



**Smart Travel Choices
Queensland Transport
Brisbane 4001**

**Submission from:
Queensland Conservation Council**

The Department of Transport (QT) Green Paper-Smart Travel Choices for South East Queensland.

The Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) is the 'peak' environment organisation in Queensland, with over 70 member organisations across the State. The QCC would like to thank QT for the opportunity to submit an opinion on the Smart Travel Choices green paper.

The QCC would like to commend Queensland Transport (QT) for developing the green paper, *Smart Travel Choices for South East Queensland*.

The matters raised in the green paper are fundamental to our way of life and signal a significant, and required, shift in the way we travel during our daily lives.

One of the fundamental flaws the QCC sees in the whole transport debate is the lack of general community awareness on the adverse impacts of increased car use on our environment and our economic future. We suggest that more public dialogue at this time on the transport green paper, could have contributed to greater awareness.

The QCC supports the overall direction and intent of the paper and encourages QT to develop a Transport White paper that translates this direction and applies effective actions to achieving the declared outcomes of less car use and more public/alternative transportation in SEQ.

Smart Travel Choices for SEQ Green Paper

The Transport green paper recognises the need to move away from our dependence upon the car, in favour of more sustainable forms of transport.

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It makes clear, our quality of life and our future are dependent upon us changing our current travel choices.

It notes that 80% of all travel in SEQ is made by the private motor vehicle, that public transport has plateaued at 7-8% and that alternatives, such as walking/cycling to work, have declined in use.

These figures show that, despite government initiatives to encourage '*smarter choices*' the community has actually increased its use of the motor car, to the extent that Brisbane is the second highest city in Australia for car use.

Whilst an increase in population has had an impact, it is noted that car use has actually increased by more than the increase in population.

It is clear that more vigorous and effective action needs to be taken to reverse these trends. The QCC believes that the significant messages from the Smart Travel Choices green paper that need to be addressed are:

- that current actions are not working to change behaviour
- that there is a lack of general community understanding on the adverse impacts that car use has on our way of life
- that urgent action needs to be taken before rising oil prices begin to further impact vulnerable communities and undermine regional prosperity and lifestyle

QCC Key Issues

1. Climate Change

QCC believes that Queensland must reduce its CO₂ and vehicle emissions. Currently transport represents about 12% of the States CO₂ emissions. This needs to be capped and reduced, ideally, in accordance with a State Strategy on Greenhouse emission reduction. Similarly, vehicle emissions also need to be capped and reduced.

2. Peak Oil

Queensland's future is likely to be dominated by rising fuel prices, associated with a peak in global oil production. Whilst the impact of rising fuel prices will affect everyone, there are some particularly vulnerable communities and suburbs in SEQ that will be significantly affected. Transport planners need to recognise this emerging and imminent issue. The problem of peak oil in itself, makes a shift in our transport culture away from the current high use of the motor car absolutely essential.

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3. Road Network Affordability

At a practical level, SEQ cannot afford to build an ever-growing road network to support increased car use (Government funding alone being in excess of \$5.6 billion over next 5 years). Designing road networks to satisfy current and future demand becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy-car use simply increases to fill the extra capacity.

As the NSW government has found, transferring costs to private enterprise to provide new road infrastructure creates its own political problems.

4. Health and Pollution

As the green paper acknowledges, pollution and health problems from car use are significant. 70% of SEQ's air pollution and 10% of greenhouse pollution are caused by motor vehicles. Health problems associated with air quality are estimated at \$500 million per year.

5. Community Building

A dependence upon the private motor vehicle has created community separation. Communities become isolated from others, individuals from their neighbours, not being able to drive becoming a serious social disadvantage (30% of residents in SEQ do not have a drivers licence).

On the other hand, communities built around public transport nodes, communities built as car-free suburbs or with pedestrian accessibility a feature, actually build a sense of community.

Reverse the current car-based culture

QCC believes a three step approach should be taken. Build an alternative, user-friendly transport network, promote and use incentives to encourage its use and discourage and penalise individual car use.

Such a carrot and stick approach has proven successful in many parts of the world. London, for example, which has suffered chronic traffic congestion despite expensive infrastructure 'solutions', has witnessed a dramatic improvement since the introduction of a congestion charging system targeting individual car use. Many other cities have successfully used similar initiatives.

QCC believes that the government needs to take note of international knowledge. What we are experiencing has already happened overseas, we need to use those learnings.

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An incentives-focussed approach may be more politically palatable but, to date has proven largely ineffective. What is required is a carrot and stick approach.

To change the political condition for such an approach, QT should more publicly acknowledge the imminent threats of climate change, peak oil, health and pollution and network costs to push community understanding of alternative transport.

These threats require urgent attention. Another spike in oil prices, for instance, would be disastrous for identified vulnerable communities and create significant political and cost issues.

Strategic Goals

The QCC strongly urges QT to develop a Transport White Paper that places climate change, peak oil, road network costs, health and pollution and community building at the top of its policy agenda.

1. Targets for CO2 reductions and vehicle emissions should be set and reported against
2. Identified *oil vulnerable* communities given priority status for the provision of public and alternative transport services
3. Priority given to public transport infrastructure
4. New suburbs built according to Smart Travel Choices criteria.
Promoting these suburbs as urban villages that provide alternative travel.
5. Promote the health benefits of active travel

QCC recommends that any Smart Travel Choices initiatives developed from this process be accompanied by a major promotional campaign. As noted above, it is the relative lack of community awareness on these issues that represents the major impediment to public acceptance and uptake.

In 2006, 80% of all travel was by private motor vehicle and 20% by public and alternative means. In 2026, the QCC believes that position should be reversed.

1. Public Transport

Make public transport a real choice.

QCC recommendations:

- Extending discounts and rewards to encourage greater use of bus, train and ferries

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- A Frequent User Reward Scheme
- Heavily promoting new services (free introductory travel)
- Integrate and improve flexibility between public transport options
- Extending the availability of public transport-particularly in new developments
- Improve quality of services-particularly comfort standards
- Providing employment packages that include public transport allowances(begin with State Government employees)
- Research and implement initiatives that constantly improve services and encourage more patronage
- All major roads to include a public transport corridor for complimentary or future development

2. Active Transport Options (Better access for pedestrians and cyclists)

QCC recommendations:

- Build a connected network of walk/cycle ways designed as an independent, safe and user-friendly alternative to the road network
- The network to be strategically developed so that user uptake is optimised. This may mean an additional focus upon suburbs and areas where there are better prospects for uptake.ie closer to CBD, existing networks that could be improved
- Design alternative networks around the most direct and attractive routes
- Develop workplace facilities for walkers and cyclists
- Improved access on public transport, particularly trains and ferries
- Link walking and cycle tracks to public transport hubs
- Promote walk/cycle routes to communities
- Use government fuel subsidies to funding alternative and public transport

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- More car-free suburbs
- Support and promote initiatives such as car pooling

3. Location

It is imperative to have well located and accessible goods, services, jobs and recreational facilities that avoid or reduce the need for car travel.

QCC recommendations:

- Plan new suburbs around transport nodes, and shopping centres to optimise community building and reduce car use
- Encourage local business development through initiatives such as transit oriented development
- More purchase of land for future public transport

4. Parking

QCC believes it is essential to use parking supply and parking costs as a disincentive for private car use.

QCC Recommendations:

- Impose a public transport levy on all parking places in CBD and other congested areas (revenue used to subsidise public transport)
- Restrict further supply of car parking in CBD

5. Promoting Choice

- Extend the Travelsmart communities program
- Heavily promote and market tailored public transport
- Support Travelsmart workplace, schools and events programs
- Promote public transport adjacent to heavily congested roads
- Require car advertisements to carry a health and environment warning

6. Traffic Management

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QCC recommendations:

- Investigate CBD congestion charging/e-tags
- Discounted registration fees for fuel efficient vehicles
- Discounted registrations for low kilometre vehicles
- Reduce maximum speed limits
- Remove govt fuel subsidies for urban users

7. Freight

QCC strongly urges that greater priority be given to the rail network generally. In the long term, QT should be looking at the potential for replacing the road network with a rail network for freight.

QCC Recommendations:

- Build on regional rail freight capacity
- Design road freight infrastructure as a supportive network to rail
- Provide rail freight with a competitive advantage over road freight
- Promote rail freight as a preferred option

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