

Information Pack: First-Time Licence Attainment

Workshop Boundary Rule: *We are not here to re-diagnose structural barriers. Our focus today is strictly on co-designing viable, place-based pilot solutions for the Mid North and North West regions that helps individuals securely gain their licence.*

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW & THE LOCAL REALITY

Why This Pathway Matters

For residents in regional South Australia, a driver's licence is not an optional milestone; it is a baseline prerequisite for employment, independent mobility, and economic survival. Dispersed workplaces, shift schedules, and limited public transport mean that without a valid licence, jobseekers remain effectively excluded from local workforce opportunities.

The Reality in Numbers

Based on a local community survey of 233 individuals who reported facing transport-related barriers to obtaining or increasing paid work:

- **54%** did not hold a valid driver licence.
- **37%** had no access to any household vehicle.
- **68%** reported that the extreme costs of professional lessons and tests were the primary reasons delaying their licence attainment.
- **63%** of those who attempted driving test but were unsuccessful cited lack of access to a vehicle as the main reason for their failure.
- **49%** of respondents reported having absolutely zero access to public transport to reach work or training hubs.
- **54%** of respondents were willing to ride a motorcycle to work if they had motorcycle licence

What We Heard From the Ground

"Employers increasingly view applicants without their own vehicles and licences as unreliable from day one. It cuts people out before they can even interview."

"The system assumes every learner has a parents' car that is clean, registered, and insured, and a parent who has the free time and clean driving record to sit with them for 75 hours. For a significant portion of our regional clients, none of those assumptions are true."

CORE BARRIERS

Barrier 1: The Learner's Permit Theory Test & Literacy/Digital Blocks

The Breakdown: Before a candidate can even sit in a driver's seat, they must pass the South Australian Learner's Permit theory test (the *myLicence* platform). This requires navigate-ready digital literacy, reliable internet access, and a reading comprehension level capable of understanding dense, compliance-heavy road rules.

The Regional Reality: Many vulnerable jobseekers, including some Indigenous participants, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) individuals, and early school-leavers, face low functional literacy or lack the required computer hardware at home. Furthermore, the mandatory identification verification documents (birth certificates, proof of address) are frequently missing and logistically difficult to replace from regional hubs.

The Impact: Candidates are blocked at Stage 1. Out of shame or frustration, they stop engaging with the process entirely, or they drive unlicensed, tracking them early into the justice and fines system.

Barrier 2: Financial Exorbitance & Commercial Instructor Scarcity

The Breakdown: Completing the minimum entry requirements safely requires professional instruction. However, the commercial cost of driving lessons (\$80–\$100+ per hour) and formal Testing (Vehicle On-Road Test - VORT) is completely out of reach for a jobseeker on income support.

The Regional Reality: Port Augusta and surrounding regions suffer from a severe structural shortage of locally based, accredited driving instructors. Commercial instructors must travel from larger centers, passing the cost of their travel time and fuel directly onto the regional consumer.

The Impact: Regional families are priced out of safe training. Waiting lists for tests stretch out for months, causing learners' skills to atrophy between available bookings and delaying employment entry windows.

Barrier 3: The Logbook Bottleneck & Supervisor Scarcity

The Breakdown: South Australia's Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) requires a minimum of 75 logged hours of supervised driving (including 15 mandatory night-driving hours). This framework relies on the assumption of an intact social network.

The Regional Reality: Many regional jobseekers do not have access to a fully licensed driver who can legally act as a supervisor. Family members may hold disqualified licences, work conflicting long-haul shift schedules, or live in separate, isolated communities.

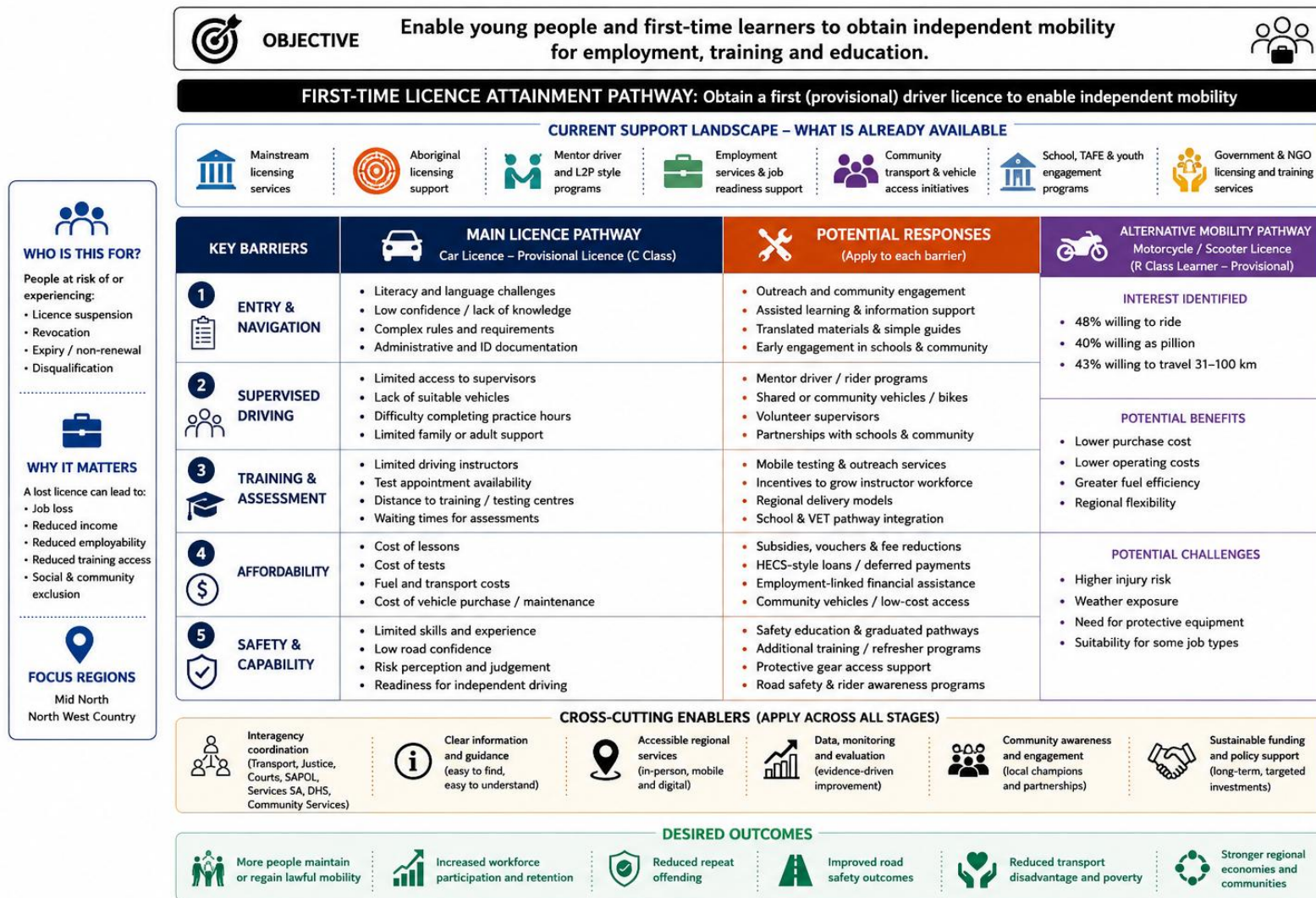
The Impact: Learners remain stranded on their L-plates indefinitely. They cannot legally log the massive volume of mandatory practice hours required to qualify for their practical assessment.

Barrier 4: The Learner Vehicle Void

The Breakdown: Even in scenarios where a supervisor or family member is willing to donate 75 hours of their time, a compliant vehicle is required.

The Regional Reality: Low-income households in regional SA often do not possess a registered, mechanically sound, roadworthy, and appropriately insured vehicle. Vehicles may be shared among multiple household members for survival trips, lack dual controls for initial safety, or be entirely unsuitable for a VORT examination due to mechanical defects.

The Impact: Learners cannot practice consistently, extending their training period over years. It leaves desperate individuals vulnerable to driving unlicensed or uninsured simply to meet basic work or family obligations, trapping them in legal jeopardy.



A Framework for Thinking About First-Time Licence Attainment

EXISTING DRIVER LICENCE SUPPORT PATHWAYS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

To prevent duplication and identify clear integration points, any newly proposed pilot concepts must build upon, connect with, or address the gaps within the existing landscape of South Australian programs

Program / Service	Provider / Auspice	Target Group	Support Provided / Key Features
On the Right Track (including remote delivery programs)	Department for Infrastructure and Transport	Aboriginal people, families and communities, including remote communities	Driver licensing support, road safety education, culturally appropriate resources, mentoring and practical assistance to obtain and retain a licence.
L2P Murraylands	Energy Education Australia, Rural City of Murray Bridge and community partners	Young people and others without access to a vehicle or supervising driver	Volunteer mentor drivers, access to a vehicle and supervised driving opportunities to assist learners complete required driving hours.
Wheels in Motion	Local government and community partners	Young people facing social or economic disadvantage	Supervised driving opportunities, vehicle access and practical support to obtain a licence.
Geared4Work / Driver Mentor Program	Workskil Australia	Young people participating in employment & training programs	Driver mentor support, supervised driving opportunities and employment-linked assistance to obtain a licence.
MYSA – Driving YOUTH	Multicultural Youth South Australia	Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds	Subsidised driving lessons and support to overcome language, cultural, financial and system-navigation barriers.
SYC – Geared2Drive	SYC	Employment service participants and jobseekers	Driver licensing guidance, lessons and support designed to improve independence and employment opportunities.
Drive for Life	The Salvation Army	Young people requiring additional support to obtain a licence	Driver training, mentoring and supervised driving support.
myLicence and Service SA Learner Resources	Government of South Australia	General learner drivers	Road rules education, practice tests, licensing information and learner resources.
Private Driving Instructors, VORT and CBT&A Pathways	Accredited instructors and assessors	General learner drivers	Professional driving lessons, competency-based training and practical licence assessments.

STRATEGIC INSPIRATION (WHAT WORKS ELSEWHERE)

Instead of designing from scratch, tables should adapt or hybridize elements from these proven, operational models from other jurisdictions:

Model & Jurisdiction	Target Cohort & Reach	How It Works Operationally
TAC L2P Program <i>(Victoria, Australia)</i>	Disadvantaged youth (16–21 years) lacking an available supervisor or vehicle.	Combines state-subsidized commercial lessons with a volunteer mentor network. Offers free professional instruction to build basic safety skills <i>before</i> learners transition to community volunteers to log remaining hours in dedicated, fully insured fleet vehicles. Program coordinates and funds all mentor vetting and mandatory background clearances.
WA RYDE Program <i>(Regional Western Australia)</i>	Disadvantaged regional learner drivers aged 16–25.	Operates a community-managed vehicle pool where learners log supervised logbook hours under a highly subsidized user-pays model (\$15 per 90-minute session). Local non-profit "RYDE providers" act as operational hubs, providing safe, fully insured vehicles and scheduling local volunteer mentors.
DriveSafe NT Regional Pilot <i>(Northern Territory, Australia)</i>	Remote and regional jobseekers, particularly Indigenous communities, facing structural isolation.	Deploys intensive mobile training units directly to regional towns. Delivers block-format services including immediate on-site birth certificate/ID retrieval, digital theory test preparation, and structured practical training blocks. Uses a dual-funded model via transport and employment agencies.
Community Driver Mentor Programme (CDMP) <i>(New Zealand)</i>	Disadvantaged learner drivers (typically aged 16–24) who have held their Learner Licence for at least 3 months but face severe resource limitations, systemic isolation, or lack family networks to log hours.	Mentees are placed into strict 12-week cohorts. They are required to commit to a minimum of two 1-hour practice drives per week with volunteer mentors, and mandatory lessons with a commercial driving instructor at the start, middle, and end of the cycle. The community anchor manages a dedicated asset fleet of modern, dedicated training vehicles; the program fully covers registration, fuel, comprehensive insurance, and maintenance, as well as commercial driving instructor costs.

REGULATORY RELAXATION – JURISDICTIONAL POLICY SETTINGS

Should our regional pilot rely purely on finding more volunteers and cars to help people comply with a 75-hour logbook requirement? Or should we advocate for policy adjustments that alter the regulatory baseline for regional jobseekers? Other states and countries explicitly adjust regulations based on age, economic hardship, or professional instruction.

State / country	Logbook & Supervised Hour Settings	Professional Lesson Incentives	Adult License Pathways (18+)
South Australia (Baseline)	75 hours mandatory (minimum 15 night hours) imposed on all learners.	No multi-hour bonus credit system for professional instruction. (3-for-1 Bonus as part of reform expected in 2027)	No age exemptions on logbook hours.
New South Wales	120 hours mandatory (minimum 20 night hours). Imposed on learners under 25 years.	Structured professional lessons can count for bonus hours; Safer Drivers Course can add 20 logbook hours.	Learners aged 25+ are exempt from logbook hours and can sit the test immediately when ready.
Victoria	120 hours mandatory (minimum 20 night hours). Imposed on learners under 21 years.	No multi-hour bonus credit system for professional instruction.	Learners aged 21+ are exempt from logbook hours and can sit the test immediately when ready.
Queensland	100 hours mandatory (minimum 10 night hours). Imposed on learners under 25 years.	3-for-1 Bonus: 1 hour of professional instruction counts as 3 logbook hours (capped at 10 structured lessons/30 logbook hours).	Learners aged 25+ are exempt from logbook hours and can sit the test immediately when ready.
Western Australia	50 hours mandatory (minimum 5 night hours). Imposed on learners under 25 years.	No multi-hour bonus credit system for professional instruction.	Learners aged 25+ are exempt from logbook hours and can sit the test immediately when ready.
ACT	100 hours mandatory (minimum 10 night hours) imposed on learners under 25 years.	3-for-1 Bonus: 1 hour of professional instruction counts as 3 logbook hours (capped at 10 structured lessons/30 logbook hours).	50 hours mandatory (minimum 5 night hours) imposed on learners aged 25+.
Northern Territory	No mandatory supervised-driving logbook requirement.	NA	NA
Ontario and British Columbia, Canada	No mandatory supervised-driving logbook requirement.	NA	NA
California and Washington State, USA	50 hours mandatory (minimum 10 night hours). Restricted strictly to minors under 18 years.	Mandatory 6 hours of professional driver training required for youth.	Accelerated adult track: Applicants aged 18+ have no logbook hour requirement and can take the test when ready.

CO-DESIGN PROMPTS & FOCUS AREAS

Table groups are required to use these direct prompts to format their actionable pilot concept within the Workshop Workbook:

1. **Clearing the Stage 1 Theory Block:** How can we integrate Learner's Permit theory preparation into existing regional literacy programs or TAFE courses? Who will assist candidates with digital navigation and ID document retrieval?
2. **Structuring the Vehicle Anchor:** How can we secure and maintain a physical pool of 2-3 dedicated learner vehicles across different sub-regions? Should we leverage underutilized local government fleet vehicles on weekends, or seek capital funding from local major employers to purchase dedicated training cars?
3. **Mobilizing and Protecting Volunteers:** What concrete incentives can we offer to attract and retain volunteer driving mentors (e.g., fuel vouchers, community recognition, free vehicle servicing)? How do we design the scheduling to prevent volunteer burnout?
4. **Selecting the Priority Target Cohort:** To maximize the immediate economic return of this pilot, who gets first priority? Should it be jobseekers with conditional job offers in local industries, or young apprentices at risk of dropping out due to transport issues?
5. **Designating the Local Anchor Lead:** Which existing regional organization is best positioned to house the coordinator role, manage the car keys, maintain vehicle insurance, and match learners to volunteer mentors?
6. **Sustaining the Financial Runway:** Beyond initial capital or pilot grant funding, how will ongoing operational costs (fuel, comprehensive insurance, professional vehicle maintenance, and coordinator wages) be subsidized? Can we integrate a social enterprise model, local corporate sponsorships, or employer-paid placement contributions to ensure the pilot's financial sustainability after Year 1?
7. **Navigating Regulatory Barriers & Long-Term Reform:** While this pilot must be viable under current South Australian licensing regulations, what mechanism will we use to document the specific regulatory friction points experienced during the trial? How can the evidence collected by this pilot be structured to advocate for formal regulatory adjustments (e.g., adult logbook requirements or licensing digital navigation support) in the future?