



Hon Rachel Nolan MP
Member for Ipswich



Our ref: MC52841

Minister for Transport

15 FEB 2011

Mr Paul French
Co-convenor
Central Business District Bicycle User Group
CBD BUG
GPO Box 2104
Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Mr French

Thank you for your letter of 15 October 2010 requesting input into the development of the Terms of Reference for the review of Queensland's driver licence testing regime, and providing a copy of the current version of the inter-governmental agreement that commits Queensland to maintaining its road rules in consistency with the nationally agreed set of road rules. I apologise for the delay of my response.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that the driving assessment standard for licence applicants reflects an appropriate level of knowledge, skill, practical ability and safe practice on the part of the learner.

As you may be aware, it was initially proposed that a small number of changes to the Q-SAFE driving assessment policy be made. However, I have ordered a full review of Q-SAFE to ensure the test standard meets current expectations and provides the safest driver testing regime possible.

The review is being conducted by an independent panel of experts. Specifically, the role of the panel is to provide advice on development of a best practice driving assessment model, how the current driving assessment model fits within the current model and the changes that must be made to improve the driving assessment regime.

I have asked the panel to conduct extensive industry and community consultation to ensure the changes are safe and meet community expectations. There will be an opportunity for your group to provide comment on the proposed changes as part of the consultation process. However, if there are specific issues you wish to raise now, please call Mr Richard Krauss, Advisor (Transport Policy) in Road Safety and System Management, on (07) 3253 4681. Mr Krauss will be pleased to assist.

Level 15 Capital Hill Building
85 George Street Brisbane
GPO Box 2644 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3237 1111
Facsimile +61 7 3224 4242
Email transport@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

You may be interested to know that some immediate minor changes to Q-SAFE were introduced on 25 October 2010. The proposed refinements to Q-SAFE are consistent with the government's road safety message with changes to exceeding the speed limit, providing an additional incentive for learner drivers to vigilantly drive within the posted speed limits. The refinements to Q-SAFE include:

- exceeding the speed limit by 1 to 4 km/h three times will result in a failed test
- exceeding the speed limit by 5 km/h or more will result in a failed test
- penalising drivers who jump the queue and turn at a set of lights instead of using the slip lane provided
- penalising drivers who drive their car over the white line for too long or unnecessarily
- penalising drivers who cross lanes when turning left or right at a multi-lane intersection, where it is permitted to commence the turn from more than one lane

In 1999, Queensland adopted the *Australian Road Rules* (ARR) into state legislation. This means that the road rules in all jurisdictions of Australia are essentially uniform. The road traffic authorities in each state or territory must agree to any significant changes to the ARR in order to preserve that uniformity. Once the ARR have been amended, these changes are then incorporated in the legislation of each state and territory. In the case of Queensland, this would be the *Queensland Road Rules* (QRR). The QRR may be accessed online at: <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/T/TrantOpRURR09.pdf>.

The government is committed to improving the safety of cyclists throughout Queensland. In 1991, as a result of a nationally agreed policy framework, legislation was introduced in Queensland that requires bicycle riders to wear an approved, securely fitted and fastened bicycle helmet when cycling. This law was introduced to reduce head injuries among cyclists in the event of a crash. A rider may be exempt from wearing a helmet if they carry a doctor's certificate confirming that they cannot wear a helmet for a stated medical reason.

Just as was the case with the compulsory introduction of seatbelts in January 1972, the decision to mandate helmet use was made at the time on the basis of a substantial body of evidence indicating a diminished risk of injury through helmet use. I acknowledge that now, nearly 20 years later, debate continues regarding the overall public health benefits of compulsory helmet wearing. However, the government believes that the road safety benefits of mandatory bicycle helmet wearing outweigh any arguments to the contrary.

While my department will continue to monitor national and international research on the benefits of wearing bicycle helmets, there are no current plans to change the legislation to remove the mandatory status of the use of bicycle helmets in Queensland.

As you are aware, the QRR provides that cyclists must dismount and walk across a pedestrian crossing, children's crossing or marked foot crossing (crossing with lights) unless there are bicycle lanterns at the crossing. However, you may be interested to know that my department is currently installing bicycle lanterns at suitable locations where pedestrian and cyclist demand is heavy, as they allow cyclists and pedestrians to be separated. Bicycle lanterns allow cyclists to ride across a crossing on a green bicycle light.

The Queensland Government is committed to improving the safety of all road users and minimising the risk of injury to cyclists through the implementation of education campaigns, policies and legislation. Information about cycling and bicycle helmets is available on the department's website at www.tmr.qld.gov.au/cycling.

In sharing Queensland roads and footpaths, all users have a responsibility to obey the laws and to consider the rights and safety of others. Further information on these rules is available on my department's website at www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Travel-and-transport/Cycling/Bike-user-guide/Road-rules-for-cyclists.aspx.

With reference to your request for a copy of the *Intergovernmental Agreement Inter-Governmental Agreement for Regulatory and Operational Reform in Road, Rail and Intermodal Transport*, this may be accessed via the National Transport Commission website at <http://www.ntc.gov.au/filemedia/general/NTCIGA.pdf>.

There are no current plans to change the existing legislation.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



RACHEL NOLAN MP
Minister for Transport