk in their first year of solo driving. This is due to a range of factors including an inability to perceive hazards, overconfidence, inattention and distraction while driving, deliberate risk-taking behaviours and the use of alcohol and drugs. It is therefore critical to road safety that young, novice drivers develop safe driving behaviours and attitudes from the start of their time on the road.

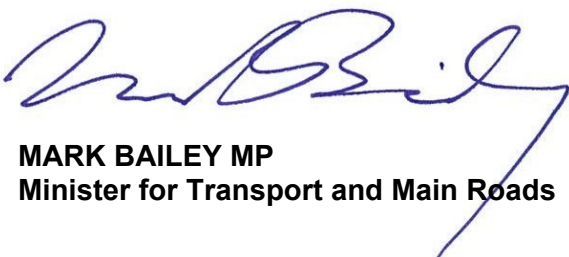
To give new drivers the safest possible start and help them to develop safe driving attitudes and behaviours, in 2018, the Palaszczuk Government implemented an Australian-first online learning and assessment program for people seeking to obtain a class 'C' (car) learner licence. The PrepL program represents a significant shift in the approach to new driver education. Participants do not just learn the rules, they learn why the rules exist and experience the consequences of poor driving behaviour in a virtual environment. PrepL also helps new drivers to understand the impact of the 'Fatal Five' driving behaviours: speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, fatigue, drink/drug driving and distraction. The government has also implemented the PrepL Supervisor Course as a companion resource for those that are supervising learner drivers. The course assists supervisors to teach learner drivers the correct road rules and safe driving skills.

From March 2021, learner drivers must also pass a hazard perception test before progressing to a practical driving test for a provisional licence. The hazard perception test examines the ability of a driver to recognise and appropriately respond to potentially dangerous situations while driving on the road.

The Palaszczuk Government has also recently made available grant funding of \$22.5 million to help drive safer behaviour on Queensland roads. This includes recurrent, long-term funding for eligible Learner Driver Mentor and Road Safety Education Programs over the next four years. The Learner Driver Mentor program helps disadvantaged young people to gain safe, supervised on-road driving towards the 100-hour driving requirement in the learner licence phase. The government has also committed an additional \$1.6 million per financial year to the Community Road Safety Grants Scheme to provide more assistance to organisations across Queensland to develop important road safety education.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



MARK BAILEY MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads