



IMPROVING BUS DRIVER SAFETY

The Queensland Government's Final
Response to the Bus Driver Safety Review

FOREWORD



The Palaszczuk Government is working closely with a range of stakeholders to provide a safer environment for drivers and customers on board bus services.

Through this work I am heartened to hear stories about all the positive interactions between customers and drivers, which demonstrate that most passengers have a high level of respect for drivers and staff, however I also see opportunities to help create a safer work environment for bus drivers.

Public transport is integral to developing vibrant and liveable communities and I am committed to continuing to make Queensland's public transport a quality service. Bus drivers are the face of your journey and a positive interaction with the driver can make a real difference to your day. It is therefore important that drivers feel safe and respected, so they can continue to deliver high quality services that take you where you need to go.

I am happy to announce that we have a suite of initiatives which cover many aspects of the delivery of bus services and we will work with all stakeholders for a safer future.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our understanding of bus safety issues and responses. We recognise that industry is often best placed to lead implementation, as they know their workplaces and understand the operating environment, but that government also has a role to play in working closely with our delivery partners and other stakeholders to support them with these initiatives.

A final thanks goes to the travelling public who are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of our public transport system, including the drivers. I look forward to continuing to work with industry to implement the Government's plan for improving safety.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mark Bailey".

Hon Mark Bailey MP

Minister for Transport and Main Roads

INTRODUCTION

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to providing safe public transport services for customers and frontline workers.

That is why the Government instigated a review into Bus Driver Safety to better understand the risk of violence towards bus drivers and potential initiatives to reduce these risks. The Bus Driver Safety Review Report was released in August 2017, and included 20 potential initiatives that could reduce the risk of violence towards bus drivers. At the same time, the Queensland Government released its Interim Response to the Review which provided a roadmap on how delivery of the potential safety initiatives could be progressed.

Since August 2017, the Queensland Government has been undertaking further investigations into the potential safety initiatives and engaging with industry. These activities have helped to inform this Final Government Response to the Bus Driver Safety Review Report.

The issue of bus driver safety is a complex one, and requires a multi-faceted and collaborative approach from government, operators, drivers, and customers to effectively tackle the causes of violence.

The Queensland Government has developed a five point plan to improve safety for bus drivers:

1. Rolling out additional physical safety measures
2. Changing policies and procedures to improve safety outcomes
3. Educating and increasing awareness of bus safety issues
4. Encouraging industry to share best practice
5. Targeting high risk areas and building a safety culture.



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ROLLING OUT ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL SAFETY MEASURES

The Palaszczuk Government will:

- Provide \$3.93 million for the installation of driver barriers in buses which travel in high risk areas, funded 50-50 with operators to help protect drivers from physical assaults on the job
- Provide \$1.54 million to ensure that the entire Queensland urban bus fleet has anti-shatter film to protect drivers and passengers from projectiles;
- Set minimum requirements for operators for closed-circuit television, duress and radio systems for the urban bus fleet;
- Make better use of data to deploy police and Senior Network Officers across the network where the risks to safety are highest; and
- Reduce the need for bus drivers to carry and handle cash with the introduction of the next generation ticketing solution which will enable cash-free ticketing.

Driver Barriers

Nearly 200 urban buses across Queensland are currently fitted with driver barriers and evidence from Queensland and other jurisdictions shows that barriers can make drivers feel safer and reduce risks associated with physical assaults. The Government will establish a grants program which operators can apply to for funding assistance to install barriers on board buses and services where there is a high-risk to drivers' safety.

The grants will be available to operators in financial year 2018-19, with further information about how to apply available from TransLink's website: translink.com.au

Increasingly buses are being manufactured with a half screen as standard providing an area of safety for drivers during an incident. The Government encourages operators to invest in these features as buses come up for replacement.



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CHANGING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE SAFETY OUTCOMES

The Government has reviewed key policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect a strong commitment to bus driver safety, and set clear expectations for the travelling public about the behaviours expected from them. Reviews have been undertaken, and changes will be introduced to:

- Incident reporting procedures with a focus on encouraging the reporting of all incidents;
- Use of updated and co-designed Customer Service Cards as a tool for de-escalation; and
- High risk passenger management, including evidence based deployment of Senior Network Officers.

A Code of Conduct for Passengers has also been developed in consultation with industry. It will be published on the TransLink website and on-board signage rolled out progressively from June 2018.

TransLink's Fare Collection Policy and Code of Conduct for Students were also reviewed as per the Bus Driver Safety Review recommendation. It was found that aligning these policies with the roll out of the Step Up student education program and de-escalation processes provides safer outcomes. TransLink will continue to work with industry through existing channels to assist industry to apply these policies in day to day operations.

Service contracts with bus operators have also been reviewed, and changes proposed in next generation contracts, to ensure an appropriate focus on bus driver safety.

Customer Service Cards allow bus drivers to direct customers' enquiries appropriately in the event that they are unable to assist. The cards provide passengers with channels through which they can provide feedback on the service or to seek further information. They have been shown to de-escalate situations that may otherwise turn to verbal or physical abuse directed at the driver by giving customers an alternative avenue for resolution.



“The anti-shatter film trial proved that the film is very effective at mitigating the effects of missiles thrown at vehicles, including a driver potentially losing control of the vehicle or a passenger being cut by shattered glass fragments”

Matt Campbell, General Manager for Safety & Risk (Transit Australia Group)

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EDUCATING AND INCREASING AWARENESS OF BUS SAFETY ISSUES

The Government will deliver:

- A Public Awareness Campaign directed at passengers, to encourage respect for bus drivers and outline expected behaviours while travelling on public transport;
- The ‘Step Up’ initiative, a program targeted at improving student behaviour at identified schools and locations. The initiative will reinforce the need for students to keep each other safe, as well as to respect property and the drivers providing a bus service. The initiative also helps students to understand the consequences of their actions and potential outcomes if their behaviour is not to the expected standard;
- Increased awareness of the availability of real-time public transport information to customers. One of the key triggers identified for verbal and physical abuse towards bus drivers related to service-delivery timeframes – real-time public transport information provides an opportunity for customers to stay across the latest information about service disruptions and alternatives.



Services in South-east Queensland can be tracked in real-time, minimising wait time and improving customer experiences. This real-time capability was extended to Cairns in November 2017.

“ We have been encouraged by the schools’ warm reception to the Step Up program and look forward to expanding it, so we can continue to develop respectful relationships between students and frontline transport workers across Queensland.”

Senior Network Officer - TransLink



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ENCOURAGING INDUSTRY TO SHARE BEST PRACTICE

Queensland is fortunate to have industry leaders in best practice safety management systems in public transport environments. Through sharing knowledge and practices, we can achieve a greater level of consistency and encourage operator innovation. In particular, there is opportunity to share best practice approaches in:

- **De-escalation training:** Many operators already provide training to customer facing staff about de-escalating situations that could lead to violence. These operators have reported success with this training approach and the opportunity is to review what is already there, refine, and extend the learnings to other operators.
- **Recruitment and training:** Industry employs a range of different recruitment and training techniques to attract and retain high quality drivers. There is opportunity to identify and share success stories around recruitment and training processes which help ensure drivers are set up to succeed in an industry with high levels of interaction with the public.
- **Fare Evasion:** Requirements for fare collection are clearly established in TransLink policy and operators have a role to play in communicating these requirements to drivers. This includes how, in practice, a driver can safely reinforce the need for all passengers to pay a fare and what to do if that becomes a problem.

“I just wanted to say a big thank you to my driver yesterday afternoon...While driving there was this very intoxicated man on the bus and he was harassing a man he was sitting next too. As soon as we got to the Buranda bus stop, our driver asked the man to exit the bus. He was very calm and polite and with this very aggressive and agitated passenger showed great skills to handling the situation very professionally and safely. I was very impressed, and felt safe knowing my bus driver could take control of the situation.”

Feedback to TransLink from a bus passenger



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TARGETING HIGH RISK AREAS AND BUILDING A SAFETY CULTURE

The Queensland Government will work in partnership with operators and relevant stakeholders to encourage a greater focus on reporting of incidents. More accurate data about the nature, time, and location of safety incidents will be used to accurately deploy safety measures to where they are most needed and help to build a culture of safety across the delivery of bus services.

The Bus Driver Safety Review noted a key issue with under-reporting of incidents. A review of the requirements for incident reporting will streamline and promote greater consistency of incident reporting across operators. It is anticipated that incident figures may increase initially as reporting is streamlined and awareness increases.

The ability to accurately map incidents and create a risk overlay ensures that interventions can be targeted to the locations where incidents occur.

There are three key activities which underpin a proactive safety culture:

1. Develop a strong safety culture with emphasis on pre-empting and minimising risks.
2. Support clear incident reporting to achieve high quality quantitative analysis.
3. Continue a partnership approach to sharing data and insights.

PLAN

Develop an incident reporting process which:

- captures contractual and legislative incident reporting requirements
- discusses how operators and TransLink will use the incident data
- provides incident definitions to support consistency in reporting
- are easy for drivers and operators to follow.

UNDERSTAND

Use incident data to:

- quantify incidents
- understand the type and prevalence of incidents
- assess location
- understand any seasonal patterns.

ACT

- Foster open Operator and TransLink communication with a focus on risk and incidents.
- Cultivate a safety culture which works actively to deploy safety interventions where they are needed most.

TAKING A RISK-BASED APPROACH TO MANAGING SAFETY

The vast majority of customer journeys occur on our bus network without incident, and customers report a high level of satisfaction with safety on Queensland public transport services. A risk-based approach to the roll-out of safety measures is important to target interventions where they are needed most, without creating a broad perception that customers have a need to be concerned about safety on-board buses.

Three risk levels were identified in the Bus Driver Safety Review. Violence factors of frequency, nature and severity of incidents as well as environmental and situational factors were used to provide guidelines for categorising operations:

1. High Risk Environment for Violence

A high risk environment has had, or has the potential to have serious physical assaults and/or serious verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or thrown objects.

2. Medium Risk Environment for Violence

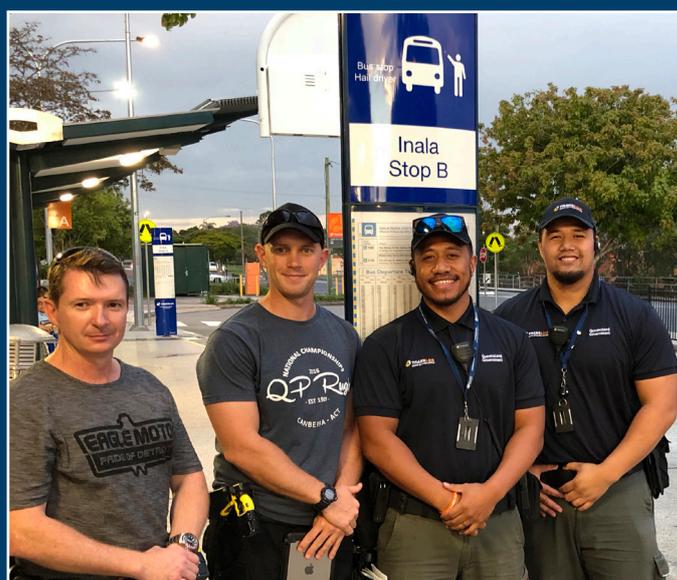
A medium risk environment does not include the serious nature of violence encountered in high risk environments, however verbal aggression is noted as occurring frequently

3. Low Risk Environment for Violence

In a low risk environment verbal abuse may occur infrequently and does not result in illness or injury.

The response to the risk will differ depending on the profile of the operation or the route in question. Taking a risk-based approach to managing safety allows government to understand where to make informed investment decisions, while also allowing operators flexibility to use safety interventions that are appropriate for their business and to protect their employees.

This risk framework will help guide where and when measures such as driver barriers, education programs for students and passengers, and Senior Network Officers are deployed.

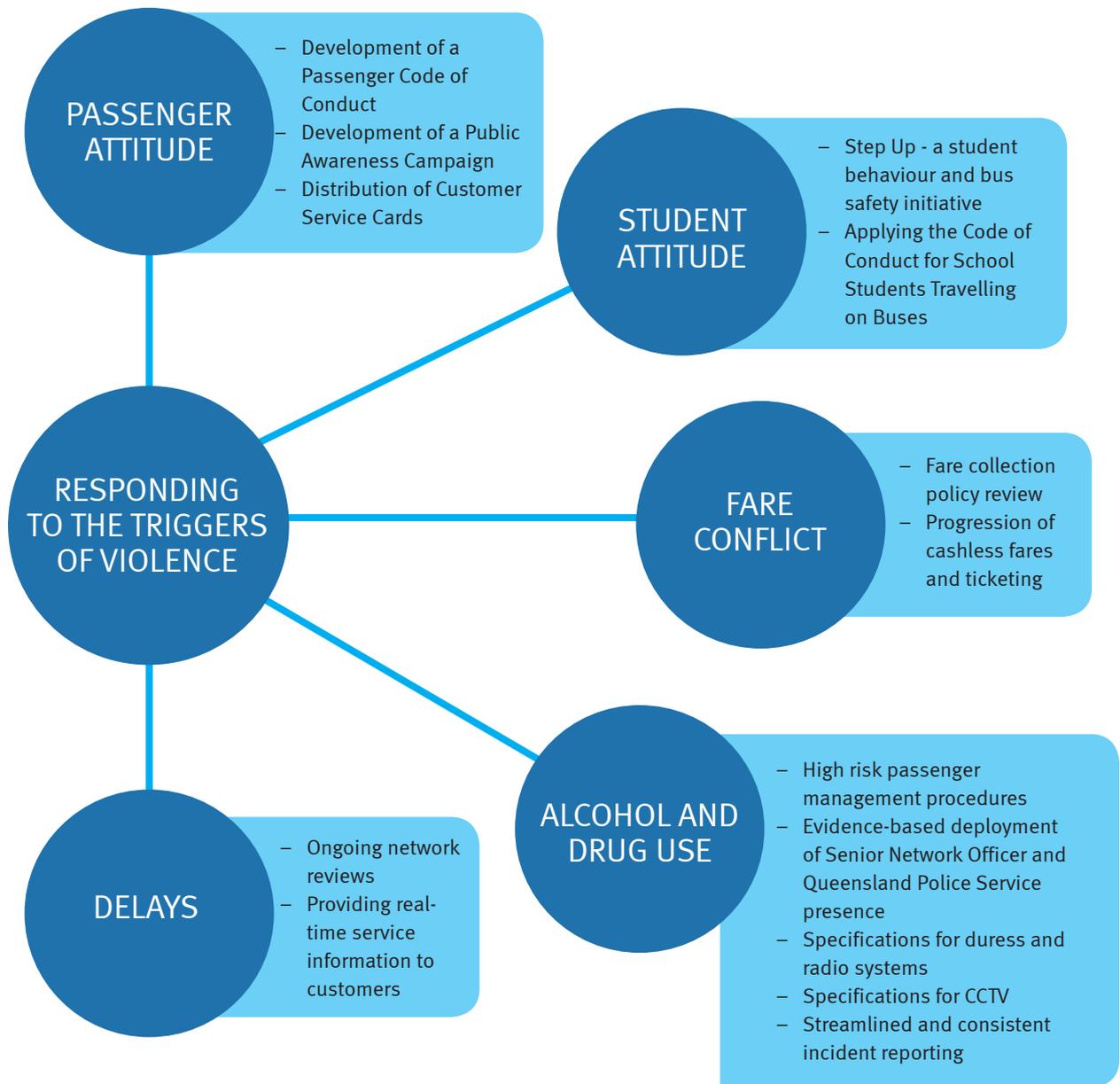


Senior Network Officers on the network

Senior Network Officers (SNOs) can be on any service at any time. Deployment of SNOs is based on incident data, operator feedback and fare evasion information. This targeted deployment brings a risk based approach to their services. SNOs and officers from the Queensland Police Service work closely together at scheduled operations to educate the community, provide customer service, change passenger behaviour and reduce fare evasion. The ability to undertake targeted operations is further strengthened by high quality incident reporting.

ADDRESSING THE TRIGGERS OF VIOLENCE

The Bus Driver Safety Review identified five key triggers which contribute to violence towards bus drivers. The actions in Government’s five point plan will directly address the identified triggers.



IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The Queensland Government will progressively implement its five point plan according to the timeframes below:

ACTION	RESPONDS TO BUS DRIVER SAFETY REVIEW RECOMMENDED INITIATIVE	TIMEFRAME FOR DELIVERY
ROLLING OUT ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL SAFETY MEASURES		
Grants program to assist operators in high-risk areas with the cost of installing driver barriers	– Driver barriers	July 2018 – June 2019
Anti-shatter film rolled out across the Queensland urban bus fleet	– Anti-shatter film	July 2018 – June 2019
CCTV, duress, and radio minimum standards set	– CCTV – Duress and radio systems	June 2018*
Evidence-based deployment of Senior Network Officers and Queensland Police Service	– Senior Network Officers – Police	In progress & ongoing
Reduce the need for cash handling on board services	– Cashless ticketing and fare system	Trials commencing in 2019
CHANGING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE SAFETY OUTCOMES		
New incident reporting procedures commence	– Incident procedures – Data collection	June 2018*
Customer Service Cards distributed	– Customer Service Cards	Commenced in January 2018
New high-risk passenger management procedures commence	– High-risk passenger management	December 2018
Code of Conduct for Passengers released	– Code of Conduct - Passengers	June 2018
Reviews of Fare Collection Policy and Student Code of Conduct	– Fare Collection Policy – Code of Conduct - Students	Completed
EDUCATE AND INCREASE AWARENESS OF BUS SAFETY ISSUES		
Run public awareness campaign	– Public Awareness Campaign	June 2018 – Dec 2018
Step Up initiative run in selected schools	– School strategies – Code of Conduct - Students	Commenced in November 2017 and is ongoing
Promote availability of real-time public transport information	– Scheduling	Ongoing
ENCOURAGING INDUSTRY TO SHARE BEST PRACTICE		
Sharing of best practice between operators through the Bus Safety Forum	– De-escalation training for bus drivers – Recruitment – Fare collection policy – Incident procedures	Ongoing
QUANTIFY RISK AND BUILD A SAFETY CULTURE		
Accurate incident reporting and analysis of data to target safety measures where they are needed most	– Incident reporting – Data collection – Senior Network Officers – Police	Ongoing
Embed a safety culture	– Contract terms	Ongoing

* Subject to new bus service contracts commencing.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The transport landscape is changing. Technology is emerging which may assist in managing the treatment of high risk passengers.

The general move across the broader population away from cash transactions is expected to be reflected in ticket purchasing behaviour, limiting the role of the driver in cash transactions.

There are potential opportunities to move towards a platform of data sharing across agencies and operators which may enable better prevention and response to safety issues.

