



INTERIM RESPONSE TO THE QUEENSLAND  
BUS DRIVER SAFETY REVIEW



# FOREWORD



The Queensland Government is committed to providing a safe environment for drivers and customers on our bus services.

Thankfully the majority of customers on-board buses are courteous and respect the important service our bus drivers provide. But unfortunately a small number of passengers threaten, verbally abuse, or physically harm bus drivers – this is unacceptable.

People have a right to go to work and come home each day, safe and free from abuse.

That is why the Bus Driver Safety Review was initiated, to understand the nature, extent, and triggers of violence towards bus drivers and identify potential initiatives to make bus drivers safer.

I thank Deloitte for their report and I am pleased to provide Government's Interim Response to its findings.

As the Bus Driver Safety Review Report notes, further work is needed to understand the effectiveness of the potential initiatives and the risk profile of particular bus services. The Queensland Government will further investigate these issues over the coming months, in consultation with key stakeholders, before releasing a final government response to the review.

The issue of violence towards bus drivers is not one that the Queensland Government can solve alone. Bus operators, drivers, passengers, and others have a role to play and that is why we will work collaboratively with key stakeholders in delivering the review outcomes.

Sharing the findings of this review and the initiatives that are in progress with the community, industry, and drivers are the first steps in an ongoing process to make a safer work environment for bus drivers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jackie Trad', written over a vertical line.

**JACKIE TRAD MP**

Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning

Bus drivers provide an essential community service by ensuring that we can easily and reliably access work, school, and university, and connect with friends and family. The safety of bus drivers while performing this essential service is a priority for the Queensland Government.

To better understand the risk of violence towards bus drivers and potential initiatives to reduce these risks the former Minister for Transport, the Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP, initiated an independent statewide bus safety review in September 2016.

The review found that the vast majority of public transport journeys are undertaken without incident and that most customers show respect to drivers. However, drivers are being subjected to an increasing number of violent incidents including verbal aggression, threatening behaviour, physical violence, and objects or missiles being thrown at buses.

The review identified 20 potential initiatives that could reduce the risk of violence towards bus drivers, noting that further piloting and analysis is required to determine which measures are most effective and under what circumstances.

The report identifies that a collaborative approach to addressing the issue of bus driver safety is required, with operators, government and drivers all having a part to play in achieving a safer workplace for bus drivers. Some initiatives have been identified as appropriate to be led by operators, and others to be led by the Queensland Government.

The Queensland Government has been working with key stakeholders, primarily through its Bus Safety Forum, to understand the views of drivers and industry on the proposed initiatives and to seek their feedback on the best way to implement initiatives to improve driver safety.

As a result of engagement with key stakeholders, the Queensland Government is proposing a phased approach to delivering the review outcomes. This interim response includes details of 11 initiatives where delivery is in progress, and 9 remaining initiatives which require further investigation.



The Queensland Government is pleased to advise that a number of key activities that contribute to managing the risks of violence towards bus drivers, or improve our ability to respond to incidents when they occur, are already under way including:

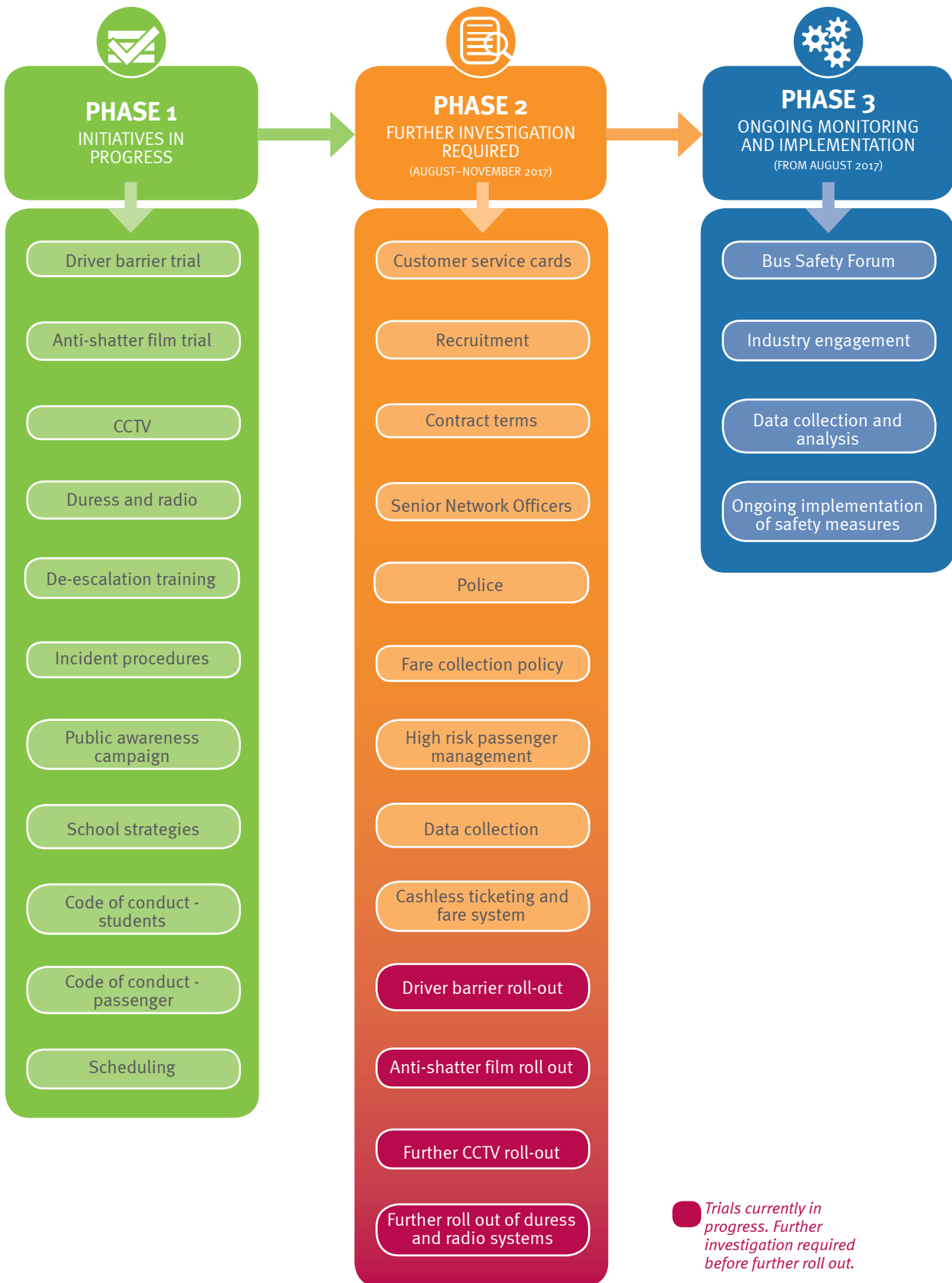
- developing a public awareness campaign regarding bus driver safety
- streamlining and standardising bus driver incident reporting
- trialling and evaluating anti-shatter film on bus windows on selected Gold Coast and Cairns buses
- reviewing the effectiveness of partial driver screens currently fitted on the Queensland urban bus fleet
- investigating statewide roll-out of de-escalation training for bus drivers
- reinvigorating the Bus Safety Forum as a mechanism for industry engagement and sharing of best practice for management of bus driver safety
- mandating the use of duress and radio systems and CCTV under new draft bus service contracts in South East Queensland
- reviewing safety-related contract requirements as part of bus contract renewal processes; and
- periodic service reviews and customer information improvements to keep customers informed of delays (identified as a key trigger of violence towards bus drivers).

As per recommended next steps in the report, the Queensland Government will need to further investigate some of the initiatives. This further investigation and analysis will be led by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), is expected to take three months and will include:

- consideration of the type and extent of existing safety measures already deployed across Queensland's urban bus fleet
- the frequency, location, and time of day of reported safety incidents
- the cost of delivering initiatives in the context of other government priorities and operator contributions to safety measures; and
- targeted consultation with key stakeholders on the appropriateness of initiatives.



# PHASED APPROACH TO DELIVERING REVIEW OUTCOMES



A list of each of the potential initiatives identified in the report and government's interim response to them follows:

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION FROM BUS DRIVER SAFETY REVIEW	INTERIM GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
1. Driver Barriers	It is recommended that various barrier designs are trialled through pilot studies, followed by implementation of the preferred barrier design to high-risk routes within two years where physical violence has been confirmed as a risk and the 'reasonableness' of the initiative relative to risk has been determined.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), in collaboration with Transit Australia Group (TAG) will evaluate the effectiveness of partial driver barriers currently fitted on their buses. The outcomes of the evaluation will inform government consideration about further roll-out of driver barriers.</p>
2. Anti-shatter film	It is recommended that anti-shatter film is implemented within two years on all buses that travel high risk routes where projectiles has been confirmed as a risk and the 'reasonableness' of the initiative relative to risk has been determined.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>Anti-shatter film is being installed, trialled, and evaluated on 30 Gold Coast buses and 10 Cairns buses over the next three months. The outcomes of the trial will inform government consideration about further roll-out of anti-shatter film.</p>
3. Closed-circuit television (CCTV)	It is recommended that buses operating at medium and high risk levels have closed-circuit television (CCTV) installed once the risk is confirmed and the 'reasonableness' of the initiative relative to risk has been determined.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>The majority of contracted buses within SEQ have CCTV installed, however it is not implemented consistently statewide. The next generation of draft SEQ bus contracts include mandatory requirements for CCTV on new fleet. Further roll-out of CCTV on board the Queensland urban bus fleet requires further investigation.</p>
4. Duress and radio	<p>It is recommended that all buses are fitted with radio and duress capability, and that operational centres are established and maintained by operators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A digital two-way radio is recommended.</li> <li>– It is recommended that both covert (e.g. foot or knee activated) and overt (e.g. radio buttons) duress options are installed.</li> <li>– Each operator requires a base or operational centre at an adequate level of sophistication to meet operational demands and comply with the technology installed on buses.</li> </ul>	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>A variety of duress and radio systems, and operations centres exist amongst operators at present. The next generation of draft SEQ bus contracts include mandatory requirements for digital radio, duress alarms, and communications to base. Further roll-out of duress, radio, and operations base measures need to be further investigated, particularly considering implications for regional operators.</p>
5. De-escalation training for bus drivers	It is recommended all drivers are competent in de-escalation techniques through regular training as a minimum requirement.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>Many bus operators already deliver driver training, including elements of de-escalation training. TMR has commenced investigations into developing a standard approach to de-escalation training for drivers. Statewide roll-out of such training is a matter for further investigation.</p>

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6. Customer service cards	It is recommended customer service cards are made available to all bus drivers to issue to customers in the event of fare disputes once the risk is confirmed and the 'reasonableness' of the initiative relative to risk has been determined.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>Distribution of customer service cards to customers disputing fares is best delivered in conjunction with de-escalation training for drivers. Developing and issuing customer service cards will be considered as part of further investigations into initiative 5.</p>
7. Incident procedures	It is recommended bus operators direct efforts to improving reporting of violence by bus drivers, decrease efforts involved in reporting incidents and improving management actions post incidents.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>Discussions with industry have commenced through the Bus Safety Forum on possible actions to streamline and standardise incident reporting. This includes investigating potential for a mobile app for incident reporting.</p>
8. Recruitment	It is recommended that operators review their recruitment strategy and selection criteria to actively seek drivers with the appropriate soft skills required for high levels of interaction with the public.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>Further investigation is required to understand current recruitment policies applied by operators and the merits/implications of standardising these policies across the state. TMR will work with industry to investigate developing standard recruitment guidance.</p>
9. Contract terms	It is recommended that consideration be given to additional requirements in the service contracts of bus operators in Queensland including increased safety measures, consistent incident data reporting, the process of operator risk assessments, and implementation of initiatives identified within this report.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>New generation bus contracts for South East Queensland are strengthening requirements around duress and radio systems, CCTV, and data reporting. Further consultation with industry is required regarding further changes to contract terms as part of ongoing contract renewal processes.</p>
10. Senior Network Officers	It is recommended that an increased presence of Senior Network Officers (SNOs) is deployed across the bus network in Queensland where it is warranted based on risk and the 'reasonableness' of the initiative relative to risk has been determined.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>The costs and benefits of increasing the number of SNOs needs to be further investigated and considered by government in the context of other government funding priorities.</p>
11. Police	It is recommended that TMR works with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to continue to develop an effective police partnering relationship that deploys police across the bus network where it is warranted based on risk and the 'reasonableness' of the initiative relative to risk has been determined.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>Deploying more police resources across the network needs to be carefully considered in the context of competing demands for limited police resources. Options for increasing police presence on the bus network will be further explored.</p>

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12. Public awareness campaign	It is recommended that TMR develop and run a media campaign to raise general awareness of acceptable (and unacceptable) behaviour whilst traveling on public transport.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>A public awareness campaign to increase the respect for bus drivers and setting the standards for acceptable behaviour on buses is currently being developed by TMR in consultation with industry. It is anticipated that this campaign could be launched by the end of 2017.</p>
13. School strategies	It is recommended that current educational resources for schools regarding bus protocol and acceptable behaviours is reviewed and updated, where necessary.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>Safe school travel programs were piloted in selected Queensland schools in 2013 to improve the behaviour of school students. TMR is currently reviewing the communications and educational resources for schools and will also be deploying SNOs to schools on a regular basis to discuss bus safety issues.</p>
14. Fare collection policy	It is recommended that TMR reviews its position on fare collection policy considering the role its current fare policy potentially plays in triggering violence and effectively communicates this to all bus operators and drivers to achieve both objectives, collection of fares and safety of bus drivers.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>TMR will investigate options for amending its fare collection policy to enhance driver safety. This will be done as part of planning for the transition to a new ticketing system to ensure alignment between the ticketing system and products, and fare collection policy.</p>
15. Code of conduct – students	It is recommended TMR review, revise and recommunicate the existing TMR Code of Conduct for School Children Travelling on Buses dated 2014.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>It is proposed that education materials for school students will be refreshed and incorporated into the public awareness campaign. Senior Network Officers (SNOs) will also commence a rolling program of school visits in high-risk areas to raise awareness of acceptable student behaviour on board buses.</p>
16. Code of conduct – passengers	It is recommended that a code of conduct for passengers is developed to clearly communicate and clarify expectations of passengers on board services.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>It is proposed that a code of conduct for passengers will be developed as part of a public awareness campaign to educate passengers on acceptable behaviour on board buses.</p>
17. High risk passenger management	It is recommended that TMR develops, deploys and manages a formal process whereby high risk passengers are systematically identified and appropriately managed.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>The identification and management of high-risk passengers requires further investigation particularly the privacy, regulatory, and enforcement implications of excluding passengers.</p>



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18. Scheduling (reducing delays in bus services)	It is recommended that the process of developing, revising and approving bus schedules is reviewed.	<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>TMR undertakes scheduling reviews of the bus network on an ongoing basis, and continually seeks to improve channels for communicating timetable changes to customers (e.g. through real-time information via the MyTransLink app). Further investigation is required to identify whether there are particular high-risk areas or services on the network that require a more targeted approach to scheduling changes to reduce safety risks for drivers.</p>
19. Data collection	It is recommended that TMR collect, analyse and interpret statewide, detailed incident data on violence to allow for accurate risk-based decisions.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>TMR will further investigate barriers and potential solutions to streamline data reporting and sharing, in consultation with industry.</p>
20. Cashless ticketing and fare system	It is recommended that safety considerations are taken into account when cashless ticketing and fare systems are evaluated or considered in the future.	<p><i>Further investigation</i></p> <p>A number of pre-paid bus services are already offered across the South East Queensland bus network. TMR will investigate expanding the number of pre-paid or cash-free services and develop plans to support customers through this transition, as required.</p>



