



Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PET 47974
Your ref: A1060855

22 March 2023

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

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3871-23, lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Bryson Head MP, Member for Callide on 23 February 2023 about the closure of the Gin Gin Driver Reviver site.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has managed the Driver Reviver Program during school and public holiday periods across Queensland for more than 30 years, helping to reduce driver fatigue and enhancing the safety of our roads.

Driver Reviver Australia is a national volunteer-led program which operates at a number of roadside stops across Australia. The national operations for Driver Reviver Australia are owned and operated by the Victorian State Emergency Service (VIC SES) along with assignment of the Driver Reviver trademarks. The program encourages drivers travelling long distances to take a break every two hours at rest areas and to enjoy a free refreshment before they continue safely on their journey.

In Queensland, 43 driver reviver sites are part of the national Driver Reviver Program. TMR manages 18 of these sites and the remainder are locally managed by councils, volunteer, or community groups.

Data shows a significant decrease in visitors at TMR Driver Reviver sites over 2017–2019, dropping by as much as 80 per cent in some regions. It is worth noting, during 2020–2021 most Driver Reviver sites did not operate due to the impacts of COVID-19.

TMR carried out health and safety assessments of TMR-managed Driver Reviver facilities across the state. The assessments raised concerns that the Driver Reviver building infrastructure may present safety issues for both the travellers and volunteers who work at the site. Based on this recommendation—as well as the decline in motorists using the sites and volunteers withdrawing their services at several sites—TMR made the decision to permanently close the Driver Reviver sites at all of its rest areas and undertake remediation works to remove the Driver Reviver infrastructure from the rest sites.

In recent months, TMR has worked closely with council and community representatives across the state to transition the 18 TMR-managed driver reviver sites to be led at a local level. It is expected this transition will bring dual benefits to road users and local communities alike, by providing opportunities for the program to operate beyond school holiday periods and potentially increasing foot traffic through local community businesses and tourism operators.

The majority of the TMR driver reviver sites have transitioned to local councils or community groups who have agreed to continue to coordinate and deliver the Driver Reviver Program through their visitor information centres. If this is of interest locally, TMR's road safety officers will support council and volunteers through this process.

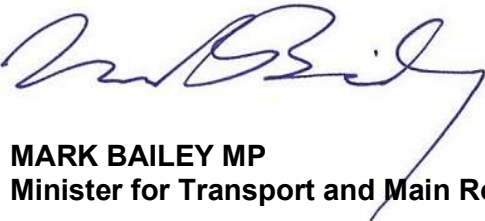
While the Driver Reviver Program will no longer continue to run at TMR sites during holiday periods, there are over 450 rest areas on Queensland roads that remain open for motorists available for use 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

In addition, the jointly funded Road Safety Program has committed \$37.9 million (Australian Government 80 per cent, State Government 20 per cent) to the Rest Area Upgrade Program (RAUP). The Palaszczuk Government has contributed \$7.58 million towards the RAUP, which provides new and/or upgrades to existing roadside amenities, to encourage drivers to stop and rest.

The Road Safety Program will deliver proactive and reactive road safety treatments to reduce related road crashes and address the issue of fatigue for all Queensland motorists.

I trust this information is of assistance.

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