



Committee Secretary
Transport and Public Works Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane 4000

24 January 2020

Dear Committee Secretary

Re: QDN Submission to the Transport Legislation (Disability Parking and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) welcomes the opportunity to make a brief submission to the Transport Legislation (Disability Parking Permit Scheme) Amendment Bill 2019.

QDN is an organisation of, for, and with people with disability with over 2000 members and supporters. QDN operates a state-wide network of members who provide information, feedback and views from the lived experience of people with disability to inform systemic policy feedback to Government and peak bodies.

QDN commends the Bill, which will expand the Disability Parking Permit Scheme to include persons with a vision impairment who are legally blind. QDN also supports the intention of the Bill to increase the current penalty for illegally parking in a disability parking space from \$266 to \$533. QDN also acknowledges minor amendments in the Bill to suspend or cancel permits for those no longer eligible and technical amendments to Queensland's rail safety regulations to ensure a nationally consistent approach.

In making our submission QDN recognises the work of QDN member Elisha Wright who made a submission and spoke at the committee's public hearing into the Bill on behalf of the "No Permit, No Park" campaign. QDN acknowledges Ms Wright's advocacy on this issue and congratulates her and the broader "No Permit, No Park" campaign on increasing public awareness around issues with accessible parking. Ms Wright's work is an example of how including people with disability in the public policy development process ensures legislation better responds to the needs of those most impacted by any amendments and ultimately leads to more inclusive and connected communities.

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QDN acknowledges that carparks in crowded shopping centres and on busy roads can be hazardous environments for people who are blind or vision impaired to negotiate independently and applauds any effort to create safer environments for all Queenslanders.

QDN has sought feedback from our members in preparing this submission. While support for the Bill has been overwhelmingly positive, members are concerned that increasing the number of permits without reviewing current numbers or quotas for accessible parking may result in not enough available parking spaces for permit users.

QDN urges the Queensland Government to undertake a review of the current requirement of two disability parking spaces per 100 spaces. QDN acknowledges the complexity of this issue as the number of on-street disability parking spaces is a local government matter. However, providing guidance to local governments and other key stakeholders on the optimum number and location for disability parking spaces would lead to greater inclusivity and consistency across the state.

Furthermore, QDN notes that off-street parking is regulated by the National Construction Code. In 2010, a national review was conducted of disability parking schemes across all states and territories. This review resulted in the introduction of a nationally recognised disability parking permit and minimum standards for disability parking concessions and required the approval of the COAG Ministerial Council. QDN notes that it has been a decade since this national approach was established and urges the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to lobby to have COAG review current disability parking schemes. In particular, consideration should be made to increasing quotas under the National Construction Code, and adopting a nationally consistent approach around the eligibility requirements for those who are blind or vision impaired, similar to those outlined in the Bill currently before the Committee.

People with disability have been impacted for years by the inappropriate use of disability parking spaces by some members of the general public. QDN members broadly support increased fines for the inappropriate use of a disability parking space as outlined in the Bill. However, some QDN members believe this offense should also attract demerit points. QDN supports this idea for on-street parking and acknowledges that further thought would be required on how to achieve this for off-street parking. QDN recommends enforcing inappropriate use of on-street disability parking spaces as a traffic offence that attracts a fine and demerit points, and that further research be undertaken as to how this would apply to off-street parking. Furthermore, QDN recommends increasing the number of inspectors or police to monitor the use of disability parking spaces and acknowledges that responses to this may differ in private and public spaces.



QDN believes there is merit in the solution proposed in Ms Wright's submission that: *"the state government [explore] legislation to make the changes necessary to allow council parking inspectors to enter into these highly abused areas for the purposes of monitoring disability parking without restriction to take the pressure off police and allow more effective management of disability parking laws"*.

The importance of an effective Disability Parking Permit Scheme and the availability of accessible parking spaces for people with disability cannot be overstated. QDN members have repeatedly raised examples of when the lack of accessible parking spaces has prevented them from buying basic groceries or attending doctors' appointments. This has broader flow on effects for the entire community, including poorer health outcomes, less money being spent in local businesses and an increase in social isolation. QDN believes the Bill goes some way towards addressing issues associated with accessible parking and making the Disability Parking Permit Scheme more effective and would support the Bill being passed by the Queensland Parliament.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief submission. If you have any further questions, please call QDN on 1300 363 783.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paige Armstrong'.

Paige Armstrong
Chief Executive Officer
Queenslanders with Disability Network