

Joint Statement:

Premier and Minister for the Arts
The Honourable Anna Bligh

Minister for Transport
The Honourable Rachel Nolan
10/03/2010

Alcohol Interlockers will stop drink drivers in their tracks

New laws will see repeat drink drivers and those with excessive blood alcohol levels pay for the installation of alcohol interlockers in their vehicles to keep them off the road.

Premier Anna Bligh and Transport Minister Rachel Nolan said the alcohol interlockers - which require drivers to pass a breath test before they can operate their vehicle - were part of the State Government's determined bid to crack down on alcohol-related road fatalities.

"Drink driving continues to needlessly contribute to fatalities on Queensland roads," Ms Bligh said.

"It's a terrible indictment on our road safety record - and on the fundamental culture among a section of Queensland motorists - that last year there were 71 road crash fatalities across the state involving drink drivers or riders.

"In the 12 months to 30 June 2008, more than 29,000 Queenslanders were convicted of drink driving - and of these, 12,000 were repeat offenders or high-end offenders with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.15 or above.

"That's not only tragic for the families of those people who were killed in road fatalities, it's unacceptable that people are still getting behind the wheel after consuming alcohol and taking their own lives as well as the lives of others in their hands.

"Our government is determined to do everything possible to stop this senseless slaughter."

The Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, introduced into State Parliament today, introduces the scheme of alcohol interlocks for high-risk drink drivers.

Ms Nolan said alcohol interlocks are an in-vehicle breath testing instrument connected to the ignition.

"In other words the driver must pass the breath tests to be able to start the vehicle," Ms Nolan said.

"Under the changes high risk drivers will have an "I" condition attached to their licence for a minimum of 12 months.

"In order to be allowed back behind the wheel, drivers will be able to choose to install an interlock at their own expense for the 12 month period.

"If they choose not to install an interlock they will be prohibited from driving for two years.

"For a number of years now there has been a mandatory loss of licence for offenders who return larger readings but clearly this is not enough for some people. This new move will be in addition to that mandatory penalty."

The 'I' licence lists conditions - mandatory for high risk drink drivers - including:

- First time offenders with a blood alcohol reading more than 0.150 percent
- Those who have repeatedly been caught for drink driving within a five-year period
- Offenders charged with dangerous driving while adversely affected by alcohol or
- Drivers who fail to provide a specimen of blood or breath

Ms Bligh said interlockers will force drivers who choose to drink before getting behind the wheel to take pause and act responsibly.

"Crucially, it will give all Queenslanders important extra assurance that they will be safe from dangerous drunk drivers - and that is something each and every Queenslanders is fundamentally entitled to."