

17 September 2021

Mr Neil Scales

Director General

Department of Transport and Main Roads

BRISBANE QLD 4001

CBCEngagement@tmr.qld.gov.au

RE: Creating Better Connections

Dear Mr Scales,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ) to complete a submission to the Draft Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders (Draft Plan). The RACQ is Queensland's peak motoring organisation with a long history of advocating for improved roads and transport options on behalf of our almost 1.8 million members.

RACQ understands the need for long term infrastructure planning based on transparent and objective criteria and has been a supporter of Infrastructure Australia since its inception. We also recognise the challenge for governments and organisations to take a forward-thinking approach to future transport and connected technology, while still meeting the demands of today.

With the high cost of infrastructure, it is important that sound policy and project decisions are made that move beyond the political constraints of electoral cycles. It is in the best interest of all Australians to have a long-term vision for a sustainable, integrated and resilient transport system that meets future needs.

RACQ understands the importance of encouraging passengers to return to travel using public transport and commends the recent implementation of initiatives such as trialling bicycles on trains in peak times and the golden ticket draw to incentivise public transport patronage. We also congratulate the Government for investing in the roll out of smart ticketing initiatives and the trial of Demand Responsive Transport.

RACQ also acknowledges the role of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) in being involved in the recent Mobility as a Service trial with the University of Queensland.



Public Transport

Public transport currently suffers from low and stagnant mode share. Data published in 2006 (Connecting SEQ 2031¹) showed that 7% of trips in SEQ were made by public transport. How Queensland Travels² reports public transport mode share reached 7.5% in 2011, but had fallen to 6.4% in 2017, recovering slightly to 6.8% in 2018.

	Active Transport	Private Vehicle	Public Transport	Taxi or Rideshare
2011	9.1%	83.1%	7.5%	0.3%
2017	10.3%	82.7%	6.4%	0.6%
2018	9.9%	82.7%	6.8%	0.6%

Public transport usage varies around SEQ. Brisbane at 11.1% had the highest proportion of public transport trips, with Sunshine Coast the lowest at 3.3%, followed by the Gold Coast at 3.5%. Trips also varied by time of day. In the AM peak the mode share for public transport in Brisbane increased to 14.2%, the highest share observed in SEQ.

Public transport, like all transport infrastructure (including the road network) is funded by various levels of government and ultimately by taxpayers. In SEQ in 2013-14 public transport fares accounted for about 22% of the total cost of running the service, and the percentage is falling. In 2008-09 fares accounted for 24% of total costs. In 2013-14 the shortfall between fares and running cost (operational expenditure) was \$1,240 million, about \$400 million than in 2008-09 when the shortfall was about \$820 million³. This figure does not include the capital expenditure of building new infrastructure.

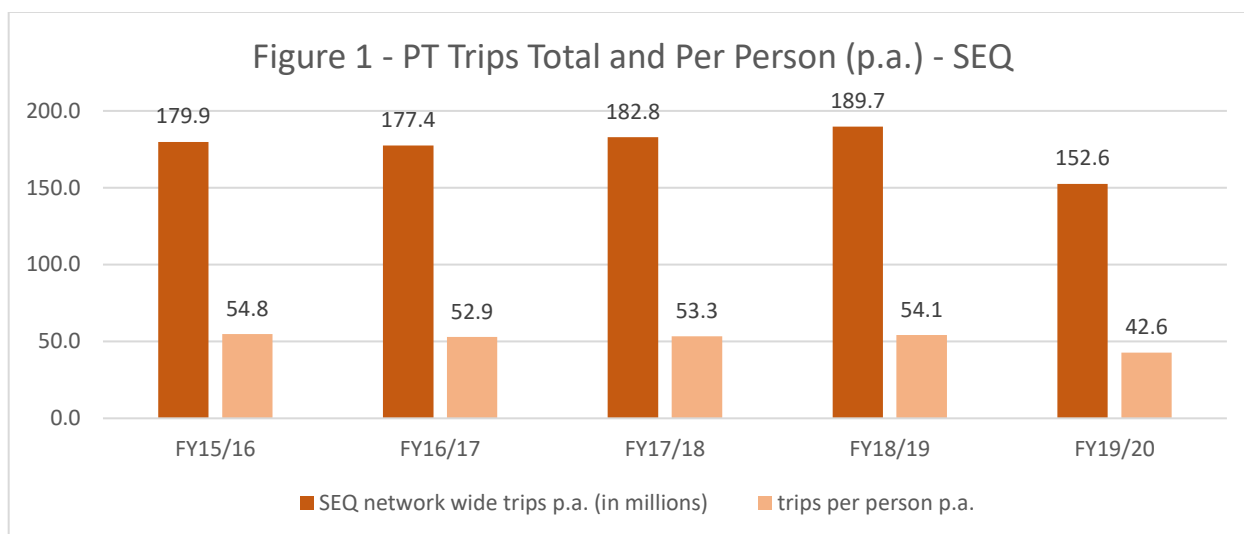
Figure 1 displays the total number of public transport trips and trips per person for FY15/16 to FY19/20. As can be observed in Figure 1, the total number of trips peaked in FY18/19 at 189.7 million trips. However, this did not equate to the highest number of trips per person. The highest number of trips per person was observed in FY15/16 when the average number of trips per person was 54.8.

The total number of trips and trips per person fell substantially in FY19/20. This was the result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns and movement restrictions. While COVID-19 presented a significant challenge to public transport operators and regulators, the fall in FY19/20 should be considered separately to the trends prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. While trips fell due to COVID-19, there were indications that trips per person per annum were in decline prior to the onset of the pandemic. As can be observed in Figure 1 the number of trips in FY18/19 at 54.1 was greater than those made in FY17/18, however it was lower than FY15/16 when 54.8 trips per person were made.

¹ *Connecting SEQ 2031*, [http://www.ppt.asn.au/pubdocs/connecting_seq2031+\(1\).pdf](http://www.ppt.asn.au/pubdocs/connecting_seq2031+(1).pdf)

² <https://public.tableau.com/profile/qldtravelsurvey#!/vizhome/QueenslandHouseholdTravelSurveyInteractiveReport/QueenslandHouseholdTravelSurvey>

³ *SEQ Fare Review - Taskforce Report*, 2016, <https://translink.com.au/sites/default/files/assets/resources/about-translink/projects-initiatives/fare-review/seq-fare-review-taskforce-report.pdf>

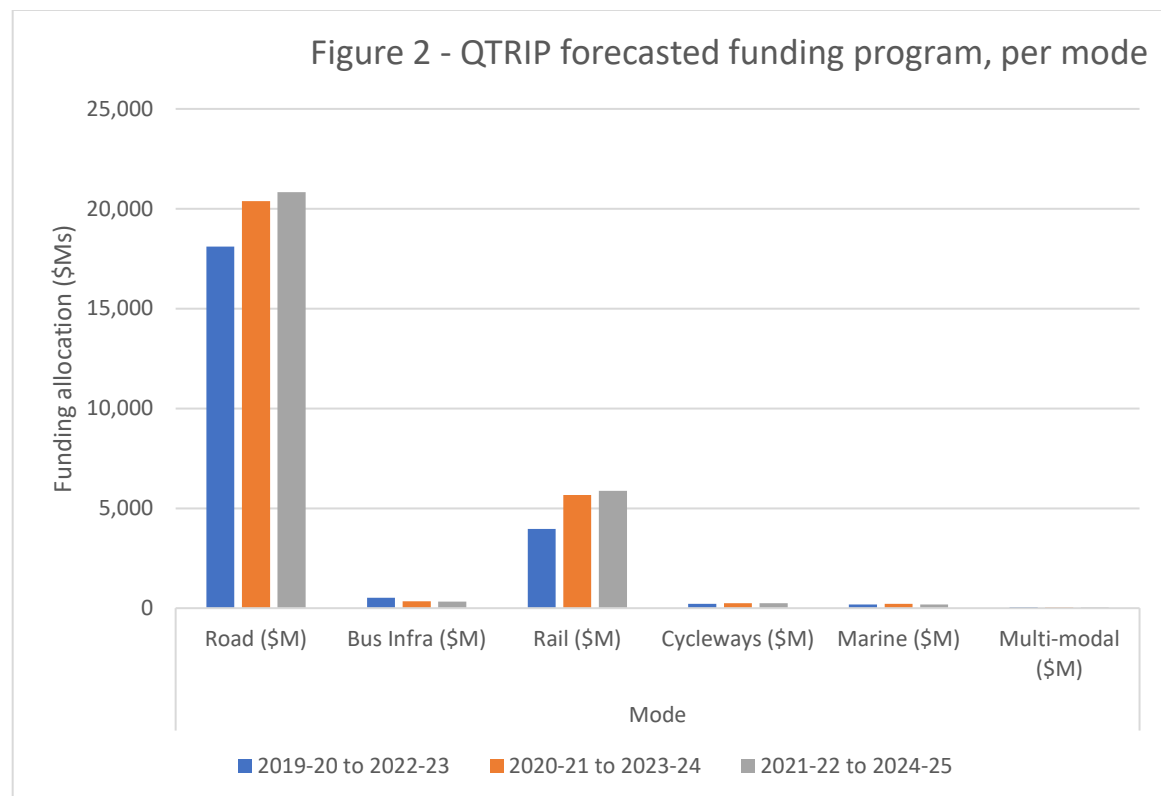


Source: (Queensland Government, *TransLink PT Performance Dashboard*, <https://translink.com.au/about-translink/reports-and-publications/performance>) (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, <https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-estimates/regions#current-release-estimated-resident-population-abs-consultancy>)

Investment in public transport

RACQ encourages TMR to commit to a higher proportion of funding for public transport to achieve the priorities outlined in the draft plan. The projected investment in Queensland over the 2021/22 financial year for public transport infrastructure (accounting for railways, bus infrastructure and multimodal/other infrastructure) is \$6.23B, shown in figure 2. While it is accepted that these figures don't mirror the 'true' investment in public transport over the financial year (as it is likely that some public transport projects would fall within allocated road funding and QTRIP excludes Cross River Rail funding), it does illustrate that achieving a funding model that results in more investment to realise the goal of a high quality and efficient public transport network is critical.

Figure 2 - QTRIP forecasted funding program, per mode



First Mile/Last Mile Mobility

The demand upon park 'n' rides within suburban transport nodes highlights the common trend of commuters utilising private vehicles as the preferred mode of first mile/last mile travel. However, journey travel data suggests that most commuters who use a park 'n' ride station generally live within the same suburb (~60%) – meaning that they are travelling short distances in their cars to access a public transport service.

In addition to investment in park 'n' ride capacity, RACQ suggests that the delivery of end of trip facilities and bicycle storage lockers be incorporated into the decision-making process as ways to encourage active transport to public transport services. Improving pedestrian and cycling paths along with increasing bus service frequency and extending service areas (including consideration of on-demand shuttle services) to connect with public transport stations are other alternative and complimentary solutions, including for emerging e-mobility devices.

However, there are currently policy barriers which limit the viability of e-mobility devices providing first and last mile connections with public transport. A lack of consistency in defining devices, and restrictions on which modes and times various devices can be taken on public transport services, means that using these devices to access services will not be feasible for many journeys. It is recommended Council (Transport for Brisbane) and TransLink update their device categorisation and modal policies to maximise potential for these devices to be used at the start and end of trips. Where not feasible, requirements for



secure storage solutions should be identified and installed. RACQ will continue to monitor the results of the six-month trial of bikes and scooters on trains.

Overall, improving the active and bus travel capability to and from public transport hubs and interchanges will complement the investment in traditional park 'n' ride facilities, increase public transport patronage and support first and last mile travel options.

Network reform

RACQ recognises that with all public transport networks there is a trade-off to be made between patronage and coverage. Designing a network to maximise patronage would make the service more profitable and would reduce the need for subsidy, but this would lead to limited coverage leaving many areas without any public transport services. In contrast designing a network to maximise coverage reduces fare box recovery, leads to low patronage and the need for increased subsidies. However, these types of high coverage, low patronage services maybe considered desirable as a community obligation service. Both types of service can and should operate on the same network, but community obligation services should be clearly identified and operated on that basis. Attempting to run these types of service as a profitable service will fail. Alternative services such as demand responsive services may prove more cost effective than a fixed route service in areas of historic low patronage.

The transition from coverage services to passenger services⁴ will improve the viability of public transport as an alternative to private vehicle trips. RACQ research has found that the two biggest barriers to people using public transport are cost and time, and a way to address these two elements is by transforming to a frequency service network that connects key destinations such as principal activity centres, business districts and transport interchanges. The Public Transport Infrastructure Manual (PTIM) highlights that there are benefits and implications for each type of service, coverage and passenger, and that there needs to be balance across the network. However, it is suggested that as South East Queensland regional centres continue to grow, the implementation of higher frequency and more direct services to major centres and key transport interchanges should also be increased.

COVID-19 has highlighted that the nature of travel and commuting is changing and as a result it is recommended that higher frequency trips be provided to service major centres within local government areas to facilitate viable public transport journeys for intra-LGA trips. For example, high frequency services connecting Caboolture South to Caloundra or Beerburum station, or high frequency services connecting Redland Bay with Victoria Point and Cleveland.

The Draft Plan highlights that approximately 75% of the population in SEQ is within 400m of a public transport stop⁵. However, RACQ suggests that proximity to a public transport stop does not support efficient and effective public transport travel. For example, if a commuter is within 400m of a stop but the service has low frequency (i.e., 30 minutes - 1 hour service) and long journey times (45 minutes or more) it is unlikely to be an attractive or viable transport option.

⁴ Department of Transport and Main Roads, Public Transport Infrastructure Manual, 2020, p33

⁵ Creating Better Connections, Setting the Context: Our System, page 17



Governance reform

The RACQ supports high-quality public transport that improves accessibility and mobility for Queenslanders and increases the efficiency and resilience of the transport network.

Queenslanders surveyed by the RACQ recorded low levels of satisfaction with public transport relative to other transport options. The three major issues identified include a lack of service availability, poor timetables, and repeated transfers required to reach a destination⁶. It is important to note that the content of the Draft Plan does seek to address these areas of dissatisfaction. However, RACQ believes that there is an opportunity for Queensland to compare to benchmark operators such as Western Australia's TransPerth⁷, which operates within an integrated public transit authority model.

RACQ believes that Queensland would benefit from a public transport authority that has sufficient integration and independence in the planning, delivery and operation of public transport. At present there are multiple "silos" involved in the provision of public transport in Queensland acts as a barrier to adopting an agile, whole-of-system approach to the planning and operation of public transport services.

A more independent public transport authority would likely overcome these barriers and has the potential to deliver a range of benefits to Government including reduced costs by removing overlapping and shared services, and further optimisation of reliability, efficiency and accessibility through the adoption of mobility enhancing technology and services.

We thank you again for the invitation to make a submission and trust that our submission is of assistance. Further comments specifically addressing content in the Draft Plan have been attached to this correspondence for your consideration and review. If you wish to discuss the contents, please do not hesitate to contact RACQ's Transport Planning and Infrastructure Advisor, Tim Mitchell, on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,



⁶ RACQ Transport Priorities Survey 2017

⁷ Translink PT Performance Dashboard, accessed 25 June 2020; TransPerth Passenger Satisfaction Monitor, 2019

Attachment 1: Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders – RACQ specific comments

Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders	Page No.	RACQ Comments
RELIABLE AND SAFE SERVICES		
› planning improvements on the Cleveland line to improve travel time reliability	28	RACQ recommends that this key project be amended to commit to duplicating Cleveland line between Manly and Cleveland.
› identifying priority level crossings for upgrades to improve the performance, safety, and resilience of the transport network for all users.	28	RACQ recommends this key project be amended to 'identify, develop and deliver a SEQ level crossing upgrade program similar to Victoria's for priority crossings including grade separation where required. This is a high priority project that should be delivered by 2030.
A network of bus priority corridors <i>A network of high-frequency bus priority corridors will be implemented progressively over the next 10 years.</i>	29	RACQ recommends that there is a clear commitment for the delivery of Eastern Busway and Northern Busway projects.
RESPONSIVE TO CHANGING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS		
Building on the success of Brisbane's busway services	38	RACQ welcomes the commitment to work with Brisbane City Council to improve capacity along the South East Busway, however we would hope to see a similar commitment be extended to transport providers and local governments in South East Queensland as well as major regional areas to improve public transport in those areas as well.
 › partner with developers and local governments to influence travel choices when new housing and commercial developments are in construction	39	RACQ recommends this objective should be expanded to incorporate engaging with local governments' during the preparation and development of local government planning schemes. This is a significant body of work that guides development and will be more effective to help implement better public transport initiatives/ outcomes if there is more guidance from the very start, rather than when a development application is proposed.
SEAMLESS END TO END JOURNEYS		

Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders	Page No.	RACQ Comments
 provide better quality information about connections in real time and options to transfer to other passenger transport services	47	RACQ suggests that to reduce anxiety for people catching connecting services or using public transport to visit new places, Translink consider incorporating digital displays within buses noting time and distance to next stop. This initiative would be useful for passengers knowing when their stop is approaching and improve the confidence of PT users or those that do not have smart phones.
Investing in parking for cars and bikes <i>There is a forward program of investment in <u>park 'n'rides and bike riding improvements</u> at public transport stations that will continue throughout the decade.</i>	48	RACQ recommends in addition to identifying the intention for greater investment in end of trip facilities at public transport stops, that a review of the Public Transport Infrastructure Manual (PTIM) be undertaken to ensure design requirements for end of trip facilities aligns with best practice. In addition to the commitment of 'investing in parking for cars and bikes' RACQ would like to see Translink include an internal governance initiative where active transport options – such as pathway improvements and end of trip facilities are part of the business case planning process, as opposed to solely park 'n' ride expansions.
More options to get to and from a stop or station <i>Improved first and last mile solutions will be implemented progressively over the next 10 years.</i>	49	RACQ welcomes the commitment to improve first and last mile solutions, Translink is encouraged to articulate tangible options, such as: • Working with local governments to improve pathway network surrounding transport stops, • Introducing programs for end of trip facilities, • Improving safety and security around transport nodes so commuters feel safe at all times. • Update their device categorisation and modal policies to maximise potential for e-scooters/e-mobility devices to be used at the start and end of trips. Where not feasible, requirements for secure storage solutions should be identified and installed.
EASY AND ACCESSIBLE		

Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders	Page No.	RACQ Comments																																																						
Compare the fare <i>Minutes a person would have to work at minimum and average wage rates to afford the lowest available return fare</i> <i>Minutes worked at minimum wage Minutes worked at average wage</i> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>City/Region</th> <th>Minutes worked at minimum wage</th> <th>Minutes worked at average wage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Berlin</td><td>36.56</td><td>18.9</td></tr> <tr><td>Chicago (Rail)</td><td>36.36</td><td>11.25</td></tr> <tr><td>London (Rail)</td><td>35.08</td><td>17.37</td></tr> <tr><td>Chicago (Bus)</td><td>32.73</td><td>10.12</td></tr> <tr><td>Beijing (Rail)</td><td>28.8</td><td>11.08</td></tr> <tr><td>Portland</td><td>27.91</td><td>11.11</td></tr> <tr><td>Melbourne</td><td>27.09</td><td>17.06</td></tr> <tr><td>Adelaide</td><td>22.78</td><td>14.34</td></tr> <tr><td>Sydney (Rail)</td><td>22.23</td><td>13.99</td></tr> <tr><td>London (Bus)</td><td>21.92</td><td>10.86</td></tr> <tr><td>South East Qld</td><td>20.38</td><td>12.83</td></tr> <tr><td>Canberra</td><td>19.83</td><td>12.48</td></tr> <tr><td>Darwin</td><td>18.47</td><td>11.63</td></tr> <tr><td>Hobart</td><td>17.24</td><td>10.85</td></tr> <tr><td>Perth</td><td>15.76</td><td>9.92</td></tr> <tr><td>Sydney (Bus)</td><td>13.79</td><td>8.68</td></tr> <tr><td>Auckland</td><td>13.22</td><td>7.01</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <i>Sources: Ninesquared, ILQ, ABS (Aust), StatsNZ, BLS (US)</i>	City/Region	Minutes worked at minimum wage	Minutes worked at average wage	Berlin	36.56	18.9	Chicago (Rail)	36.36	11.25	London (Rail)	35.08	17.37	Chicago (Bus)	32.73	10.12	Beijing (Rail)	28.8	11.08	Portland	27.91	11.11	Melbourne	27.09	17.06	Adelaide	22.78	14.34	Sydney (Rail)	22.23	13.99	London (Bus)	21.92	10.86	South East Qld	20.38	12.83	Canberra	19.83	12.48	Darwin	18.47	11.63	Hobart	17.24	10.85	Perth	15.76	9.92	Sydney (Bus)	13.79	8.68	Auckland	13.22	7.01	54	South East Queensland ranks the 11th most expensive city/region in the world when the affordability of the lowest available return fare is compared to minimum wage earnings. This highlights the importance and need for fare restructure. Based on current fare data, the lowest possible fare would consist of travelling within 1 zone, during off-peak, with a concession which would currently be \$1.35⁸. When comparing fare and zone structure it is reasonable to note that the cost of fares for commuters in more regional areas (travelling to a major centre) is significantly higher than those who live closer to the Brisbane CBD or a major urban centre (i.e., northern Gold Coast). RACQ suggests that Translink consider a review of fare zones to reduce costs for those making long distance journeys. Reducing the cost of longer trips would help promote public transport journeys over private vehicles and may reduce peak congestion on key road corridors.
City/Region	Minutes worked at minimum wage	Minutes worked at average wage																																																						
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⁸ <https://translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/fares-and-zones/current-fares>

Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders	Page No.	RACQ Comments
 › make the network fair for everyone by ensuring customers pay their fair share	56	The above action is ambiguous and can be interpreted as calling for greater enforcement on the public transport network to reduce fare evasion. RACQ suggests that this action be re-phrased to state that <i>“the network is fair and equitable by ensuring it is affordable for all customers.”</i>
ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE		
Autonomous Vehicles in action Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) have the potential to improve the overall environmental footprint of the transport fleet and improve safety outcomes. TMR has developed an AV trial permit and application guide to ensure that AV trials are conducted on a transparent and consistent basis, accessible to all members of the community and compliant with relevant vehicle and safety standards. The first substantial trial of an AV passenger service was the RACQ Smart Shuttle which was operated by Redlands City Council on a fixed loop route on Karragarra Island, and a further trial is underway in Raby Bay.	63	RACQ recommends that this section in the Draft Plan be updated, noting that the Raby Bay Trial has concluded. The RACQ Smart Shuttle is part of a five-year automated vehicle program which is seeking to understand various transport issues, including: • transport disadvantage • safety of autonomous vehicles • their suitability to Queensland driving conditions • how they interact with other road users. Also please note that it is “Redland City Council”, not “Redlands City Council”.