Report outline

Title: Harmonisation of Pilot and Escort Vehicle Driver Requirements – National Accreditation Scheme

Type of report: Discussion paper

Purpose: Identification and discussion of issues in proposing a national accreditation scheme for pilot and escort vehicle drivers.

Abstract: The paper identifies and discusses the proposed national accreditation scheme for pilot and escort vehicle drivers. It outlines the nature of the problem, current status of pilot and escort vehicle driver accreditation and the proposed nationally consistent approach. The proposed accreditation scheme is based on Phase 1 of the project undertaken by Austroads in 2012-13.

Submission details: Submissions will be accepted until 21 February 2014. They can be submitted online at www.ntc.gov.au or by mail to:

National Transport Commission
Level 15/628 Bourke Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Key words: Pilots and escorts; harmonisation; driver; heavy vehicles; OSOM; oversize; accreditation; registration; police; road agencies; RTO; registered training organisation; cross-border.

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Foreword

The National Transport Commission (NTC) is an independent statutory body responsible for developing, monitoring and maintaining uniform or nationally consistent regulatory and operational reforms relating to road, rail and intermodal transport.

When oversize and over mass loads are transported, pilot and escort vehicles are employed to guide them and protect the safety of all road users. However, there currently exists significant divergence between the states and territories with respect of the requirements to become a pilot or escort vehicle driver. Qualifications, where they exist, are not always recognised across borders. These inconsistencies make it difficult to transport oversize and over mass loads between the states and territories. This has consequences for industry.

The introduction of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) presents an opportunity to harmonise the requirements for pilot and escort accreditation across the country. Harmonisation will provide benefits for road and enforcement agencies and for industry.

In 2012, representatives of the state and territory road agencies agreed that the development of a national accreditation scheme and operational guideline for pilot and escort drivers was important. This initial stage of the project was managed through Austroads and forms the basis on which this discussion paper is prepared.

To continue this process, the NTC and Austroads are working together to develop the detail of an accreditation scheme in consultation with government and industry stakeholders.

This discussion paper provides a brief summary of the discussions that have led to a proposed framework for pilot and escort accreditation and a suggested role for the NHVR in its implementation and administration. It asks stakeholders to consider the options raised and to provide feedback on what might be the most appropriate way forward to achieving a harmonised outcome.

This is an important reform that will improve productivity through increasing the efficiency of operations in the movement of oversize, over mass or critical loads. Once fully developed and endorsed it is suggested that the accreditation scheme could be implemented by the NHVR.

I look forward to feedback from our stakeholders on the proposed national accreditation scheme, to ensure this important national project delivers productivity and safety benefits.

I acknowledge the work of the NTC staff in developing this discussion paper, in particular Sri Kannan.

Paul Retter AM
Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner
Executive Summary

When heavy vehicles transport loads are in excess of regulated dimension and/or mass limits, their movement may require accompaniment by pilot or escort vehicles. Pilots and escorts play a vital role in warning other road users of the presence of an oversize vehicle/combination and are a core element in risk minimisation.

However, currently there are variations in the accreditation and training requirements to qualify as a pilot or escort driver across the states and territories. The NTC is working closely with heavy vehicle industry, state and territory governments, Austroads and the NHVR to better understand the pilot and escort industry and to develop a national accreditation scheme.

In addition to the variations in accreditation requirements, pilots and escorts function differently across the states and territories. Each jurisdiction regulates who may operate as a pilot or escort vehicle driver, when they are required to accompany a load, and how they must function when operating. Further, there are no formal arrangements for mutual recognition of interstate pilot or escort drivers when loads are moved across borders. These differing requirements create inefficiencies for transport operators moving oversize loads over borders and for pilot and escort drivers wishing to work in different areas of the country.

In 2012 Austroads commenced a project (FS1701) to review current practices and propose a nationally harmonised accreditation scheme, including an operational guideline for adoption by the jurisdictions. State and territory governments have since agreed to the further development of a national scheme through a consultative process managed by the NTC and Austroads.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to explain key aspects of what a national accreditation scheme might include and seek input from stakeholders, including industry, on the structure and functionality of the proposed scheme. It includes an overview of the current accreditation arrangements that exist in states and territories, work undertaken by Austroads and the jurisdictional representatives to date and detail of the proposed scheme. Targeted questions for the consideration of stakeholders are provided throughout the paper, with a full list provided at Section 9.

Following a period of public consultation, the NTC and Austroads will consider responses to this discussion paper and undertake further targeted consultation with industry and government (including the NHVR, road authorities and police) to refine the proposal. The NTC will then further develop and finalise the detail of the accreditation requirements and standards for pilot and escort drivers. Austroads will subsequently undertake the development of an operational guideline to support the scheme, and a final report will be produced recommending the adoption of a nationally consistent pilot and escort vehicle driver accreditation scheme inclusive of plans for implementation by the NHVR.

It is planned that once the proposed scheme is fully developed and endorsed by jurisdictions, it would be transferred to the NHVR for implementation, administration and operation.
11. Abbreviations

Appendix 1: State-by-state comparison of current pilot and escort vehicle
driver accreditation requirements

Appendix 2: Content and scope of the Queensland operational guideline
1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the project

The purpose of this project is to develop a national scheme for pilot and escort accreditation. The establishment of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) provides an opportunity for the harmonisation of various aspects of heavy vehicle regulation. The project looks to ensure that pilot drivers are appropriately qualified to manage the risks they deal with on a consistent basis across the country, and to minimise issues associated with cross-border movements of oversize, over mass and critical loads.

The project has been divided into two phases. The first phase was coordinated by Austroads and saw road agency stakeholders brought together to develop a broad vision for a harmonised pilot and escort accreditation scheme. The second and current phase, coordinated by Austroads with input from the NTC and the NHVR, will consider the results of Phase 1, pursue further consultation with stakeholders and deliver a more detailed and implementable scheme.

The framework scheme developed during Phase 1 contains two levels of accreditation for pilot vehicle drivers and one for escort vehicle drivers. However, detail of the qualifications required by escort drivers has been deferred as this role is currently performed by either road agency staff or police, depending on the jurisdiction. For this reason, the accreditation of escort drivers requires significant consideration in its own right.

Industry was not directly consulted during the initial development phase due to the need to first explore the divergent approaches currently in place across the states and territories. The development of a robust framework on which to base discussions was desirable prior to engaging with industry in Phase 2 of the project.

It is anticipated that upon completion of Phase 2 and pending jurisdictional agreement, the agreed scheme and a program for implementation will be provided to the NHVR to pursue as part of its forward work program.

1.2 Purpose of the discussion paper

The purpose of this paper is to seek stakeholder feedback on the proposed framework developed during Phase 1 of the project.

This paper presents the work undertaken during Phase 1 and includes a number of discussion points for further consideration. It notes that the proposed national pilot accreditation scheme framework is based on current practices in some states and territories, and would therefore represent minor change for some jurisdictions, but more significant change for others. For this reason, the paper also includes high level concepts relating to the transition of current pilots to the new scheme and potential implementation measures on which feedback is sought.

It is noted that NTC is undertaking a separate project (Oversize Over Mass [OSOM] project) designed to achieve a nationally consistent approach to the regulation of over-dimensional vehicles. The project is investigating the environmental and policy differences that exist between states and territories in over-size heavy vehicle regulations to harmonise them. The scope of this discussion paper does not include matters considered by the OSOM project.
2. Project Background

2.1 The need for harmonisation

Pilots and escorts are integral to the heavy vehicle industry providing on-road guidance to oversize, over mass vehicles and movements along critical sections of infrastructure. While each of the states and territories has a requirement for pilots and escorts, there are differences in the knowledge, experience and duties to be performed to appropriately undertake these roles.

In 2004, the NTC, in association with the then Queensland Transport, published an Administrative Guideline: Pilot and Escort Vehicle Driver Accreditation Procedures with the intention that, as far as practicable, some degree of uniformity could be achieved in the qualification and certification of pilot drivers.

The NTC reviewed the content and application of the Guideline in 2008, finding that although the content remained relevant, variations across the states and territories continued to exist. Further, the NTC found these variations in requirements were becoming a more pressing issue for industry due to their impact on cross-border transport.

During the 2008 review, road agencies agreed on the importance of a nationally uniform approach to the accreditation of pilot and escort drivers. However, the awareness of the existing Guideline amongst road agencies varied, with some agencies having used it to inform the development of their own guidelines, while other agencies were unaware of its existence.

Industry expressed frustration at the lack of uniformity in accreditation and differing requirements across the jurisdictions. Different requirements caused confusion amongst operators and pilots seeking to work across borders. Variations between the state and territory approaches to the qualification, registration and administration of pilot and escort drivers remained a frustration to industry.

The establishment of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) as the national administrator of heavy vehicle law and regulations provides an opportunity to harmonise the approach to pilot and escort driver requirements across the states and territories.

Work to harmonise these requirements was begun in 2012 by Austroads. The outcomes of the first phase of the project were contained in the Austroads report AP-R439-13 Harmonisation of Pilot and Escort Vehicle Driver Requirements, released in June 2013. The report proposed a broad framework for the harmonisation of pilot and escort requirements that had been developed in conjunction with state and territory road agencies. This second phase of the project builds upon the broad framework proposed by Austroads.


Question 1: Do you have information on the number of cross border movements that require pilots and/or escorts? If so, please provide detail in relation to how many, what requirements apply, incidence of cross border issues and any other relevant information?
3. The Current State of Pilot and Escort Driver Accreditation

3.1 The use of Pilots and Escorts

The requirement for a heavy vehicle to be accompanied by a pilot and/or escort is dependent on a number of factors. Most commonly it is the width of the load that is the key determinant of the need for either pilots, escorts, or a combination of both. The length of the combination and weight of the load may also be relevant factors, as may the route and any need to pass over critical infrastructure.

A risk based approach is generally adopted by the agencies responsible for authorising over-dimensional vehicle movements when allocating the number of pilots or escorts required to assist in the movement, and is applied on a case-by-case basis.

Piloting duties are performed by third party providers or by pilots attached to heavy vehicle operators. Queensland, Northern Territory and Victoria make a distinction between Level 1 pilots, who are permitted to accompany ‘smaller’ lower risk oversize loads, and Level 2 pilots, who are required to undertake some degree of training and may accompany ‘larger’ oversize loads. Other jurisdictions have only a single level of pilot.

In all states and the ACT, escorting duties are performed by either police officers or personnel attached to the road agency. In the Northern Territory accredited third party escorts are also permitted.

Table 1 below provides an overview of piloting and escorting arrangements across the states and territories, with a detailed breakdown attached at Appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Level 1 (or Registered) Pilot</th>
<th>Level 2 (or Accredited) Pilot</th>
<th>Escort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>Accreditation required</td>
<td>Accreditation required</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>No requirements</td>
<td>Accreditation required</td>
<td>Accredited third party escorts or police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>No requirements</td>
<td>Accreditation required</td>
<td>Road authority officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Accreditation required</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police or traffic warden attached to road authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>No requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>No requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>No requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>No requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police or transport inspectors attached to road authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Summary of current Pilot and Escort arrangements
3.2 Pilot accreditation

Broadly, there are three approaches to pilot accreditation adopted to varying degrees across the states and territories:

- Mandatory accreditation for all pilots;
- Accreditation required for some pilots; or
- No requirement for accreditation.

Currently Western Australia requires pilots to complete a number of competencies administered through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)\(^4\), which includes practical training elements.

Queensland, Victoria and the Northern Territory each have two levels for pilots, although only Queensland places qualification requirements on both levels. Victoria and the Northern Territory require ‘Level 2’ pilots to undertake training prior to commencing piloting activities at this level.

By contrast, New South Wales, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania currently have no training or qualification requirements attached to pilot vehicle drivers.

The details of the pilot and escort accreditation required by each of the states and territories are attached at Appendix 1.

3.3 Escort accreditation

As noted, in all states and the ACT escorting duties are only able to be undertaken by officers of the road agency or police (in Western Australia Police escorts are unsworn personnel).

In the Northern Territory, an appropriately accredited person may provide some escort services. Escorting may also be undertaken by police in some circumstances determined on a case-by-case basis.

\(^4\) RTOs are private organisations that offer courses to become an accredited pilot.
4. Austroads Project FS1701 (Phase 1)

4.1 Background

Government agencies considered the following matters during Phase 1:

- The current requirements for pilot and escort vehicle drivers in each of the jurisdictions;
- Existing literature such as guidelines and regulated requirements, that might assist with the administration of a scheme and guide the harmonisation process; and
- Options for a national pilot and escort accreditation scheme.

In addition, agencies broadly considered potential transitional arrangements and possible costs and benefits of moving to a harmonised accreditation scheme. However, these and other practicalities will require further discussion and definition as part of Phase 2.

The first phase of this project was undertaken by Austroads, and involved government agencies considering requirements for pilot and escort drivers. Agencies agreed that the national scheme would include harmonised accreditation for drivers and operational guidelines for drivers and regulators, intended to replace inconsistent state-based requirements. The results from this phase of the project were published in the Austroads Research Report AP-R439-13: *Harmonisation of Pilot and Escort Vehicle Driver Requirements*.

It was noted that during Phase 1 some of the jurisdictions identified core elements of current practices that were locally significant and that they would prefer to maintain. However, these may have altered since the completion of Phase 1 and the advent of the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Regulations.

In relation to the harmonisation of escort requirements, Phase 1 participants noted the challenges associated with transferring roles currently performed by police or specialised road agency staff to third party escort drivers. Any proposed transfer of current arrangements to third party escort drivers may require the allocation of additional powers though legislative means, which would allow escorts to stop or direct traffic, close critical infrastructure and amend permits en route. The risk profile associated with this role would require additional training and qualification over and above that for pilot drivers.

4.2 Phase 1 Outputs

There were two key outputs from Phase 1 of the project:

- An agreed draft framework for a national pilot and escort scheme, with some detail relating to the proposed qualification requirements for pilots.
- A broadly defined draft administrative guideline to underpin the scheme.

These outputs are briefly outlined below, with further detail and targeted consultation questions contained in the next section of this paper.

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4.2.1 Draft framework – National Pilots and Escort Scheme

An approach to pilot and escort accreditation that includes two categories of pilot vehicle drivers and one category of escort vehicle driver is outlined in table 2 below. It includes a high level description of training and qualification requirements for pilot drivers, and broadly articulates the role they would play in the national scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered</td>
<td>Hold and open driver’s license.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successfully complete a multiple-choice test on piloting operations in their state or territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submit to one or more background checks (driving history and/or police checks).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assist Accredited Pilots in accompanying loads between 3.5 &amp; 4.5 metres wide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hold and open driver’s license.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successfully complete a number of units of competency through a Registered Training Organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prove minimum level of experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submit to one or more background checks (driving history and/or police checks).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited</td>
<td>Accompany loads between 3.5 &amp; 5.5 metres wide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manage assisting Registered Pilots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assist escorts with loads greater than 5.5 metres wide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escort</td>
<td>Accompany loads above 5.5 metres wide, or on a case-by-case basis dependent on risk profile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Currently primarily undertaken by staff of the jurisdictional road agency or police officers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A scheme for accredited third party Escorts will require development but would, at a minimum, include those requirements particular to Accredited Pilots plus additional qualification or experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Draft framework for Pilot and Escort Scheme

Question 2: Does the approach to piloting and escorting shown in Table 2 present an acceptable model for harmonisation?

4.2.2 Administrative Guideline

The development of a guideline to underpin the administration of the national scheme was considered to be a necessary component by Phase 1 stakeholders. The existing Queensland Government Form 7: Guideline for Pilot and Escort Vehicles and Drivers⁶ was used as the basis for discussions. While there are some elements of the Guideline that are relevant to a national scheme, it was recommended that this be considered in greater detail in Phase 2 by seeking feedback from a broader stakeholder group and that consideration should also be given to revising the NTC-developed Administrative Guideline: Pilot and Escort Vehicle Driver Accreditation Procedures.

⁶ Department of Transport and Main Roads, 2010.
5. Proposed Accreditation Scheme

This section provides further detail on the proposed accreditation scheme, including the proposal to create two categories of pilot - a Registered Pilot and an Accredited Pilot.

5.1 National Qualifications for Registered Pilots

5.1.1 Phase 1 discussions

Phase 1 elicited two distinct views on the appropriateness of qualifications for Registered Pilots, as outlined in Table 3 below.

These discussions were based around the appropriateness of applying qualifications to a role that is currently performed without accreditation in some jurisdictions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic requirement knowledge/training/experience</th>
<th>No requirement beyond appropriate licensing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A risk exists and Registered Pilots should be appropriately aware of these potential risks at a minimum.</td>
<td>Most jurisdictions do not have requirements applicable to this level of piloting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In issuing registration to a pilot, the conditions of registration ensure any major risk is mitigated.</td>
<td>This may increase regulatory burden for some sectors that may require basic piloting, for example, agricultural sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity exists to raise the bar and improve the industry.</td>
<td>External pilots can currently accompany loads into Queensland without meeting the necessary requirements for Level 1 pilots if they carry evidence that piloting is their normal occupation in their home state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing existing requirements in Queensland is undesirable (Level 1 pilots currently require basic qualification in that jurisdiction).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summary of views on the need for Qualifications for Registered Pilots

5.1.2 Hybrid approach to Registered Pilot accreditation

As a result of these discussions the following hybrid approach to Registered Pilot accreditation was proposed. The qualifications applicable to the driver would be dependent on where the driver intended to operate.

For pilot vehicle drivers operating only within their home state or territory, where that jurisdiction permits operation without qualification beyond an appropriate licence, the driver may continue to operate without registration. The Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania expressed a reluctance to require qualifications and accreditation for pilots operating at this level.

For pilot vehicle drivers operating on a national basis or in jurisdictions requiring a basic level of qualification, the short test would apply in addition to the holding of an appropriate licence and background check if appropriate. While Queensland already requires this level of assessment for ‘Level 1’ pilots, both New South Wales and Victoria saw merit in ‘raising the bar’ and maintaining some consistency across the eastern seaboard.
It is noted that Western Australia would not consider allowing Registered Pilots into its jurisdiction, as this would represent a significant reduction in qualification, based on its current requirements for pilots.

5.1.3 Proposed role and qualifications

Under the draft framework, a Registered Pilot would be permitted to accompany loads between 3.5 and 4.5 metres wide and provide assistance to Accredited Pilots in accompanying loads between 3.5 and 5.5 metres wide. The distinction between the two categories of pilot is based on guidelines currently in place in jurisdictions, however in some situations Accredited Pilots may be required for loads under 4.5m, depending on other risk factors determined on a case-by-case basis.

At a national level a Registered Pilot would be required to:

- Hold an open drivers license.
- Successfully complete a multiple-choice test (based on the current Queensland model) on piloting operations.
- Submit to one or more background checks (driving history and/or police checks).

Where a driver successfully meets those requirements the administrating authority would issue the driver with authorisation to work as a Registered Pilot.

Question 3: Should specific qualifications be required for persons seeking to become Registered Pilots? If yes, are the qualifications outlined above appropriate and adequate?

5.2 National Qualifications for Accredited Pilots

5.2.1 Proposed role and qualifications

It is proposed that an Accredited Pilot be permitted to accompany loads between 3.5 and 5.5 metres in width, and manage any assisting Registered Pilots that may be accompanying the load. Further, an Accredited Pilot would be permitted to assist Escorts with loads greater than 5.5 metres wide. As noted previously, there may be other factors that determine the appropriateness of applying an Accredited Pilot to a load; however these threshold points are based on currently applied jurisdictional guidelines.

It is considered appropriate that an Accredited Pilot should be required to undertake training to provide greater assurance of their ability to competently pilot the movement of an over-dimensional vehicle where there is a greater risk level than those applicable to small to medium oversize moves.

To qualify as an Accredited Pilot, it is proposed that a driver would be required to:

- Hold an open driver’s license.
- Successfully complete the relevant units of competency through a Registered Training Organisation.
- Prove minimum level of experience.
- Submit to one or more background checks (driving history and/or police checks).

5.2.2 Units of competency and entry points

The proposed competencies, listed below, are based on existing training modules being delivered in some jurisdictions, with the addition of a module on bridge and level crossing supervision for those jurisdictions where these are critical infrastructure issues. These would be delivered by Registered Training Organisations:

- TLIB3004A: Carry out vehicle inspection.
- TLIC3010A: Pilot and escort oversized and/or over mass loads.
- TLIE3009A: Use pilot and escort communication.
- TLIF3013A: Coordinate breakdowns and emergencies.
- TLIF3060A: Control traffic as a pilot vehicle operator.
- Additional competency – bridge/level crossing supervision.

In addition to the successful completion of the units of competency, a driver would be required to demonstrate an appropriate level of piloting experience. Two avenues for achieving this are proposed, dependent on the point of entry.

When transitioning from a Registered Pilot, the driver must:

- Produce a logbook containing records of at least 10 trips conducted as a Registered Pilot under a number of conditions for review by the Registered Training Organisation.
- Receive a Statement of Attainment from the Registered Training Organisation confirming successful completion of the necessary competencies.
- Apply for Accredited Pilot status.

Where the driver commences at the higher Accredited Pilot level, they must:

- Receive a Statement of Attendance from the Registered Training Organisation, which allows them interim operation as an Accredited Pilot subject to restrictions (for example may only operate as rear pilot, no traffic control powers).
- Produce a logbook containing records of at least 10 trips conducted under a variety of conditions for review by the Registered Training Organisation.
- Receive a Statement of Attainment from the Registered Training Organisation confirming successful completion of the necessary competencies.
- Submit to any background check required.
- Apply for Accredited Pilot status.

The ‘variety of conditions’ requirement means variation in the road types, size of the loads, and weather conditions.

Question 4: Are the proposed qualifications appropriate and adequate requirements in order to become an Accredited Pilot? Are there additional competencies that should be considered for Accredited Pilots?

Question 5: To qualify as an Accredited Pilot, do you agree that drivers complete some level of prior piloting experience? If so, what degree of experience would you consider appropriate?
5.3 National Qualifications for Escorts

Further feedback is sought to define the appropriate requirements for third party escorts to undertake the role currently performed by police or road agency personnel in most states and territories. Currently, only the Northern Territory\(^8\) permits the use of third party escorts for some oversize movements.

The Northern Territory requires drivers applying for escort status to complete the following additional qualifications prior to being issued with accreditation:

- Provide evidence of at least 15 trips as an Accredited Pilot, including 10 two-pilot trips and at least 5 trips assisting escorts.
- Complete the unit of competency TLIH3002A: Plan and navigate routes, delivered by a Registered Training Organisation.
- Provide a referee from previous work as an Accredited Pilot.
- Submit to a criminal history check.

States and territories agreed in Phase 1 that a scheme for accredited third party Escorts would, at a minimum, include those requirements particular to Accredited Pilots plus additional qualification or experience.

5.3.1 Issues relating to Escort accreditation

A number of issues exist with respect to the harmonisation of accreditation requirements for escorts, which will require consideration as part of this phase of the project. These include:

- The views of the jurisdictions on the impacts of moving away from using road agency personnel or police to undertake this role.
- The consideration of any barriers to conferring the necessary powers onto third party escorts, including powers to stop and direct traffic, close critical infrastructure, and amend permits en route.
- Assurance that the level of risk associated with large oversize, over mass or other critical moves can be mitigated through appropriately trained third party escort drivers.
- Assurance that the appropriate level of road and infrastructure safety can be maintained.

Question 6: Should third party escorts be able to undertake the duties currently delivered by police or road agency escorts? Is the development of an accreditation scheme for third party escort drivers a suitable way to ensure that they can undertake those duties?

5.4 Authorised status and traffic control

In order to undertake their duties, a pilot and/or escort driver may be required to direct or control traffic. In addition, it may become necessary for them to temporarily close a section of road or critical infrastructure to safely facilitate the movement of a load. To do so, the pilot or escort requires the necessary ability through powers delegated by legislation or regulation.

Currently, the Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia allow pilots to undertake some level of traffic control. However, the means by which this may occur differ, with the Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria permitting the use of stop/slow bats, while Western Australia allocates full Authorised Person status to appropriately qualified pilots.

Consideration needs to be given to the most appropriate mechanism for directing, controlling and stopping of traffic in order for pilots and escorts to undertake their roles as necessary.

5.4.1 State-Based Traffic Laws

The National Heavy Vehicle Law does not grant the NHVR authority to allocate the necessary powers of traffic control under state-based traffic laws to pilots and escorts. In order to achieve a harmonised approach, each state and territory must agree to recognise and allocate the same powers for pilots, enabled via the applicable legislation.

Question 7: What powers are necessary for pilot and escort drivers to undertake their roles? How can these powers be conferred or delegated within your jurisdiction.
6. Administrative/Operational Guideline

A number of administrative and operational issues were considered by the road agency stakeholders during Phase 1 of the project. The Queensland Government Form 4\(^9\): *Guideline for Pilot and Escort Vehicles and Drivers* was used as the base model for a possible new National Guideline. The Queensland Guideline covers a number of matters relevant to a national Guideline - such as vehicle and driver requirements, warning requirements, administrative procedures, and traffic control (dependent on the allocation of sufficient powers via legislative/regulatory means). These are outlined in greater detail at Appendix 2.

During this current phase of consultation, stakeholders should also consider the proposed administrative approach within the *Administrative Guideline: Pilot and Escort Vehicles and Drivers* document, which was developed by the NTC, but not uniformly implemented. In 2008, the road agencies agreed that the content of this document remained valid and applicable.

The following matters need to be addressed by a National Guideline.

6.1 Administration

Administrative procedures and timeframes for the granting, refusing, surrendering, suspending or cancellation of registration and accreditation require definition.

A dispute resolution process may also require development. This would encompass not only disputes relating to the issue/non-issue/cancellation of accreditation but also include avenues for persons to make complaints against pilot or escort drivers.

6.2 Application and issue of Registration or Accreditation

An applicant would be required to complete the necessary testing for competencies, including on-road experience, prior to applying for registration or accreditation.

As there may be grounds for the inclusion of a drivers licence or other record check, it will be necessary to consult the jurisdiction that issued the drivers licence held by the applicant to confirm these records prior to the issue of registration or accreditation. The Guideline would also need to address the period of validity of registration or accreditation. A period of either three or five years has been proposed.

6.3 Registered Training Organisations

The requirements of the harmonised accreditation scheme entail some training elements to be delivered by Registered Training Organisations. It is not known how many Registered Training Organisations are currently delivering any or all of the relevant units of competency.

Stakeholders may need to consider the need to devise a strategic approach to ensure the availability of an adequate number of Registered Training Organisations that can deliver the approved units of competency.

It is noted that during the transitional period there may be a spike in demand for training services. For this reason, agreement amongst the states and territories, as well as an indication of the proposed implementation schedule from the NHVR on completion of this project, will allow organisations to prepare appropriately.

6.4  Drivers’ licence

At a minimum, an applicant for accreditation as a pilot or escort vehicle driver must hold a driver’s licence. Some states and territories currently require that an applicant for accreditation must hold and have held, at a minimum, a car drivers licence\textsuperscript{10} for a period of three years.

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\begin{tabular}{|p{1\textwidth}|}
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Question 8: Is the period of validity of driver accreditation outlined here (three to five years) appropriate? Should a background check be required at the time of renewal? \\
\hline
Question 9: How long should a driver have held a licence before being eligible to become a Pilot or Escort vehicle driver? Are there existing dispute resolution procedures that can be applied to this proposed scheme? \\
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\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{10} Roads and Maritime Services, NSW, accessed 16\textsuperscript{th} July 2013 \\
\url{http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/licensing/licence_classes.html}
7. Interim and Transitional Arrangements

7.1 The role of the NHVR

The NHVR has indicated a commitment to supporting the development and operation of a national approach to accreditation for pilot and escort drivers. Following this current phase of the project, a national Pilot and Escort Vehicle Driver Operational Guideline will be prepared as part of the continuing Austroads project for implementation by the NHVR.

7.2 Implementation Plan

Once agreement has been reached on a national accreditation scheme for pilot and escort drivers, the NTC will provide support to the NHVR to develop an implementation plan for the harmonisation of pilot and escort arrangements across the states and territories.

It is anticipated that the NHVR would provide the one-stop-shop through which applicant drivers apply and receive their registration or accreditation. The development of an administrative model will be considered as part of the current stage of the project and, given the overlap with other road agency concerns, will require agreement from the jurisdictions.

7.3 Transitional arrangements for existing Pilots

During Phase 1 of the project, broad consideration was given to the treatment of existing pilots during the transition to harmonised accreditation requirements. The following outcomes were reached, however further definition of the process of application and recognition should be considered during the current phase of the project.

- Any pilot previously operating as a Level 2 pilot in the Northern Territory, Queensland or Victoria, or as a pilot in Western Australia will be recognised as an Accredited Pilot and permitted to conduct both Accredited and Registered Pilot operations nationally.
- Any pilot previously operating as a Level 1 pilot in Queensland or with significant operational experience as a non-accredited pilot (in a jurisdiction currently not requiring accreditation) will be recognised as a Registered Pilot under the national scheme, and permitted to conduct applicable duties nationally.
- The option of developing localised conditional piloting arrangements may be considered to ensure no disruption to piloting arrangements for specific purposes, such as short distance agricultural equipment moves.
- Pilots will not be automatically recognised and will need to opt-in, to ensure that current active pilots are recognised under the new scheme.

In addition, there is a need to consider the potential for Accredited Pilot status to be issued to long serving and experienced pilot drivers who currently operate in jurisdictions not requiring qualification or accreditation. Definition of the acceptable evidence of their conduct and experience would need to be negotiated between the states and territories.

Question 10: During the transition to a national scheme, should concessions be made to extend the Registered Pilot and/or Accredited Pilot status to experienced and practicing pilot drivers operating in states and territories that do not currently have formal accreditation? If so, what level or proof of experience should be required?
8. Next Steps

8.1 Stakeholder feedback and engagement

Following receipt of stakeholder feedback on this discussion paper, the NTC will consider those submissions, and provide the information to Austroads who will hold a series of workshops with government and industry representatives. These workshops will involve the NHVR, state and territory road authorities and police. The workshops will focus on refining the core aspects of the proposed harmonised scheme and discussions of differences in approach, so as to achieve an agreed position.

8.2 Next steps in the project

At the completion of workshops, the NTC will make recommendations for the harmonisation of accreditation requirements and standards to the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials Committee. Austroads will prepare a report that proposes a national Pilot and Escort Vehicle Driver Operational Guideline and an administrative framework to underpin the scheme’s operations. It is planned that any national scheme would be implemented by the NHVR.
9. Questions for discussion

1. Do you have information on the number of cross border movements that require pilots and/or escorts? If so, please provide detail in relation to how many, what requirements apply, incidence of cross border issues and any other relevant information?

2. Does the approach to piloting and escorting shown in Table 2 present an acceptable model for harmonisation?

3. Should specific qualifications be required for persons seeking to become Registered Pilots? If yes, are the qualifications outlined above appropriate and adequate?

4. Are the proposed qualifications appropriate and adequate requirements in order to become an Accredited Pilot? Are there additional competencies that should be considered for Accredited Pilots?

5. To qualify as an Accredited Pilot, do you agree that drivers complete some level of prior piloting experience? If so, what degree of experience would you consider appropriate?

6. Should third party escorts be able to undertake the duties currently delivered by police or road agency escorts? Is the development of an accreditation scheme for third party escort drivers a suitable way to ensure that they can undertake those duties?

7. What powers are necessary for pilot and escort drivers to undertake their roles? How can these powers be conferred or delegated within your jurisdiction.

8. Is the period of validity of driver accreditation outlined here (three to five years) appropriate? Should a background check be required at the time of renewal?

9. How long should a driver have held a licence before being eligible to become a Pilot or Escort vehicle driver? Are there existing dispute resolution procedures that can be applied to this proposed scheme?

10. During the transition to a national scheme, should concessions be made to extend the Registered Pilot and/or Accredited Pilot status to experienced and practicing pilot drivers operating in states and territories that do not currently have formal accreditation? If so, what level or proof of experience should be required?
10. References and Bibliography


11. Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATC</td>
<td>Australian Transport Council</td>
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<td>AVSR</td>
<td>Australian Vehicle Standards Rules</td>
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<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council Of Australian Governments</td>
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<td>GVM</td>
<td>Gross vehicle mass</td>
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<td>HVNL</td>
<td>Heavy Vehicle National Law</td>
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<td>NHVR</td>
<td>National Heavy Vehicle Regulator</td>
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<td>NTC</td>
<td>National Transport Commission</td>
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<td>RTO</td>
<td>Registered training organisation</td>
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<td>RIS</td>
<td>Regulatory impact statement</td>
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<td>TISOC</td>
<td>Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials' Committee</td>
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<td>WA</td>
<td>Western Australia</td>
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### Appendix 1: State-by-state comparison of current pilot and escort vehicle driver accreditation requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>PILOT</th>
<th>ESCORT</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WA</strong></td>
<td>Pilot vehicle drivers in WA must obtain accreditation by:</td>
<td>In WA, escorting is conducted by WA Police (either sworn officers or Traffic escort wardens). (Traffic escort wardens are now under Main Roads WA although they are providing the same function with the same powers)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(a) holding an open driver’s licence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) sitting a 3-4 day, 5-unit training course (including practical training) through an RTO.</td>
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<td>The 5 units of competency are:</td>
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<td>- TLIB2004A <em>Carry out vehicle inspection</em></td>
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<td>- TLIC3010A <em>Pilot or escort oversized and/or over-mass loads</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- TLI3009A <em>Use pilot and escort communication</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- TLI3013A <em>Coordinate breakdowns and emergencies</em></td>
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<td>- TLI3060A <em>Control traffic as a pilot vehicle operator</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pilot vehicle drivers from other states and territories must obtain WA pilot accreditation to operate in WA but may be eligible to sit a 1-day course in lieu of the full course if they are accredited in another jurisdiction.</td>
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<td>Pilot vehicle drivers accredited in WA are trained in bridge supervision through practical sessions as part of the above modules. The bridge supervision component is not a formal part of the modules and is not conducted in other states and territories.</td>
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<td>WA pilots have ‘Authorised Person’ status granting them limited traffic control powers.</td>
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<td>PILOT</td>
<td>ESCORT</td>
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<td><strong>Queensland</strong></td>
<td>Level 1 pilot vehicle drivers in Queensland must:</td>
<td>Escorting in Queensland is conducted by Queensland Police.</td>
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</table>
|                | (a) hold an Australian or New Zealand open driver's licence for any 3 of the past 5 years  
|                | (b) either sit a 1-day training course through an RTO (module TLIC3010A or TLIC1007) or pass a written test through the Department of Transport and Main Roads.  
|                | Pilot vehicle drivers from other states and territories may operate as level 1 pilot vehicle drivers in Qld (inbound only) if they provide evidence that their normal occupation is a pilot vehicle driver in another state.  |                                                                 |
|                | Level 2 pilot vehicle drivers in Queensland must:                    |                                                                 |
|                | (a) hold an Australian or New Zealand open driver's licence for any 3 of the past 5 years  
|                | (b) sit a 1-day training course through an RTO (module TLIC3010A or TLIC1007)  
<p>|                | (c) provide the RTO with evidence that they have completed at least 12 trips as a level 1 pilot vehicle driver.       |                                                                 |
| <strong>South Australia</strong> | There are no formal requirements for pilot vehicle drivers in South Australia. Anyone holding a current open driver's licence can operate as a pilot vehicle driver. | Escorting in South Australia is conducted by SA Police. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Pilot Requirements</th>
<th>Escort Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory</strong></td>
<td>There are no formal requirements for level 1 pilot vehicle drivers in NT. Anyone holding a current open driver’s licence can operate as a level 1 pilot vehicle driver.</td>
<td>Level 2 pilot vehicle drivers in the Northern Territory must obtain accreditation by completing training in 5 units of competency through an RTO and providing two referees. The 5 units of competency are: TLIB2004A Carry out vehicle inspection TLIC3010A Pilot or escort oversized and/or over-mass loads TLI3009A Use pilot and escort communication TLIF3013A Coordinate breakdowns and emergencies TLIF3060A Control traffic as a pilot vehicle operator There is no requirement to have prior experience as a level 1 pilot.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>New South Wales &amp; ACT</strong></td>
<td>There are no formal requirements for pilot vehicle drivers in New South Wales and ACT. Anyone holding a current open driver’s licence can operate as a pilot vehicle driver.</td>
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<td><strong>Tasmania</strong></td>
<td>There are no formal requirements for pilot vehicle drivers in Tasmania. Anyone holding a current open driver’s licence can operate as a pilot vehicle driver.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1 (if applicable)</td>
<td>Level 2 (if applicable)</td>
<td>ESCORT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are no formal requirements for level 1 pilot vehicle drivers in Victoria. Anyone holding a current open driver’s licence can operate as a level 1 pilot vehicle driver.</td>
<td>Level 2 pilot vehicle drivers in Victoria must obtain accreditation by: (a) holding an open driver’s licence (b) completing training in 4 units of competency through VicRoads. The 4 units of competency are: TLIC3010A Pilot or escort oversized and/or over-mass loads TLIE3009A Use pilot and escort communication TLIF3013A Coordinate breakdowns and emergencies TLIF3060A Control traffic as a pilot vehicle operator Accreditation is subject to the applicant providing records of at least 20 trips as a level 1 pilot vehicle driver.</td>
<td>Escorting in Victoria is conducted by VicRoads transport safety services officers.</td>
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Appendix 2: Content and scope of the Queensland operational guideline

The Queensland operational guideline covers the following aspects of pilot/escort vehicle operations:

**Authority, commencement date and application**—sets out the legislative instruments through which the guideline has effect, the guideline’s commencement date, the vehicles and drivers to which the guideline applies, and general definitions.

**Vehicle requirements**—sets out the physical requirements of pilot vehicles and escort vehicles, such as warning signs and warning lights to be fitted and equipment to be carried, and operational requirements, such as the use of headlights and the prohibition of towing or carrying loads.

**Warning devices**—sets out the requirements for warning lights, wig wag lights, warning signs, and traffic cones.

**Driver requirements**—sets out the requirements for pilot and escort vehicle operators, including accreditation requirements (Level 1 or Level 2), records of movement, communication, damage caused by oversize vehicles, and hand gestures.

**Vehicle operations**—sets out the requirements for positioning of pilot and escort vehicles in relation to the oversize vehicle, and requirements for low-visibility environments.

**Pilot and escort requirements**—sets out the circumstances under which different numbers of pilot vehicles and escort vehicles are required to accompany an oversize vehicle (both general and critical areas/roads), and requirements relating to night movements and road closures.

**Traffic control**—sets out the requirements for escort vehicle drivers performing traffic control, including where to stand, where to place the vehicle, how to stop and start traffic, clothing requirements and signalling equipment.

**Administration**—sets out the requirements for gaining approval from relevant authorities when there is a risk to infrastructure such as overhead wires, carrying documentation in the vehicle, and mutual recognition of interstate drivers.

**Appendix**—sets out restrictions on oversize load movements that apply only to specific areas and at specific times.