

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drivers Licensing Program Introduction

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drivers Licensing Program is responsible for delivering drivers licensing services to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland.

Over many years we have seen activities implemented by Queensland Transport in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Northern Region. Through the objectives met within the Queensland Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander Drivers Licensing Project there has been an increased awareness of the legal requirement and social and economic usefulness of a drivers licence. Many communities are now seeking advice and support that will enable their people to enter the drivers licensing system.

The– What we do

Currently Driver Licence Testing is conducted by Queensland Transport and Queensland Police Service. This provision of service is divided between the two agencies with Queensland Transport delivering to the major population areas and Queensland Police to the majority of small rural and remote locations.

Queensland Transport commenced the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Drivers Licensing Project in early 2003. The project was broadly planned to encompass 3 sub projects, namely:

- Problem Identification
- Intervention Development
- Implementation and Evaluation

Queensland Transport engaged the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety Queensland (CARRS-Q) to assist in an extensive consultation process with the communities and agencies in the *Problem Identification Stage* of the Licensing Project. This stage of the project identified that there are many barriers that impede Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people from obtaining and maintaining driver's licences.

In late 2003 Queensland Transport presented the findings from the *Problem Identification* stage to the State Law and Justice Committee. This committee endorsed the project and a Coordination Committee with participants from key agencies was formed and oversees the outcomes of the whole of government project taskgroups.

The objectives of Stage 2 *Intervention Development* were to:

- Prioritise the issues experienced by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people entering and remaining within the drivers licensing system;
- Develop interventions to address the key issues;
- Seek appropriate endorsement/approval of interventions; and
- Support the implementation of interventions through an evaluation framework.

The taskgroups created in Stage 2 *Intervention Development* achieved the majority of their objectives from Stage 2, in the area of;

- Evidence of Identity
- Court Diversion
- Program delivery (Instructing, testing and licensing)

- Learner Licence User Friendly Learning and Testing Materials

Queensland Transport finalised Stage 3 *Implementation and Evaluation* in 2006. Consequently two new groups were established to manage the project as it becomes operational.

The two primary areas for operations are;

- Driver Education Management
- Driver Assessment Management

The objectives of Stage 3 *Implementation and Evaluation* were to:

- Pilot protocols in representative communities throughout Queensland.
- Conduct evaluation of community acceptance levels, processes of implementation and changes to licensing rates (outcome measures).
- Development of long-term evaluation framework and implementation of strategies to support 'recommended suite of programs'.
- Diversionary program/s piloted in several locations.

An additional area for focus is Driver Licensing Research and Evaluation.

Continuous improvement and actions in the areas of Court Diversion and Evidence of Identity will be ongoing through the business as aligned to the Education and Training areas. Further actions in relation to the program delivery (instructing, testing and licensing) and Learner Licence User Friendly Learning and Testing Materials will be achieved in the same manner.

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drivers Licensing Program is responsible for the testing and issuing of drivers licenses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, the management of Community based Driver Education and Training as aligned to the Drivers Licensing Cycle and implementation of Driver Licensing Evaluation that supports the sustainable delivery of drivers licensing initiatives and programs.

The objectives of the overall program are to reduce the cost to the State of Queensland and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples by:

- Empowering self-determination among Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples to address road user attitudes and behaviours;
- Increasing the number of licensed Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander drivers and retention rates of drivers' licences for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Reducing the involvement of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples in road trauma;
- Addressing community and cultural issues associated with unlicensed driving;
- Fostering an increase in the value placed on licence ownership among Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples; and
- Lowering incarceration and recidivism rates amongst Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples for licence related offences.

The transition of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drivers Licensing Project to a Program began in July 2006. This program will be ongoing until we achieve the same licensing rate as the rest of the Queensland population. The project will then be ongoing as we maintain driver education support and remote licensing service provision in Northern Region. This project focuses on remote communities in Northern Region due to the population numbers as located here in comparison to the rest of Queensland.

The model that has been developed for the ongoing operational management of the Implementation stage supports two key areas;

Driver education which evaluates and promotes driver education programs in Remote communities, correctional settings and for court diversion and Mobile licensing service to provide written and practical driver assessment to remote communities

QT will continue to support QPS remote driver licensing service delivery through core business and future work will identify, disseminate and monitor adoption of 'Good Practice' in rural and remote community licensing and service delivery.

Paralleling the operational management is the on going evaluation of the project. A process and impact evaluation framework with milestones and defined key performance indicators has been secured with QT Data Analysis Unit and CARRS-Q.

A comprehensive process and impact evaluation framework for the project (in its entirety) that will enable ongoing time-repeat comparisons using a variety of key performance indicators is being developed.

The evaluation framework will not only examine outcome performance measures but also the degree to which the program aligns with proven principals for community crime prevention in remote Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities.

Improving the drivers licensing system

Queensland Transport Northern Region are currently securing a Remote Communities *Policy Direction* Framework. This framework will set a vision for Queensland Transport and Whole of Government in respect to improving drivers licensing service delivery to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Remote Communities *Policy Directions* is based on the principals of equity, access, participation and rights as articulated in the Queensland Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement.

As part of Government's commitment to improving the drivers licensing system, Queensland Transport and their Whole of Government partners including: Queensland Police Services, Department Corrective Services and Department Justice and Attorney General supported and endorsed key directions for remote communities as outlined in the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drivers Licensing Program's Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011.

Queensland Transport will work in partnership with Whole of Government and our Community partners to improve prioritised elements of the drivers licensing cycle.

Queensland Transport and Whole of Government are committed to addressing prioritised issues and barriers and a Strategic analysis of all remote communities in Queensland is currently being undertaken to support the future scheduling of service that will be delivered by the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drivers Licensing Program.