23 April 2025

Royal Automobile Club of Queensland

Thank you for your recent correspondence conveying the RACQ's policy priorities to Labor.

We encourage the RACQ to continue following Labor's announcements for the remainder of the campaign.

Our response follows.

A 10-year funding plan for the Bruce Highway

As you are aware, we recently committed a further $7.2 billion towards safety upgrades on the Bruce Highway, under a $9 billion package with the Queensland Government, with the Commonwealth being the majority funding partner.

This is the single largest investment ever into the Bruce Highway, and takes the Australian Government's total investment in the Bruce to more than $17 billion.

We have committed this significant funding in recognition of the Bruce Highway's national significance, unique challenges and dire safety record.

We have already started delivering on this commitment, with our 19 March 2025 announcement that construction will commence immediately on a $300 million early works program under this package. This will involve 16 new projects between Gympie and Innisfail, including:

- wide centre line treatments between Rungoo and Mourilyan;
- overtaking lanes between Ayr and Brandon; and
- a new heavy vehicle rest area in Gin Gin.

Our other significant investments in the Bruce Highway include nearly $1.4 billion for the Rockhampton Ring Road and $758 million for Bruce Highway - Gateway Motorway to Dohles Rocks Road Upgrade.

Boost Queensland's national highway maintenance and resilience funding

The Coalition froze the indexation of road maintenance funding for ten years, depriving states of vital resources to repair and maintain national highways, such as the Bruce.

By contrast, we have increased the Commonwealth's annual commitment to road maintenance funding to $460 million and reinstated indexation. Further, we are doubling funding under the Roads to Recovery Program to $1 billion annually, allowing councils to plan for the long-term maintenance and upgrade of local roads.

Under the Albanese Government, total investment in Queensland infrastructure over the next ten years has increased to $27.3 billion, a record investment for the state.

Increase investment in a range of measures to reduce the impact of severe weather events on high-risk communities and improve insurance affordability

The Albanese Government has been taking action across Australia to reduce risk in areas where there are rising insurance premiums.

This includes establishing the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF), which provides up to $200 million each year in Commonwealth funding to supporting resilience and mitigation projects across Australia.

This also included funding the fourth round of the Household Resilience Program in Far North Queensland in Round One, with work already underway or completed to undertake household improvements on 200 homes ahead of the High Risk Weather Season. This program has reported average insurance premium savings of 13 per cent for homeowners.

Round Three of the DRF is now open. The guidelines for the third round emphasise the importance of enduring project benefits for communities, with $138m dedicated to infrastructure-focused programs.

Other initiatives include:

- Delivering $3 million for the Bushfire Resilience Rating Home Assessment App. Users who complete the assessment and make their homes more resilient will now receive discounts on their household insurance premiums from NRMA and Suncorp.
- The NSW and Queensland Resilient Homes Funds relocate those most at risk and increase the resilience of homes and communities. Moving forward, we will be continuing to work with jurisdictions to make sure that resilience is a core element of recovery, and the way we administer the DRFA.
- The establishment of the Hazards Insurance Partnership, a single touchpoint between the Australian Government and the insurance industry to engage on issues of disaster risk reduction and hazard insurance.

Expand the Battery Booster scheme and expedite Vehicle to Grid and Vehicle to Home capabilities

The Cheaper Home Batteries program will make batteries cheaper for every Australian household and small business with a 30 per cent discount on the up-front cost of a typical battery, slashing energy bills for good.

Discounts will be based on the size of the system, with support for the first 50 kWh of usable capacity for eligible batteries sized up to 100 kWh. That means larger batteries appropriate for small businesses and community facilities will also be eligible, but it will also support larger batteries that need to provide longer periods of backup electricity for places at high risk of weather-related power outages. For example, the rebate on a 22 kWh battery system would be around $8000.

We have a revised Australian Standard in place to make bidirectional charging, including V2G and V2H, possible in Australian homes. Policies like our New Vehicle Efficiency Standard will help get V2G capable vehicles brought to the Australian market.

Greater investment in the EV transition and embracing of biofuels

Our policies are delivering more choice to save petrol for Australians - whether that's cars, utes, or SUVs, petrol, hybrid or diesel. By catching up to the rest of the world and introducing New Vehicle Efficiency Standards, car companies can't treat us as a third world dumping ground.

It's already working to give Aussies overdue hybrid and EV choices - like the new BYD shark, with thousands of orders from its first weeks on sale. We've roughly tripled EV choices since coming to Government.

Let's be clear on what these standards do: they bring us into line with the rest of the world, so that Australians can have more cars that are cheaper to run. Turning standards into a toothless tiger, as the Liberals propose by abolishing enforcement of NVES, is worse than a voluntary standard and will rip away choices from Australian families.

We've made EVs cheaper - cutting taxes on EVs that can save up to $11,000 a year on a $50,000 EV. Month-to-month, you can lease an EV like a Tesla Model 3 for less than a petrol vehicle like Mazda 3.

And we've got more EV charging - tripling the number of fast chargers since we came to Government.

The Government identified low carbon liquid fuels as a priority sector under the Future Made in Australia plan and these could play an important role in decarbonising hard-to-electrify transport.

Transport tax reform

Labor remains committed to overseeing an increasing uptake of a more fuel efficient and zero emissions vehicles, and will examine how these new vehicles can contribute to road funding.

Fuel excise as a proportion of total Australian Government revenue have been in decline for the last 40 years. However, timeframes for future declines in fuel excise are uncertain, depending on a range of factors.

A re-elected Albanese Labor Government will continue to work with the state and territory governments on long term options for zero emission vehicles user charging.

Thank you once again for talking the time to write to Labor outlining the RACQ's priorities.

Yours sincerely

ALP Campaign 2025