




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Road Safety, Distracted Driving

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.11 am): Queensland drivers illegally using mobile phones, endangering their lives and other people's lives, have been put on notice. From 1 February next year they will face the toughest penalties in Australia to make Queensland roads safer. Under the changes the Palaszczuk government is announcing today, drivers caught illegally on their mobile phones will be fined \$1,000 for their first offence. Demerit points for this offence will increase from three to four. If drivers are caught a second time within 12 months, double demerit points will still apply, rising from six demerit points to eight demerit points, and they could lose their licence for a second offence. These are tough penalties but they are necessary to reduce fatalities and tragedies caused by crashes involving distracted drivers.

In 2018, 33 people died on Queensland roads in crashes involving distracted drivers. Another 1,358 people were hospitalised in distracted driving crashes in 2018. This is totally unacceptable. The terrible truth is that the real numbers of deaths and severe injury are certainly much higher. Due to difficulties investigators often face in determining driver distraction as the cause of a crash in the aftermath of a crash, the true number of people being killed or injured is under-reported. Reaching for the phone to send a quick text or check social media when your eyes should be on the road is as dangerous as driving drunk. A driver's slower response time while texting is comparable to that of a drunk driver with a blood alcohol level of between .07 and .10. It is a deadly habit that has been escalating and now is the time for it to stop.

Queenslanders want action, and they are getting it. More than 1,250 Queenslanders responded to our online survey on this issue earlier this year and an overwhelming number of those commenting supported an increase in penalties for distracted driving. In July the Palaszczuk government hosted Australia's first ever Distracted Driving Summit to push this issue onto the national road safety agenda. The summit brought together vehicle manufacturers, tech companies, insurers, telco companies, road safety specialists and legal professionals to discuss solutions to distracted driving. With these road safety reforms announced today, Queensland is leading the way nationally.

Now is the time to send the strongest possible message on distracted driving. Road safety campaigns on distracted driving will run early next year ahead of the 1 February changes and we are giving people two months notice of this kicking in. Most of us will spend time in the car with family and friends over the summer holiday break, so with Christmas approaching I say to anyone out there who is still using their mobile illegally while driving: now is the time to once and for all deal with the phone before every single drive. I urge all Queenslanders to have that conversation about distracted driving with their family, with their friends and with their workmates. Give the phone to your passenger, put it in the glove box or set it to the 'do not disturb' setting so that you are not distracted while you are driving and so your eyes are on the road—where they need to be. Let us make this the safest Christmas on Queensland roads that we have ever had. Distracted driving needs to become as socially unacceptable

as drink-driving because it is the same risk to other drivers and other people on our roads. This is actually a small but crucial change to our driving routine but it is one that could save your life or the life of someone else.