

## **Barriers to drivers licensing for CAYLUS clients that are resident in Alice Springs**

### **Background**

The Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service is a youth substance misuse prevention program based at Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs. One way that we have been supporting some carers of young people who are at risk is through assisting them to get drivers licenses. We started this work in Jan 2021.

This document is an attempt to capture some of the complexity that we and our clients have experienced in this process. See attached our attempt at a flow chart of the system as we have come to understand it. The following points provide details of the barriers we have observed at the various steps in this system.

### **CAYLUS Driver Licensing Project Sample**

Our current cohort of 14 learner licensed students that are resident in Alice Springs town camps are aged 27 to 60 (32, 54, 27, 60, 35, 39, 35, 48, 32, 32, 33, 37, 43, 60).

All have moderate to extensive experience in remote and urban driving.

Only 1 had previously held a full license (expired). Two have held Learners licenses. All had acquired these licenses in remote locations.

5 students were required to do 'Back on Track' mandatory drink driver training (\$375 ea) before enrolling in Drivesafe program (\$110 ea) to attain their Learner licenses.

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### **Identity documents to apply for license**

Gathering the necessary ID to apply for a drivers license can prove complex because of cost, misspellings in names and people using multiple names as is common.

**Sample (Category A and Category B);** Birth certificate (Cat A), Tang I.D, concession card, medicare, bank card, student card, (Cat B). Other Cat A and B documents are accepted but often unavailable to our cohort.

All names must match. Any young person over 16- under 22 would struggle with these documents as they would need to be a student, or receiving income (bank card), and in CAYLUS experience less likely to have a Medicare or concession card or be registered for income support. At a minimum support required is to apply for a Tangentyere i.d card(\$20) then open a bank account, and apply for a birth certificate(\$47).This if seamless will take about 2 weeks for the bank card to arrive assuming identity can be proved.

3 students in our cohort needed to apply for their Birth certificates to have adequate i.d (\$47 ea). This required a vehicle and dedicated caseworker in an urban setting to acquire necessary documents. Samples of CAYLUS clients- 1 birth not registered. 2 births interstate. 1 client with no I.D at all- had been raised with different name to birth name. No continuity of authorities who could identify him. One client had all documents in his 'known' name- but his birth certificate surname was spelt differently.

### **Accrued Fines, compounding late fees**

Accrued fines with compounding fees can prove an insurmountable barrier to getting a driving license. Some people become perpetual offenders when they keep driving without a license as their initial debt can never be addressed or cleared to progress to licensing. This contributes to household poverty and incarceration.

Amongst our cohort 8 students currently have 5 cars available on a daily basis for their use.

Most have accrued fines driving vehicles unlicensed.

Removal of issue of Vehicle rego stickers makes it hard to determine whether a car you are driving has current registration.

1 student CE owed \$9,065 in fines. CE was only permitted to do business with MVR after paying an initial \$505, and an agreement to continue with \$205 per fortnight. CE is unsure when these fines started to accrue, possibly in 2000 - they may have related to DUI. CE has been sober since 2013. CE frequently has responsibility for many more children than car seats. CE thinks other fines were for unsecured passengers, unregistered cars and unlicensed driving.

1 student CB owes \$14,784 . Each of the 12 fines attracted a \$250 late fee (these added an additional \$3,000 to the fine) as CB had not set up an arrangement to pay. CB on Disability Support Pension was required to enter a payment plan of \$85 fortnightly. CB has past convictions, most recent 2018 for drink driving.

### **Lack of availability of essential support staff**

Two attempts to book CB into Learner test at MVR with an interpreter. On both occasions the interpreter did not show.

### **Shortage of Driving Instructors**

There are only 5 driving instructors for automatic vehicles in Alice Springs. Only 2 fulltime, 1 of whom is chief Drivesafe instructor and is often remote. Very hard to book a consistent time with instructors for students. The students we have been supporting in general do not have reliable communications to make appointments at different times. Management of the learning environment involves bringing a student to training location. Dogs, drunk visitors, and cultural events such as 'sorry' make it advisable to run lessons out of camp.

There was a wait period of 4 months to secure 2 mornings of tuition per week to support our cohort. Then there is a wait period of up to 6 weeks for test. The cohort have little experience of participating in formal test situation.

### **Drivesafe course as an opportunity to get to learner license**

Drive 1 (full day) and Drive 2 (1/2 day) Theory class- both currently offered twice per month subject to teacher availability. Plus online First@scene- St Johns First Aid course.

Learner license achieved after successful completion of the 1 day class of Drive 1 Theory class and multiple-choice driver knowledge test. None of the CAYLUS students had good literacy or experience in multiple-choice tests. CAYLUS arranged a private class (7-14 students) with literacy support. The teacher was accommodating and worked through answers without multiple choice. The layout of answer sheet and resources were not of a good standard.

### **Drivesafe as an opportunity to pass Provisional license practical test**

After 6 months of holding a Learners license our cohort can sit the test for a Probationary license. They can use the NT Drivesafe program to access 10 subsidised lessons during this period. After securing their L's students also have the option of sitting for their practical test outside the Drivesafe program, at the full test fee. They can return to the program if further lessons are necessary.

Urban Drivesafe is framed around providing a program of weekly lessons based on achieving a series of competencies and assumes that the student will have an opportunity to practice between lessons. The CAYLUS cohort have no licensed drivers to practice with and no registered vehicles to practice in. Drivesafe permitted our cohort 2 lessons per week to allow students to practice competencies. CAYLUS intentionally sought lessons towards the end of the 6 months- to minimise the period between lessons and test.

It is probable some of our cohort will accrue driving fines and points loss over this extended 6-month period that will prevent them getting licensed instruction. The students license status will need to be checked before lessons commence.

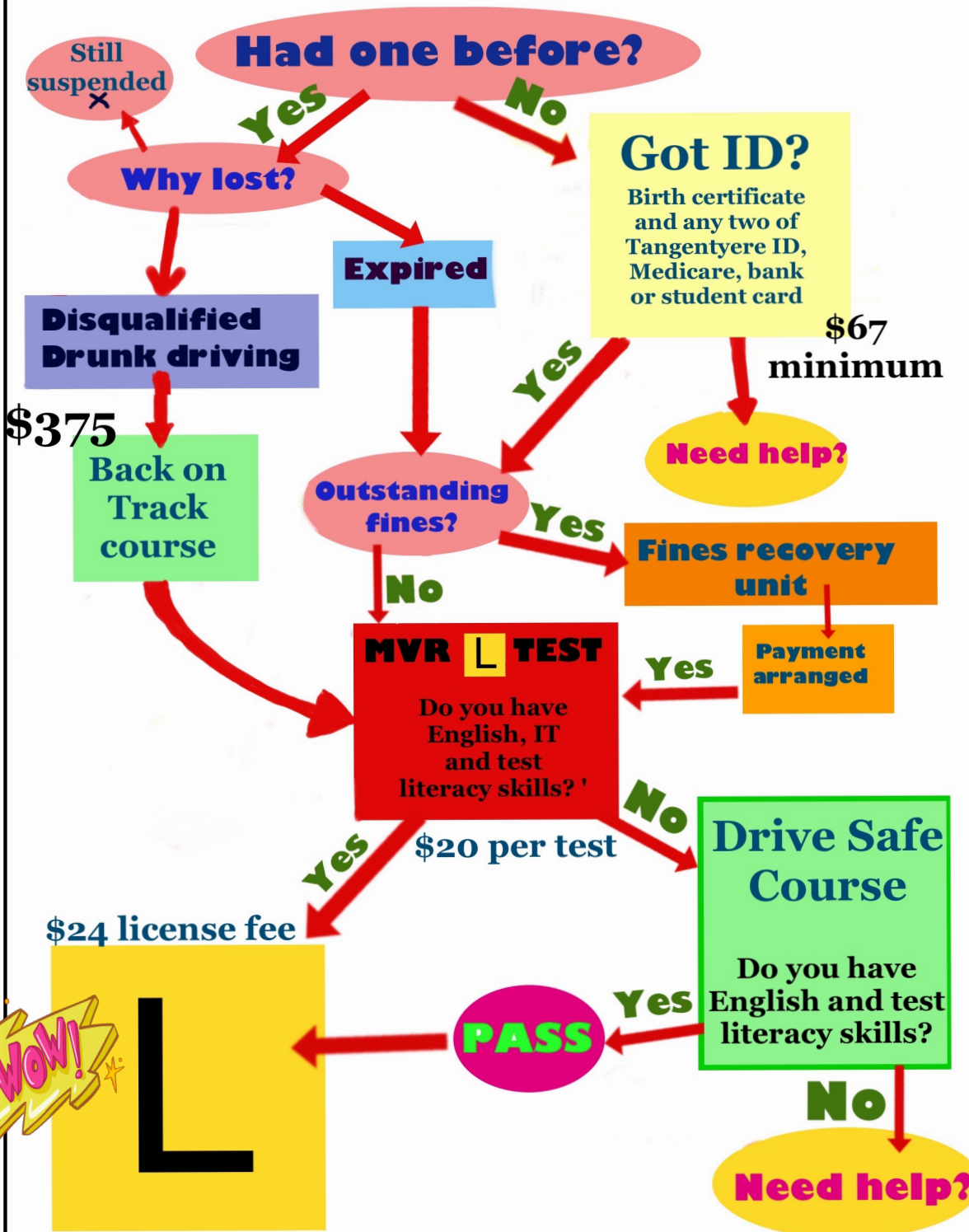
With the Drivesafe subsidy lessons costs \$30-\$40 per lesson- up to 10 lessons and 2 attempts at the driving test. These lessons are subsidised, but students need access to web services just prior to the lesson to redeem the subsidy vouchers. The driving instructor may offer to assist with this.

The Drivesafe program is a pathway, but for the CAYLUS cohort- it is probable they will lack the confidence to be successful at formal tests.

Students need to provide a suitable and safe car for doing their driving test, in our cohort no student has a suitable car so they will need to either borrow or hire a car for this purpose

The Drivesafe program running in remote communities seem to provide a more accessible pathway and process, however the people we are supporting are not able to access these.

# I want my **L**earners license!



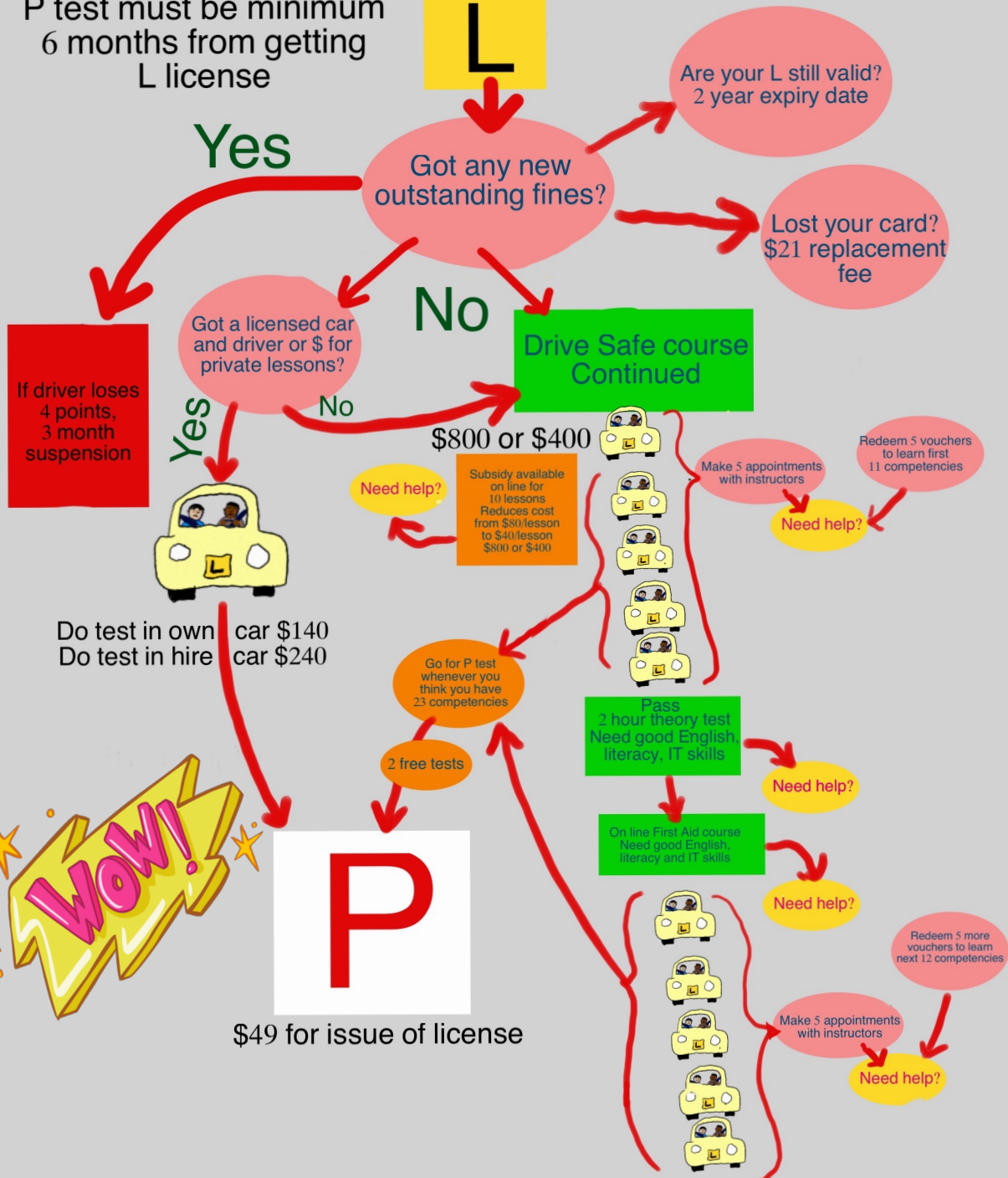
Help can be money, casework, administrative support, arranging interpreters, transport to the various locations, literacy support for the various forms.



# Getting P license



P test must be minimum 6 months from getting L license



**Help can be money, casework, administrative support, arranging interpreters, transport to the various locations, literacy support for the various forms.**