



Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PET 41952
Your ref: A699384

1 William Street Brisbane 4000
GPO Box 2644 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7300
Email transportandmainroads@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Website www.tmr.qld.gov.au

15 July 2021

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3435-20, lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Michael Crandon MP, Member for Coomera on 15 June 2021 about novice driver education in Queensland.

I thank the petitioners for their quest to reduce lives lost on Queensland's roads—I unequivocally share their concern about the current rate of road trauma. Although the efforts to improve safety on Queensland roads has resulted in a 33.5 per cent decrease in lives lost over the period between 2009 and 2019, sadly there has been an increase in the lives lost in 2020 and in the first half of 2021.

The increase in the number of lives lost on Queensland roads is concerning and demonstrates that road safety is a critical issue, demanding continued attention and action.

As the petitioners point out, young and inexperienced drivers are of particular concern and a priority focus for the Palaszczuk Government. As a key action in *Queensland's Road Safety Action Plan 2020–21*, and in recognition of the unique risk profile of children and young people, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) developed a road safety education strategy, the *Queensland Road Safety Education Blueprint* (the Blueprint). The Blueprint (www.tmr.qld.gov.au/roadsafetyblueprint) was released in early 2021 and will guide Queensland's road safety education approach for the next five years for children and young adults from birth to 24 years of age.

The Blueprint was developed through consultation with stakeholders representing road safety program providers and is based on a review of up-to-date research around cognitive and developmental milestones of children and young adults, as well as the experiences and challenges they will face at each stage of life. This is why the Blueprint includes 27 actions that support a whole-of-life road safety educational approach aiming to equip children and young adults with the skills to become safe pedestrians, bicycle riders and road users.

There is a specific focus area for adolescents and young adults aged 16 to 24. For this cohort, in addition to practical driving skills and road rules, the review found that road safety education should target awareness of road safety hazards and an understanding of the risks of speeding, distraction, fatigue, not wearing a seatbelt and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (the 'Fatal Five' factors). The review also found that education for this age group should emphasise cognitive-behavioural skills within the driver context, including specific focus on risk-taking and resisting external pressures.

To implement these findings, TMR and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland have entered into a partnership with the Re:Act road safety program with a purpose of bringing the industry, government, higher education institutions and students into collaboration.

TMR has also been working alongside young Queenslanders to develop road safety campaigns through the Co-Lab Youth Road Safety initiative. These campaigns continue to reach young drivers with road safety messaging developed by young people for young people. The most recent campaign, 'Regional Roads Aren't a Game', aimed to educate young drivers on the importance of safe travel speeds on regional roads. The campaign achieved more than 23 million impressions on social media alone. Encouragingly, post-campaign research indicates that 84 per cent of young drivers who viewed the campaign reported they were more likely to take additional care on regional roads. *StreetSmarts* social media will also continue to be an 'always on' source of road safety education for the Queensland public. *StreetSmarts* has over 166,000 followers and reaches more than one million people each month.

Further, Queensland's Graduated Licensing System (GLS) helps reduce road traffic crashes, particularly among young drivers, by requiring novice drivers to gain experience and improve their driving skills before they are able to progress to a higher type or class of licence. The GLS was introduced in 2007 as a part of Queensland's licensing system strengthening and, in November 2018, PrepL, a revolutionary online learning and assessment program designed to replace the written road rules test, was introduced as part of the GLS. PrepL shifted the focus of driver education towards safer driving behaviours and attitudes, rather than road rule testing, and having been completed by over 170,000 young drivers, the model is being adopted by many jurisdictions across Australia.

Independent evaluations of Queensland's GLS show that the changes to young driver licensing were associated with a significant reduction in crashes involving novice drivers. In March 2021, new hazard perception test arrangements were introduced as part of the GLS requiring all learner licence holders pass a hazard perception test before progressing to unsupervised driving or riding. The changes introduced a new motorcycle hazard perception test for learner motorcycle riders and moved the car hazard perception test from between the P1 and P2 licence stages to the learner phase to ensure they have the ability to identify hazards before they can drive alone. The new tests feature high quality 3D computer generated clips of hazards that have been identified as the most challenging for novice drivers, based on road crash data.

TMR supports road safety education, including initiatives for novice drivers, through the Community Road Safety Grants (CRSG) scheme, with more than \$18 million awarded to 462 road safety initiatives across Queensland. In response to the number of lives lost and the increasing demand for road safety education across the State, the Palaszczuk Government has committed that the CRSG scheme will increase from \$4 million per annum to \$5.6 million per annum from 2022–23 for road safety education programs.

With the 'Fatal Five' contributing to around 50 per cent of lives lost on Queensland roads, the Palaszczuk Government is also tackling these high-risk driving behaviours.

Drink driving continues to be a significant road safety issue. Apart from the tragic personal impacts it has on friends and family, drink driving, on average, costs the Queensland community \$741 million annually. To combat this, TMR will introduce two new education programs for drink drivers in September 2021. All drink drivers will be required to complete an early intervention education program before they receive their licence back, while repeat offenders will be required to complete a more intense multi-session program. These programs will be supported by an enhanced and expanded Alcohol Ignition Interlock program that will require all drivers with a mid-range Blood Alcohol Concentration (0.10) and above to participate in the program. The program will become performance based, meaning a person will not be able to remove the interlock from their vehicle until they have demonstrated they can separate their drinking and driving.

Research shows that using a mobile phone behind the wheel is just as dangerous as drink driving. In 2020, TMR and the Queensland Police Service trialled camera technology, a key action in *Queensland's Road Safety Action Plan 2020–21*, aimed at detecting drivers using their mobile phones illegally as well as drivers and front-seat passengers failing to wear a seatbelt. As a result of the success of the trial, cameras will be rolled out in urban and regional areas across Queensland from July 2021.

The Palaszczuk Government is also increasing safety on Queensland roads through significant infrastructure investment. The Targeted Road Safety Program (TRSP), through the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program, is committing almost \$1.7 billion over four years, 2021–22 to 2024–25, and includes interventions such as the:

- Safer Roads Sooner Program
- Australian Government Road Safety Program (RSP)
- Black Spot Program
- High-Risk Roads and Mass Actions Programs.

As at 30 June 2021, the TRSP has expended \$443.6 million, which exceeds previous financial year delivery benchmarks of \$177.9 million in funded safety projects delivered across Queensland, in support of the actions outlined in the 2017–19 and 2020–21 Queensland Road Safety Action Plans.


The TRSP will continue to deliver a record infrastructure program over 2021–22 through to 2024–25 with the addition of RSP funding, including \$150 million of funding for safety packages, as part of the Palaszczuk Government's roads and transport stimulus packages announced last year, to support Queensland's economic recovery from COVID-19.

The current *Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2015–21* (the Strategy) will expire at the end of 2021. Development of the next Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2022–31 and the Queensland Road Safety Action Plan 2022–24 is currently underway. The forthcoming Strategy will set a path for Queensland to make the next step change in road safety to meet our vision of zero lives lost on Queensland roads by 2050. Queensland's 2030 targets will align with the National Road Safety Strategy targets of 50 per cent reduction in fatalities and 30 per cent reduction in serious injuries. The Strategy will involve a holistic approach with new partnerships and collaborative opportunities.

It is recognised that, in order to make significant gains, going forward we will need to look beyond the traditional transport sector and consider the broader social factors contributing to road trauma, ultimately reframing the problem of road trauma as a public health issue reflecting broader cultural and societal trends. This approach aligns with the new National Road Safety Strategy, which takes a social model approach.

I would like to assure the petitioners that reducing the devastating impact of road trauma remains a key priority for the Palaszczuk Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Bailey', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

MARK BAILEY MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads