

Question on Notice

No. 1443

Asked on Tuesday, 30 August 2016

MS FARMER asked the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (HON M BAILEY) —

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what are the most successful strategies TMR has employed to reduce risks for vulnerable drivers?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Bulimba for the question.

For the first time in Queensland's history, the Palaszczuk Government appointed a Minister for Road Safety and launched an ambitious strategy to save lives.

The Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2015–21 introduces a vision of zero road deaths and serious injuries which, supported by the *Action Plan 2015–17*, is a genuine commitment to keep our communities safe. We are well on the way to delivering our current two-year action plan, investing over \$500 million in 57 key initiatives. This includes a number of successful strategies to reduce the risks for our most vulnerable groups on the road – that is, young drivers, motorcycle riders and bicycle riders.

Young drivers

It has long been recognised that young drivers are one of our most at-risk road user groups, due to the combination of age, inexperience and risk-taking behaviour.

Queensland's graduated licensing system, introduced in 2007, is based on evidence that the most effective way to reduce young driver crashes is the accumulation of extensive driving experience in a range of real-world driving conditions. It aims to encourage safer, more proficient drivers by allowing novice drivers to gain more experience and improve their overall driving skills as they progress through the licensing system. A key item of the action plan is to further evaluate the Queensland graduated licensing system and consider further options to improve young driver safety through education, training and licensing. I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes of this evaluation.

The Community Road Safety Grants program supports community organisations deliver road safety projects and programs throughout the State. I was delighted to recently announce that more than \$8.4 million will be shared between Queensland schools, community groups and councils to improve road safety in their local areas during the next three years.

The grants have been expanded to target education and mentoring programs for senior school students and novice drivers. A good example of such a program is the Prevent Alcohol and Risk-related Trauma in Youth (PARTY) injury awareness program and RACQ's Docudrama program which operates through high schools. These programs add to the young driver experience by providing teenagers with information about trauma to enable them to recognise potential injury producing situations, make prevention orientated choices and adopt behaviours that minimise unnecessary risk.

We have also recently released the Queensland learner logbook app. Completing a learner logbook is now quicker and easier than ever. The app allows users to electronically record and store their driving hours – all from the convenience of the user's smartphone or tablet. It also enables users to electronically submit their completed hours directly to TMR for processing. Not only does this function save time and money by eliminating the need to mail a completed logbook to TMR, but the instant submission process means that TMR will be able to start checking submitted logbooks sooner.

This government is committed to listening to people and encouraging creative thinking. A campaign created by young people for young people to reduce risk taking behaviour on our roads has already reached over 4.7 million people with 2.7 million views via social media, since its launch on 20 June. The 'Settle down Stallion' campaign idea was generated at the Co-Lab Youth Innovation Challenge held in 2015 where young people tackled ways to get the road safety message across to their peers. As the winning Co-Lab solution, the 'Settle down Stallion' team had the chance to develop their concept into an online and social media campaign. The campaign uses humour to target young men and their social networks with the aim of stigmatising unsafe driving and speeding.

Following on from this we will be running a second Co-Lab Road Safety Challenge in October to tackle the issue of mobile phone use while driving. This is part of our highly successful Join the Drive to Save Lives social change program. Join the Drive to Save Lives aims to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads by moving to a more positive and empowering communication approach. It strives to give the community the tools and inspiration to do something positive about road safety. The Join the Drive Facebook page has a strong online community with 117,000 followers and growing.

Motorcycle riders

Motorcycle riders and passengers are one of the most vulnerable road user groups, and tragically continue to be over-represented in the Queensland road toll. This government is committed to improving the safety of motorcycle riders and passengers.

The government is changing motorcycle licencing to improve the skills and safety of Queensland riders and better prepare them for their time on road. The reforms will be introduced from October and aim to ensure novice motorcycle riders have the appropriate skills, experience and attitudes to ride safely.

More than \$11 million in infrastructure projects is being spent over four years 2014–15 to 2017–18 to reduce the severity of crashes at motorcycle black spots.

We launched 'The Perfect Ride' motorcycle safety campaign, which focused on recreational riding in 2015–16. The television commercial showed that hazards beyond the control of the rider can occur no matter how skilled the rider is.

In July we launched a new campaign, 'Sixth Sense', which will run until October. The campaign includes an online commercial featuring motorcycling legend, Mick Doohan, who explains how developing and honing a 'sixth sense' will help riders stay safe. The campaign is for all riders whether new to bikes, riding all their lives or coming back to riding after a break.

A series of videos on cornering, group riding, returning riders, and roadcraft has been developed and is available on the Join the Drive to Save Lives website. This also includes a comprehensive motorcycle riders' guide including Queensland's favourite rides and what to look out for while out on the road.

I am pleased to say that the campaign has already reached more than 3 million people and over 664,000 people have viewed the video.

Bicycle riders

Improving the safety of bicycle riders is another key priority.

On 7 April this year, I announced that the trial of road rules requiring drivers to keep a minimum distance when passing a bicycle rider was here to stay in Queensland. This was positive news for bicycle riders, who are among our most vulnerable road users. The evaluation of the rule found it had been successful in improving motorists' awareness of riders on the network. Out on the road, a metre can make a serious difference.

The government is investing over \$162 million into high-priority cycle infrastructure over the next four years, including more than \$84 million in cycle infrastructure on the state-controlled road network. This will deliver better cycling facilities, improved safety and convenience of cycle networks and encourage more people to cycle.

Development of a new cycling strategy for Queensland is also currently underway. Our goal is to encourage more people to cycle, more often, and improved safety outcomes are an important part of this. I invited Queenslanders to have their say on the strategy in April as part of public consultation, which included an online survey and written submissions. I am looking forward to the strategy's release.

Safer roads for Queensland

Our most vulnerable road users will also benefit from other initiatives in our action plan.

Our road safety action plan includes an investment of \$300 million over the two years of the action plan through the Targeted Road Safety Program to make our road network safer and more forgiving for everyone. The package includes improved rest areas, wide centre line treatments and audible edge lines which will assist in reducing fatigue and head on related crashes. Verge clearing, intersection improvements, shoulder seals, safety barriers and critical maintenance will decrease the amount and severity of crashes. One year into the action plan, over \$151 million has been expended with 196 projects completed in 2015–16.

I know that the Member is a strong advocate for road safety, and I thank her for her efforts in continuing to raise this important issue in her local community.