



## Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: MC114347

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Mr Stephen Hodge  
Director – National Advocacy  
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Dear Mr Hodge

Thank you for your correspondence to the Honourable Mark Bailey MP, Minister for Transport and Main Roads, received on 23 April 2020 seeking support for safer walking and cycling during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Minister has asked that I respond on his behalf.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected how all of us live our lives, including a significant increase in the number of people I see walking and riding bikes around their neighbourhoods, suburbs and cities for exercise, enjoyment and commuting. I appreciate the commitment of all the supporting parties to your correspondence in coming together to improve the safety of people riding bikes and walking during this difficult time.

I know that across Queensland there has been an increase in the sale of bicycles. Higher than usual sales of children's bike helmets and child seats indicate that many families are using this time to engage, or re-engage, with the simple pleasure of riding a bike. I am pleased to see so many Queenslanders experiencing the health, emotional and environmental benefits that come with active transport. However, I also acknowledge the additional demands this is placing on our cycling and walking infrastructure.

### **Investment for the future**

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to getting more people out riding and walking. Through the *Queensland Cycling Strategy 2017–2027* (QCS), the government is demonstrating a significant and ongoing commitment and investment in active transport. This includes commitments of over \$73.8 million for high-quality cycling and walking infrastructure, planning and programs across Queensland in 2019–20, and over \$219 million between 2019–20 and 2022–23. The focus of investment is on providing facilities that are physically separated from motor vehicles. In areas with high demand, the program funds separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

In August 2019, Minister Bailey released the *Queensland Walking Strategy 2019–2029* with \$2.5 million being invested over three years into walking initiatives. The strategy provides the framework for promoting walking as an accessible, active transport mode across the state, delivering health benefits for Queenslanders and access to important destinations such as schools, shops and public transport.

### **Short-term responses**

I note your comments about initiatives in other countries to support social distancing when riding and walking, including speed limit reductions, footpath widening, rolling out new bike lanes, and closing some streets to motor traffic. I am keen to support short-term responses that enable more people to ride and walk wherever it can be safely achieved. I am sure that active transport will continue to play an important role in our transport system during the recovery phase and beyond.

Our short-term responses to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) include:

- automating pedestrian push buttons at traffic lights and providing stickers to inform users that they do not need to push the button, or, to use their elbows if the button is not automated
- supporting local governments in the application of lower speed limits in high active transport user areas
- showing COVID-19 messages on variable message signs across the state.

In addition, TMR will support local governments to trial innovative treatments using provisions in the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*, including discussing how such approaches may be applied to fast track delivery of projects (even if on a temporary basis) on critical missing links. This is consistent with the New Zealand Transport Authority's Innovating Streets approach referenced in your correspondence.

TMR will continue to work with other Queensland Government agencies such as the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning to develop and implement best practice guidances for the development of urban places.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to share your suggestions about how we can improve the safety of people riding bikes and walking.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TAM VAN ALPHEN', written in a cursive style.

**TAM VAN ALPHEN**  
**CHIEF OF STAFF**