INTRODUCTION
In Queensland, as in other jurisdictions, young drivers aged between 16 and 25 years are grossly overrepresented in road fatalities and injuries. This vulnerable road user group constitutes only 12.5 percent of the Australian population but accounted for 26 percent of all road fatalities in 2008 [1]. Young driver fatalities are also more likely to occur at night and on weekends in comparison to other drivers. Evidence from numerous research studies indicates (a) that inexperience, peer passengers, driving a high-powered vehicle, distraction and night driving all contribute to young driver crash risk, and (b) that graduated licensing systems which incorporate measures which address these factors have been effective in reducing young driver crash involvement [2].

In July 2007 the Queensland Government made a number of changes to its graduated licensing system. For learners, this included lowering the minimum learner age from 16.5 to 16 years, increasing the minimum learner period from 6 to 12 months, and requiring a minimum of 100 hours of supervised on-road driving experience (documented in a logbook for those aged under 25 years). In addition, a two phase provisional licence was introduced. Other changes included the introduction of compulsory ‘L’ and ‘P’ plate use and peer passenger, high-powered vehicle, mobile phone and ‘late night driving’ restrictions.

This study sought to examine the attitudes of 18-24 year old Queensland drivers to graduated licensing, particularly the recent changes, and how these changes had affected them. Information was also collected about their beliefs about crash causation and responsibility for prevention in order to help inform possible future prevention measures (and assist in understanding the effects of current measures).

METHODS
A population-representative telephone survey of attitudes and beliefs towards injury prevention, which was funded by the Queensland Injury Prevention Council, included 249 Queenslanders aged 18-24. The survey was administered by a commercial company in September 2008. The survey over-sampled regional and rural areas and had a participation rate of 64.5% [3].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Of the 133 Provisional licence or Learner permit holders, 64% said that they had not been affected by recent changes to graduated licensing. Of those affected, 28% had delayed obtaining their L or P plates, 18% reported more supervised driving practice, 16% extra cost, and 16% “made me safer/more responsible/more aware”. Illegal behaviours by self or other road users were the two factors most commonly nominated as contributing to injury crashes in drivers of their own age for both first (26% and 27% respectively) and second mentions (18% and 19% respectively). For first mentions, another 13% identified some form of bravado or feelings of invincibility while 11% identified inexperience. Risk-taking or dangerous driving (following too closely, fatigued driving etc) either by self (6%) or others (8%) also appeared as first mentions. Individual drivers themselves were seen as those mainly responsible for improving their safety by 52% of the group. Government agencies were cited as mainly responsible by 29%.

Two-thirds of respondents said they had done nothing “in the previous 12 months to reduce your chances of being injured in a car crash”. Among those who reported having taken some action, driver education/training was most common (17%) followed by claims of not speeding (8%), not drink driving (6%), taking general extra care (12%) and buying a safer vehicle (11%).

CONCLUSIONS
The majority of the 18-24 year olds claimed to be unaffected by the licensing changes (64% said they had not experienced any effect as a result of graduated licensing). However, it is somewhat striking that the 18-24 year olds cited illegal behaviours by self or others as the main factors in crashes for drivers of their age, suggesting that they are naïve to their own inexperience or its role in crashes for drivers of their age. There seems little awareness of the contribution of peer passengers or night driving to increasing crash risk. Addressing these lacks of insight may be a place to start for drivers affected by the new licensing system as well as for those who are still at risk but who are not captured by the legislation.

REFERENCES
1. DITR&LG Road Deaths Australia 2008 Statistical Summary, Canberra, 2009.