

***Driver's Guide?***  
**It's Time for a *Queensland Road Users' Handbook***  
*recommendations from Bicycle Queensland*  
July 1999

## **1. A NEW GUIDE FOR CHANGING TIMES**

Around Australia and the world, transport departments are realising that making our roads safer and creating a more healthy road culture is a mammoth task. Road design and legislation can only do so much – unfortunately, complete re-education of motorists is necessary. Responsible road use is now far more complicated than ever before, and Queensland Transport has had to begin taking into account not only the safety and convenience of road users, but the health and well-being of the wider community in terms of worsening air quality and a global greenhouse crisis.

This report identifies a range of shortcomings of the existing *Queensland Driver's Guide*, and provides guidelines for a new *Road Users' Handbook* to promote safer and better educated road use by not only new driver's licence applicants, but by experienced motorists, cyclists and pedestrians alike. The recommendations contained herein transform the current driver's licence application process into an education program based on existing federal, state and local government road use policies (e.g. IRTP, Cycle South East, Australia Cycling and TravelSmart).

### **1.1 WHY UPDATE NOW?**

Queensland's adoption of the new Australian Road Rules (January 2000) is a significant transition providing the perfect opportunity to overhaul our existing Driver's Guide. In addition, Queensland Transport is investing \$500,000 on a "Share the Road with Bicycles" campaign for late-1999, which could be enhanced through integration into a new Road Users' Handbook.

In addition, though, the Driver's Guide has not undergone a thorough review (including public consultation) in many years. By now the content and even the format of the Guide is outdated when compared to equivalent guides in other Australian states such as New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria, not to mention some of the very progressive material available in Europe and the United States.

### **1.2 FOLLOWING OTHER STATES' LEAD**

We need look no further than New South Wales for a very useable model. The NSW *Road Users' Handbook* requires its readers to acknowledge from first glance that there are several legitimate kinds of road users, not just one. The handbook then shows the reader how to share the road safely with all other road users, whether they are walking, cycling or driving a car. A road users' handbook, like a road itself, must be designed to protect the needs and responsibilities of all road users equally.

The *Victorian Traffic Handbook* also contains good examples for Queensland to consider. A section called "Sharing the Road" (pp 58-61) treats non-motorised road users not as 'hazards' or 'obstacles', but as accepted and expected features of Victorian roads. This handbook also contains a fantastic section called "Speed – the dangerous multiplier" (p 57), showing how much harder it is to stop even with a mere 5-10 km/h increase in speed.

*Drive Safe: A Handbook for Western Australian Road Users* brings the safety message to the forefront, and is structured very much like this report suggests. WA has included a section for motorists called "Other Road Users" (pp 74-77), as well as a "Ride Safe" section specifically written for cyclists (pp 101-105).

Many other useful formats and diagrams can be found on the internet, and examples from California and Utah (USA) have been attached to this report.

### 1.3 RESHAPING THE TRENDS

The Commonwealth Government, Queensland Transport and many local councils throughout Queensland have adopted modal shift targets – that is, shifting the way people choose to travel. QT's Integrated Regional Transport Plan (IRTP, 1996) seeks to increase cycling from 2% of trips in 1995 to 8% by 2011, walking from 13% to 15%, and use of public transport from 7% to 10.5%, while decreasing private motor vehicle use from 78% to 66.5%. These shifts *will not happen on their own* unless we reshape the tools we have used in the past. A "Road Users' Handbook" is just such a tool.

### 1.4 IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST

By focusing on pedestrian and cyclist safety, this report is designed to benefit *all* Queenslanders, as even the most dedicated motorist becomes a pedestrian the minute s/he leaves the car, and is likely to ride a bicycle on the weekend. In addition, every Queenslanders is paying the price for the over 250 deaths on Queensland roads each year, as well as the billions of dollars in costs to the community each year as a result of personal injury and death, deteriorating health standards, increased air pollution and noise, and an overall decline in livability. A *Queensland Road Users' Handbook* will result in safer roads, considerable economic savings, environmental protection for ourselves and for future generations, and increased accessibility and mobility for everyone.

## 2. ROAD USERS' HANDBOOK: A NEW STRUCTURE

Given the multi-modal nature of almost every trip, a "Road Users' Handbook" should provide individuals with all the information necessary to share the road safely no matter what type of road user they happen to be at any particular time. This report recommends the handbook be structured into sections directed at each type of road user, with a general introductory section of information relevant to all members of the community. Sections would include:

- General Information
- Information for Motorists
- Information for Motorcyclists
- Information for Operators of Buses, Trucks and Heavy Vehicles
- Information for Cyclists
- Information for Pedestrians

### 2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

The *General Information* section (for all road users) is a place where Queensland Transport can disseminate the kind of information that nowadays seems to be relegated to public service advertisements and brochures. By including this information in the Road Users' Handbook and actually testing new driver's licence applicants on the content, we ensure that the information is reaching the target audience. We recommend the following sections:

- Queensland Roads: Who uses them? Who pays for them?
  - ...explaining what the roads are "for", what registration pays for and does not pay for, and the *real* costs of driving, both for individuals who drive and for the community as a whole.
- Road Toll: The Impact of Injury and Death on Society
  - ...that the "Road Toll" is more than just a number – it is a considerable source of social and economic devastation to society.
- Transport Trends and New Targets
  - ...what the IRTP says, and why the government is asking individuals to re-examine their transport choices.
- Transport Choices and Personal Health
  - ...how an individual can improve their health by utilising transport modes other than the motor vehicle. (Also, public health costs borne by society as a result of the motor vehicle.)
- Transport Choices and the Environment

- ...how deteriorating air quality and depletion of open spaces impacts our lives and the livability of our state for future generations. (Also, economic costs of motor vehicle emissions.)
- Travel Blending: Learning to choose the right mode for each trip
  - ...how combining trips, using public transport when possible, walking and cycling for local trips – and generally reducing motor vehicle use – can benefit the individual and society. (BCC *TravelSmart*: “Think before you drive.”)
- Queensland Police Service: Protecting the Safety of Queenslanders
  - ...redefining the current image of the Police as needlessly authoritarian enforcers of arbitrary road rules. Road rules are the only laws in our society that people feel quite comfortable violating, and any serious attempt by the Queensland Police Service to enforce existing road rules meets heavy criticism. This section would illustrate the *benefits* of enforcement, and would provide the Queensland Police Service with an opportunity to emphasise their role as a *Service* to the community.
- Alcohol and our Roads
  - ... including the quite comprehensive existing section on alcohol and other drugs, but perhaps including the NSW table showing penalties for first and second offences at each BAC (PCA) level (p 146), to clearly illustrate the serious consequences of drink-driving offences.
- Speed and our Roads
  - ...giving motorists a better idea of the responsibility they take on when operating a motor vehicle. Some elements would include: (a) pedestrian survival ratios in collisions at different speeds (from QT’s leaflet “Are you driving too fast for the unexpected?”); and (b) the FORS diagram (attached) showing that in a 60 km/h zone, the risk of involvement in a casualty crash doubles with each 5 km/h increase in travelling speed (Figure 4.3, p 39).
- Speed, Fatigue and Not Wearing a Seat Belt: How they compare to alcohol
  - ...based on another FORS diagram (Table 5.2, p 54, Appendix), which shows that driving at 65 km/h in a 60 km/h zone increases the risk of a casualty crash equivalent to driving with a BAC of .05%; 70 km/h is like a .08% BAC, 75 km/h is like .12% BAC, and 80 km/h is like .21% BAC. This data should be included in the handbook to express how dangerous it is to exceed the speed limit by even 5 km/h. (If similar figures exist for fatigue and not wearing a seat belt, this information should be supplied as well, since drivers commonly accept drink-driving as stupid, but do not realise the stupidity of the other three of the “Fatal Four”.)
- Driving Patiently, Defensively and Unaggressively: How to Avoid Crashes
  - Road rage is becoming a more and more serious problem all around the world. This discussion would centre on the psychological effects of driving, and how to keep control of one’s temper while using the road.
- Sharing the Roads: An Introduction
  - The underlying theme of the handbook, that roads are for everyone, would be explained here, perhaps with particular emphasis on QT’s current “Share the Road with Bicyclists” campaign.
- Signs, Road Markings and Lanes
  - Because signs, road markings and lanes are directed at and used by multiple road users (and not just motorists), it is better for these issues to be explained in the General Information section. The sections for each individual type of road user may very well include additional signs and road markings that only they would encounter. (For example, motorists will never encounter bikeway signage while driving.)

## 2.2 INFORMATION FOR EACH TYPE OF ROAD USER

The sections for each individual road user type would provide the relevant road rules and diagrams for different situations the road user might encounter, plus special sections on how to interact responsibly with the other road user types. As an example, the *Information for Motorists* section would include the following sub-sections:

- Responsible Road Use: Motorists

- ...consisting of most of the current section “All about learning to drive in Queensland”
- Sharing the Road with Motorcyclists
  - ...consisting of half of the current section “Motorcycles”, thereby making it clear that this section is required information for motorists.
- Sharing the Road with Buses, Heavy Vehicles and Long Vehicles
  - ...a section focusing solely on what *motorists* need to know in order to safely co-exist with these types of vehicles. (There would be a separate section specifically for operators of these vehicles.)
- Sharing the Road with Cyclists
  - ...what *motorists* need to know in order to safely co-exist with cyclists. (There would be a separate section specifically for cyclists.)
- Sharing the Road with Pedestrians
  - ...what *motorists* need to know in order to safely co-exist with pedestrians. (There would be a separate section specifically for pedestrians.)

(Some material from the existing “Bicycles” and “Pedestrians” sections can be used for the *Information for Cyclists* and *Information for Pedestrians* sections of the new handbook, respectively; and “All about motorcycles” and “All about heavy vehicles” provide a basis for those sections.)

### 3. ADDITIONAL MINOR CHANGES

This report recommends that the following alterations be made to existing *Driver’s Guide* content. (Page numbers are based on the *Queensland Driver’s Guide, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition*.)

- Having your licence cancelled (p 19):
  - The Demerit Points schedule fails to give motorists any indication of the seriousness of the offences listed. What is needed is an indication of the fines/jail terms involved for each offence. (The demerit system itself is perhaps in need of updating, in order to more seriously penalise those offences that are most endangering to other road users. For example, “Motorcycle or moped driver not wearing safety helmet” is penalised as seriously as “15km/h or more over speed limit”.)
  - There is no penalty listed for “dangerous or aggressive driving”.
  - Though the Information for Cyclists section includes a full list of infringements and fines, no fines are listed for motorists. Either fines should be added for motorists, or fines removed for cyclists.
  - The terminology of “Demerit Points” is problematic, as “points” are often seen as positive, not negative.
- Signs (pp 30-34):
  - There are no signs depicted relating to bicycles. There are several bicycle-related MUTCD signs that are likely to be new to motorists, which is all the more reason for them to be included here.
- Bus and transit lanes (p 37):
  - Both of these paragraphs need to add “bicycle” to the list of vehicles permitted to use the lane.
- Bicycle Lane. (p 37):
  - *Please add:* “Motorists wishing to enter or cross a bicycle lane in order to turn left or park must give way to bikes already in the bicycle lane.”
- Vehicle positioning – Multi-lanes (p 38):
  - *Please add:* “Cyclists are bound by the same keep left rule as all other vehicles – that is, they must keep as far left as practicable. If there is a bicycle lane in useable condition, cyclists are required to use it. However, cyclists are **not** required to use a nearby bikeway or footpath instead of the road.”
  - *Please add:* “Some marked lanes are not wide enough to accommodate a bicycle and a motor vehicle side by side. In such a situation it may be necessary for a motorist to change lanes in order to pass a cyclist safely.”

- *Please add:* “Cyclists will occasionally need to use a lane other than the kerbside lane. This is usually for the purpose of turning right (or going straight past a left-turn-only lane). Motorists should realise that these situations are only for a short period of time and patience and consideration for the cyclist should be exercised.”
- Vehicle positioning – Reversing (p 38):
  - *Please add:* “Watch for bicycles, particularly when reversing from driveways and nose-in angle parking spaces.”
- Turning – Left turns (p 43):
  - *Please add:* “When turning left, motorists must look left and take care not to cut across a cyclist. Similarly, when turning right, motorists must give way to oncoming cyclists.”
- Giving way (p 45):
  - *Please add:* “In the following diagrams, keep in mind that a vehicle is sometimes a bicycle or a motorcycle.”
- Giving way at STOP and GIVE WAY signs (p 46):
  - *Please modify:* “When you come to a STOP sign, you must bring your vehicle to a complete stop just behind the stop line *or pedestrian crossing.*”
- Giving way to buses (p 47):
  - *Please add fourth dot point:* “[you are not required to give way to the bus if] you are already alongside the bus when the bus driver first signals his/her intent to rejoin traffic.”
- Giving way to the right (p 48):
  - *Please add:* “Even if a situation does not require you (by law) to give way, you should do whatever is necessary to avoid a collision, especially with more vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.” (In the absence of stop signs or give way signs, the blanket rule “give way to the right” is too ambiguous to be safely practiced.)
- Giving way – Entering or leaving a road (p 50):
  - *Please add:* “Vehicles entering or leaving traffic must give way to pedestrians and cyclists on the footpath or cyclists in a bicycle lane.”
- Giving way – pedestrians (p 51):
  - *Please modify:* “In the next 2 diagrams, the vehicle must give way to the pedestrian *or cyclists coming from the footpath*, and wait until *they* are clear before turning.” [Please add “or cyclist” to each of the diagrams.]
- Roundabouts (pp 53-54):
  - Each of the lists of “How to leave...” should start with the following point: “✓ as you approach the roundabout, slow down and be prepared to stop.”
  - *Please add (in each list):* “✓ give way to all vehicles already on the roundabout, *including cyclists*”
  - The point stating “if you are travelling in the left lane through a roundabout with lane markings, you must give way to all vehicles exiting from the right lane” is very dangerous to cyclists and should be removed. If the cyclist has given way to all vehicles already on the roundabout, then s/he needs to be able to progress through the roundabout without being cut off by vehicles attempting to turn left from the right lane. (See next point.)
  - *Please add to “How to leave at the first exit”:* “✓ when turning left from the right lane, give way to [or beware of?] vehicles, especially motorcyclists and cyclists, going straight through the roundabout in the left lane.”
- Roundabouts (cont.) (p 54):
  - *Please add:* “NOTE: Cyclists are permitted to use the left lane regardless of the exit they plan to use.”
  - *Please add:* “NOTE: Cyclists may choose to use the right lane to turn right at the roundabout. Please exercise patience and consideration for the cyclist, and expect them to change into the left lane once they have successfully exited the roundabout.”
- Speed limits (cont.) (p 56):
  - *Please modify:* “Your speed should *always* take road, weather *and traffic* conditions into account.”

- *Please add:* “Drivers should slow when reaching the crest of a hill in case of unexpected road circumstances on the other side.”
- Freeway driving (p 61):
  - *Please add:* “NOTE: Watch for cyclists on freeways, as bicycles are permitted on some freeways.”
- Overtaking (p 61):
  - *Please add:* “Give adequate clearance to cyclists when overtaking.”
  - *Please add:* “To overtake a cyclist in a narrow marked lane, motorists should change lanes. You may be required to slow down and wait for an opportunity to pass the cyclist safely.”
- Pedestrians [ Sharing the Road with Pedestrians] (pp 71-72):
  - ...Parts of this section that are directed towards pedestrians should be moved to the *Information for Pedestrians* section, and parts intended for motorists would form the basis of the *Sharing the Road with Pedestrians* section.
  - *Please add:* “Motorists should always be mindful that pedestrians are very vulnerable road users, and can be very unpredictable.”
  - If responsibilities of pedestrians are listed in the section intended for motorists, then the first point should be: “Though pedestrians are required to follow these guidelines, motorists must always give pedestrians the right of way, and should treat pedestrians with extra caution.”
  - *Please add:* “Drivers should slow when reaching the crest of a hill in case of pedestrians crossing the road just out of view.”
- Bicycles [Sharing the Road with Cyclists] (pp 73-74):
  - ...Parts of this section that are directed towards cyclists should be moved to the *Information for Cyclists* section, and parts intended for motorists would form the basis of the *Sharing the Road with Cyclists* section. This section and the section directed towards cyclists would need to incorporate all of the key messages of the QT State Cycle Unit’s current “Share the Road” campaign. In addition to some of the existing points, which are very important and are well put, the following points should be included:
    - *Please add:* “Cyclists have the same *rights* and responsibilities under the [Traffic Act] as motorised road users.”
    - *Please add:* “Motorists should always be mindful that cyclists are very vulnerable road users, requiring the extra caution of motorists.”
    - *Please add:* “Though cyclists cannot usually travel as quickly as a motor vehicle, motorists must be patient and always consider the safety of the cyclist over any other consideration.”
    - *Please add:* “Each cyclist on the road is one less car that would be adding to the existing congestion. Cyclists are also making a worthwhile contribution to our air quality by not driving a motor vehicle.”
    - *Please add:* “Cyclists are not required to ride in the gutter. Cyclists are bound by the same keep left rule as all other vehicles – that is, they must keep as far left as practicable. If there is a bicycle lane in useable condition, cyclists are required to use it. However, cyclists are **not** required to use a nearby bikeway or footpath instead of the road. Cyclists wishing to travel at normal road speeds would be irresponsible to use a path because of the danger this poses to pedestrians and slower cyclists.”
    - *Please add:* “The part of the road nearest the kerb, where cyclists usually drive, is often in a poorer state of repair and may have hazards such as loose stones, broken glass, potholes and parked cars. For this reason, motorists should be tolerant of cyclists’ need to ride further out to the right if necessary.”
    - *Please add:* “On a road with marked lanes, there are sometimes situations where the left lane is too narrow for a motorist to share with a bike. Motorists should change lanes to pass in such a situation, or should wait until it is safe to pass. Cyclists may need to occupy the centre of a lane if their safety requires it.”
    - *Please add:* “Cyclists need about a metre and a half to pass parked cars with safety. Riding any closer leaves them in danger of being hit by an unexpectedly opened door.”
  - *Please add:* “In busy traffic conditions, there is rarely any disadvantage in having to wait behind a cyclist for room to pass safely. Watch the traffic conditions further ahead before overtaking.”

- *Please add:* “The new rule requiring drivers to give way to merging vehicles applies equally to bicycles. Merging situations include narrow squeeze points, cycle lanes coming to an end and cyclists moving around parked cars. The motorist or the cyclist should give way to the vehicle that is abreast and ahead. Cyclists should be aware that they can sometimes be hard to see and should indicate their intentions clearly.”
- *Please add:* “Cyclists needing to negotiate road obstacles are asked to ride in as predictable a manner as possible, and not weave in and out to avoid hazards. This means that sometimes a cyclist may need to ride further to the right than may appear necessary from a distance. Motorists are asked to slow if necessary to safely overtake the cyclist.”
- Information for Cyclists (NEW):
  - ...This section would include some of the information from the existing page on Bicycles (pp 73-74), as well as new messages based on the QT State Cycle Unit’s “Share the Road” campaign. Additional points for cyclists might include:
    - *Please add:* “Cyclists have the same *rights* and responsibilities under the Traffic Act as motorised road users.”
    - *Please add:* “Cyclists should report any dangerous driving or harrassment from other road users to the Queensland Police Service.
    - *Please add:* “Cyclists needing to negotiate road obstacles should ride in as predictable a manner as possible, and should not weave in and out to avoid hazards. Make smooth, gentle manoeuvres around them. Try to ride in relatively straight lines. Do not ‘hide’ in gaps between parked cars. Stay as far out as is necessary to be seen without needlessly obstructing traffic.”
    - *Please add:* “Cyclists riding in front of a queue of cars should allow them to pass as soon as it is safe to do so.
    - *Please add:* “Cyclists are allowed to turn right from the left lane of a roundabout, but should be aware that in doing so they might not be seen by an exiting motorist and should thus exercise extra care.
    - Fines for cyclists should only be listed in the *Information for Cyclists* section. Also, some of the infringements listed are ambiguous and should be clarified (e.g. “make improper turns” and “misuse a bike lane”).
    - Attached are cycling-related materials from the California and Utah (USA) handbooks, which may contain other useful ideas. Particularly of note are: (a) the diagram on hook turns (UT, p 3 of 6 – very useful for cyclists and motorists to know about); (b) the Share the Road diagram showing a cyclist rightfully occupying the middle of a lane (UT, p 2 of 6); and (c) the diagram showing all of the different places motorists could expect to find cyclists on the road (CA, p 2 of 2 – also useful for the *Information for Motorists* section).
- Bicycle Helmets Save Lives (p 73):
  - This is a debatable point, to say the very least. It would be more appropriate to use the header “Bicycle helmets must be worn”.
- Long vehicles (pp 97-98):
  - *Please add:* “Drivers of long vehicles, particularly those not fitted with under-riders, should take care when overtaking cyclists, and should check for cyclists when turning left.
- Motor vehicle registration (p 118):
  - The sentence “Registration fees are used to build and repair roads” has given many motorists the idea that registration fees pay for *all* building and repairing of roads, which has led to the misconception that road users who do *not* pay registration (particularly cyclists) have no right to use the road. This sentence must be reworded to clarify that registration costs go *towards* road building and maintenance, but that they fall far short of the full costs. This issue would also be covered in more depth in the proposed section “Queensland Roads: Who uses them? Who pays for them?”
- Roadwork sites (p 121):
  - *Please add:* “NOTE: Always be extra cautious of cyclists and pedestrians around roadwork sites.”

#### 4. OTHER NEW SECTIONS TO BE INCLUDED:

- How to Drive Fuel Efficiently
  - ...This section, included in the *Information for Motorists* section, would inform motorists not only how to save themselves money, but how to reduce unnecessary air pollution and noise. It would also discourage rapid acceleration, which is the cause of many crashes, injuries and deaths.
- “Responsible Road Use” Examination
  - ...The current written test given to driver’s licence applicants merely requires the motorist to know a very narrow range of road rules. To accompany the broader focus of the Road Users’ Handbook, a new examination must be designed that requires the applicant to understand the key issues of responsible shared road use. The subjects included in the *General Information* section of this report are essential pieces of information for making good transport choices, and for understanding one’s rights and responsibilities on our roads. A new road culture requires education of road users, and the education program will not work if applicants are allowed to skip whole sections of the handbook that will not be a part of the examination.
  - A QT “Glovebox Guide”, no matter how progressive the information it contains, would be all but useless because it would not be *required reading* for motorists.
- Glossary of [Traffic Act] terms
  - ...Many specific terms are used in the handbook and should be defined for the reader to remove any ambiguity of meaning.
- Index of topics
  - ...An index of topics would make the handbook a more useful reference guide to road rules and responsibilities.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The *Queensland Driver’s Guide* is the only Queensland Transport publication that has a significant readership. Unfortunately, in its current form this publication fails to appropriately educate new and existing road users, thereby working against IRTP aims and contributing to a very unhealthy (deadly) road culture. A large-scale review and overhaul of the *Queensland Driver’s Guide* is long overdue, and this report has done much of the work already.

If our roads are to be made safe and useable for all Queenslanders, then a *Road Users’ Handbook* must be developed to replace an outdated publication and an outdated perception of road use, in accordance with existing Queensland Transport policy.

Bicycle Queensland looks forward to being a part of further consultation with Queensland Transport as the revising of the *Queensland Driver’s Guide* progresses.

#### 6. REFERENCES

Kloeden, CN, AJ McLean, VM Moore and G Ponte (Nov 1997), *Travelling Speed and the Risk of Crash Involvement*, NHMRC Road Accident Research Unit, The University of Adelaide, Federal Office of Road Safety (FORS). <http://raru.adelaide.edu.au/speed>

State of California Department of Motor Vehicles (1998), *1998 California Driver Handbook*. [http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/hdbk/driver\\_handbook\\_toc.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/hdbk/driver_handbook_toc.htm)

State of Utah *Driver Handbook* (1999), <http://www.ps.ex.state.ut.us/dl/dhb/chapter5.html>