



25 June 2024

National Transport Commission  
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Dear National Transport Commission,

**RE: Automated Vehicle Safety Reform consultation**

Queensland Walks is the peak state walking organisation with a community-based membership and a coalition of partners in the [Queensland Walking Alliance](#). Our purpose is to promote walking and advocate for improved walking opportunities in Queensland. As the peak body for walking, Queensland Walks facilitates the Queensland Walking Alliance.

Queensland Walks welcomes this opportunity to provide feedback on Australia's automated vehicle safety reforms as automated vehicles present both potential road safety benefits and dangers to people walking, rolling and strolling. We understand that:

- The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts (DITRDCA) and the National Transport Commission (NTC) are preparing for the possibility of small numbers of automated vehicles entering the Australian market from 2026
- An automated driving system is a combination of hardware and software that is capable of driving without needing a human to be in control or supervising
- An automated driving system is a combination of hardware and software that is capable of driving without needing a human to be in control or supervising known as the Automated Driving System Entity

The discussion paper acknowledges the potential dangers associated with the operation of automated vehicles and many of the potential proposed legislative inclusions are sensible. Our main concern with this discussion paper is that it does not adequately prioritise the safety of people walking on or across roads and streets or in roadside locations, potentially rendering these people as secondary to vehicle users. While vehicle technology and infrastructure are important, there is a tendency to overshadow the needs of non-vehicular or non-motorised road users.

There is a great opportunity to use this legislation to move toward zero road deaths and zero serious injuries. The Automated Vehicle Safety Reform can provide an overarching basis to state laws that may not be adequate to this task.

**Queensland Walks recommends the following:**

1. Adopt the following principles:
  - The corporation that designed the automated vehicle must be responsible for it during its entire life. Secondary responsibility lands on the owner / operator
  - Each automated vehicle design/system must not operate in Australia until it is demonstrated to be safer than existing drivers
  - Automated vehicles must prioritise safety of people over all other considerations
  - Safety of people must be prioritised according to their vulnerability
  - Any applicable fines must be such to incentivise investment in improving safety, rather than part of business as usual



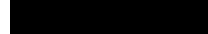
- Vehicles must be operated to minimise emissions
  - Vehicles must be operated to minimise the need for vehicle related road space
2. Adopt a road user hierarchy similar to the TfNSW Road User Space Allocation Policy, which puts the access and safety of people walking, rolling and strolling at the top of hierarchy of consideration in urban street environments, followed by people riding bikes, public transport users, then ride-share, freight and private vehicle users
  3. Adopt an automated vehicle hierarchy which prioritises active and public transport ahead of private automated vehicle use
  4. The future legislation must require automated vehicles to prioritise protection of people according to a vulnerability index, reflecting the hierarchy in the TfNSW Road User Space Allocation Policy
  5. Be clear that any changes to road laws must increase the rights of people who are walking or otherwise using streets while not in vehicles, for example to use streets to walk, cross, and enjoy outdoors
  6. Ensure the national safety legislation leads best practice, rather than relying on state legislation that may not be adequate
  7. The legislation should require all automated vehicles to demonstrate they are involved in fewer crashes and with fewer and less-severe fatalities and injuries than human drivers
  8. The legislation must establish requirements for introduction of new automated vehicles into Australia. The legislation must also ensure the monitoring over time relative of safety of operation compared to human drivers, demonstrating an increase in safety
  9. Ensure legislation creates a framework requiring a corporation be located in Australia, and maintains sufficient capital for insurance, maintenance and compliance
  10. Non-compliance fines must be set to ensure that it is more financially prudent to ensure vehicles operate more safely than to risk further fines. Automatic vehicle manufacturers that fail to demonstrate adequate safety measures for pedestrians, that results in death or injury may be found negligent and may result in legal ramifications
  11. Dangerous driving is easily reportable, including near-hits, and that data on this is publicly available
  12. Ensure legislation requires automated vehicles to operate to minimise road space requirements and develop a framework that demonstrates how this can be practically measured
  13. Develop legislated data sharing requirements (including data on walking) to inform better road safety practices, injury and fatality reductions and better land use and urban planning. This data should help identify crash / near miss hotspots to guide interventions and future funding such as federally funded Black Spot programs and equivalent
  14. Legislate requirement for automated vehicles to demonstrate sufficient levels of understanding of human non-verbal communication, e.g. hand wave, stop
  15. Legislate automated vehicle identification markings requirements
  16. Comply with Acoustic Vehicle Alerting System (AVAS) electric vehicle requirements to provide sound emissions for vision impaired and blind pedestrians and to especially consider those wheelchair and white cane users, those who are shorter in stature, older people and children and other vulnerable road users
  17. **Queensland Walks would also like to acknowledge and support the findings and recommendations of the Better Streets' submission.**



Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission further.

Yours in health and walking,

Anna Campbell  
Executive Officer



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