The Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ) is calling for the Queensland Government to take actions to protect road users, address traffic congestion, and increase productivity in the next State Budget. RACQ has a long history of lobbying for safe and affordable transport and we represent more than 1.6 million members covering 60 percent of households in Queensland.

Queensland needs safer, good quality roads and transport systems to drive productivity and grow the economy. The ability to efficiently move people and goods is essential to improved productivity. Unfortunately, this is being hindered in Queensland by a backlog of transport infrastructure needs.

In the last two years, Queensland Budget funding for transport and roads has dropped to the lowest level in a decade. We ask the State Government to address this and make transport infrastructure a priority. The investment needs to be in high-quality transport projects, so for this reason we also call on the Government to publish comprehensive infrastructure business cases prior to selecting which projects to construct.

The RACQ welcomed the introduction of the National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) in 2016. In order to help maintain the affordability of car registration and Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance, RACQ seeks a freeze on vehicle registration charges. We also urge the State Government to restore funding for the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council.

Our submission to the Queensland Government Budget Process specifically asks that the 2017-18 State Budget:

- Increase Queensland road and transport investment in 2017-18
- Allocate funding to progress key transport projects
- Publish full transport infrastructure business cases
- Restore National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council funding
- Freeze vehicle registration charges for three years
1. Increase Queensland road and transport investment in 2017-18

In the last two years budgeted capital funding for transport and road infrastructure has fallen to the lowest levels in a decade. Queensland Budget funding in 2015-16 and 2016-17 was $3.7 billion and $4.05 billion respectively (see Chart 1). Not only has funding in Queensland failed to keep up with inflation, but it has failed to improve productivity or cater for population growth. Under-investment is detrimental to Queensland’s future prosperity and the safety and health of our community.

Good quality roads are essential to productivity growth in major sectors of Queensland’s economy, including the agriculture, tourism, mining and resource industries. Over the long term, improvements in business efficiency and competitiveness from better transport systems can grow domestic and export market opportunities for Queensland organisations. Infrastructure spending is an important means by which to stimulate the economy, particularly when other sectors of the economy are in a downturn.

RACQ has combined efforts with 33 local governments, five Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees and eight regional transport groups to develop the Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan (IQ-RAP). The goal of IQ-RAP is to improve productivity and safety on inland Queensland roads, and improve accessibility between communities. The 15-year IQ-RAP program identifies 3,000 kilometres of strategically important road and 300 bridges and culverts requiring upgrade. RACQ asks the Queensland Government to support IQ-RAP and help deliver funding for the inland road network.

Chart 1: Queensland Government budgeted transport and road capital funding

Queensland faces a backlog of transport infrastructure needs and higher future transport volumes. In south east Queensland traffic congestion is a significant problem...
and peak hours are getting longer. Increased road capacity, efficiency improvements and managed motorway applications are needed to address this. Urban rail capacity constraints in south east Queensland also need to be addressed so Cross River Rail should be progressed as the top public transport priority for the Queensland Government.

RACQ acknowledges the budgetary pressures the Queensland Government faces, but believes it is a false economy to reduce government investment in better roads and transport systems. Ultimately Queenslanders pay for this in terms of reduced productivity and lost lives. In-depth crash studies show that the road is a causation factor in about 30% of all crashes, while it is a factor in the severity outcome of 100% of crashes.¹

RACQ therefore asks the State Government to recognise the need for greater investment in transport infrastructure and provide at least $1 billion in additional funding compared to the amount budgeted in 2016-17.

2. Allocate funding to progress key transport projects

Queensland will need increased road capacity and efficiency improvements in the transport network to cater for future traffic growth. Vehicle kilometres travelled in Queensland are expected to increase by 2.8 percent annually to 2020.² Without upgrades to our highways and freight routes, vehicle operating costs and travel times will increase leading to greater productivity losses.

The RACQ asks that the Queensland Government increase investment in Queensland’s road and rail system in 2017-18 and progress the key transport projects outlined in the three tables below:

**Table 1 National Projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bruce and Warrego Highways</strong></td>
<td>Deliver the 10-year $8.5 billion joint funding commitment to the Bruce Highway and deliver the $2.1 billion in joint funding for the Warrego Highway Upgrade Strategy and the Toowoomba Range Second Crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pacific Motorway</strong></td>
<td>Upgrade to 8 lanes from the Gateway Motorway to Loganholme and Upgrade to 6 lanes between Nerang and Tugun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross River Rail</strong></td>
<td>New rail tunnel to provide a second river crossing and add rail capacity in inner Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inland Queensland Road Action Plan</strong></td>
<td>A 15-year program to upgrade inland regional Queensland roads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Austroads, 2015, *Road Geometry for Improved Rural Safety*
Beerburrum to Nambour Rail Upgrade
Construct a new alignment from Beerburrum to Landsborough and progress a business case to fully duplicate from Landsborough to Nambour.

Gold Coast Light Rail
Construct Stage 2 (Parkland Drive – Helensvale Rail Station) of the light rail transit system

Table 2 Existing Queensland Transport & Roads Investment Program Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cairns</th>
<th>• Kennedy Hwy/Developmental Rd (Cairns to Ravenshoe) – Widen and seal, intersection improvements and overtaking lane/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>• Gregory Developmental Rd – Rehabilitate and widen, replace bridge/s, undertake transport project planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Kennedy Developmental Rd (Hann Hwy) – Pave and seal, routine maintenance and undertake transport project planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay/Whitsunday</td>
<td>• Peak Downs Hwy (Mackay to Clermont) – Replace bridge/s and approaches, heavy vehicle parking, Eton Range realignment and undertake transport project planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton (Central Qld)</td>
<td>• Burnett Hwy (Monto – Biloela) – Widen and seal, construct/rehabilitate bridge/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Capricorn Hwy (Rockhampton to Duaringa) – Construct overtaking lane/s, improve intersection/s, heavy vehicle parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Bay/Burnett</td>
<td>• Burnett Hwy (Goomeri – Gayndah) – Improve intersections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• D’Aguilar Hwy (Yarraman – Kingaroy) – Improve channelization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>• D’Aguilar Hwy (Caboolture – Yarraman) – Improve intersections, rehabilitate and widen, install pedestrian refuges and miscellaneous works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>• Centenary Motorway Planning Study - Medium Term Staged Upgrades – (Toowong to Sumner) – Undertake transport project planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cross River Rail – Planning and early works</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gympie Arterial Road Options Analysis (Aspley) – Undertake transport project planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• North West Transport Corridor Planning Study (Everton Park – Bald Hills) – Undertake transport project planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• North South Arterial – Undertake transport project planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Brisbane Valley Highway (Ipswich - Harlin) – Improve channelization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast</td>
<td>• Mt Lindesay Hwy (Brisbane to Beaudesert) – Undertake transport project planning, install traffic signals, miscellaneous works and Beaudesert Town bypass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 3 Additional RACQ Priority Projects

**Intersection upgrades**
- South Pine / Stafford Road intersection upgrade
- Old Cleveland Rd / Gateway Motorway safety improvements / interchange upgrade
- Linkfield Rd / Gympie Arterial Rd northbound on-ramp (Linkfield Rd dedicated left turn lane onto on-ramp)
- Moreton Bay Rd / Mt Cotton Rd (extend slip lanes, SE and SW corner)

**Further planning / design for future upgrades**
- Centenary Motorway upgrade
- North-West Transport Corridor (Stafford to Bruce Hwy)
- North-South Arterial Rd (North Lakes / Griffin)
- Mackay – Bowen Basin Service Link (Walkerston Bypass)

**Establish an open level crossing upgrade program (as a State contribution toward these projects)**
- Boundary Road (Coopers Plains)
- Cavendish Road (Coorparoo)
- South Pine Road (Alderley)
- Warrigal Road (Runcorn)
- Kianawah Road / Lindum Road (Wynnum West)

**Mass action safety programs**
- Mt Lindesay Hwy – Greenbank to Beaudesert
- Brisbane Valley Hwy
- D’Aguilar Hwy
- Peak Downs Hwy
- Captain Cook Hwy – Cairns to Port Douglas
- Kennedy Hwy – Smithfield to Mareeba
- Burnett Hwy – Widening and safety improvements
- Continue to dual lane seal – Kennedy Developmental Rd and Gregory Developmental Rd

**Vulnerable road user safety**
- Motorcycle mass action program
- Principal Cycle Network program

**IQ-RAP / heavy vehicle strategy / regional transport planning**
Progress planning and network strategy across Queensland

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3 ‘Mass action safety’ includes: lane and shoulder widening, safety barriers or removal of roadside hazards, ATLM / rumble strips, wide centre line treatments, intersection improvements and additional overtaking lanes / opportunities.
3. Publish full transport infrastructure business cases

Infrastructure planning, design and construction is complex and once built, it is around for a long time. This makes it critical that the right projects are selected and that they represent value for money. Government needs to effectively target infrastructure spending to ensure that infrastructure increases economic activity and improves amenity and lifestyles.

The RACQ has publicly supported the establishment of Building Queensland as an independent assessment body to improve all aspects of infrastructure project selection, including community engagement and transparent publication of business cases. In 2014 the Productivity Commission found that decisions are often based on inadequate information and assessment of the costs and benefits of road projects.4

The RACQ is disappointed by the quality of the business cases that Building Queensland is publishing. Building Queensland only releases brief summaries of business cases, making it impossible for stakeholder organisations or community members to assess the details of the large projects that will consume their taxes.

Part of the benefit of publishing a business case is that it enables assumptions to be questioned. This is not possible at present because most of the assumptions are not reported. The limited amount of information being published also prevents the community and stakeholders from being engaged in a meaningful discussion of project benefits and costs. The transport network is a public good and is therefore worthy of strong community discussion and involvement.

We ask the Queensland Government and Building Queensland to increase the transparency of their processes by publishing more extensive details of proposals and their impacts, including alternative options. There is no commercial-in-confidence rationale to prevent this as specific information can be redacted where an issue could compromise government’s negotiating position.

4. Restore National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC) funding

In 2012 the previous Queensland Government ceased funding contributions to the NMVTRC and Queensland lost vital theft reduction programs provided by this organisation. The loss of funding has weakened the NMVTRC’s sustainability given its relatively small funding base (that comprises essentially a 50/50 split between state/territory governments and the insurance industry).

Queensland is currently the only state not contributing and RACQ asks that funding for NMVTRC be reinstated in the 2017-18 Budget. The RACQ estimates that the Queensland contribution would be approximately $220,000 per annum.

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4 Productivity Commission (PC), 2014, Inquiry Report Public Infrastructure Volume 1 No. 71

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The work of the NMVTRC ranges from young offender programs through to the development of analytical tools for use by police and their initiatives range from locally-based programs through to national strategies. Benefits extend beyond the visible reductions in vehicle theft and include the flow-on costs to the community through police and the legal system and related car-crime activities.

Our State has experienced rising vehicle theft numbers so there is a pressing need for Queensland to re-engage with the NMVTRC and contribute to the funding of its work. The NMVTRC’s CarSafe website shows the current passenger/light commercial vehicle theft rate for Queensland is tracking 19% higher over the past year (September 2015 to 2016 data).  

5. Freeze vehicle registration charges for three years

The introduction of the National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) in October 2016 saw annual total CTP insurance premiums increase by $39 for Class 1 passenger vehicles. In recognition of the increased financial burden on motorists, RACQ urges the Government to freeze vehicle registration charges on private-use vehicles for three years.

Affordable motoring is important for Queenslanders, particularly those living in rural and regional districts, and in outer south east Queensland suburbs. In these areas, limited public transport combined with a higher proportion of low income households and the need to travel considerable distances to reach employment or services, can result in significant transport disadvantage.

Queensland is among the most expensive states in which to own and operate a vehicle. RACQ believes the State Government should remove the CPI indexation of registration and leave vehicle registration fees at their current 2016-2017 levels. This would provide some respite for motorists, while the natural growth in this tax base (through population growth), means that the Government would maintain a substantial and growing income stream from registration charges.

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