

13 March 2026

Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)
Queensland Government
Delivered by email: corridorpolicy@tmr.qld.gov.au.

Dear Corridor Policy Team,

**Submissions to Sunset Review of the Transport Infrastructure
(State-controlled Roads) Regulation 2017**

This submission outlines Q Shelter's input to the Sunset Review of the Transport Infrastructure (State-controlled Roads) Regulation 2017.

Background

Q Shelter is Queensland's peak body working to address housing need and homelessness. We envision a future in which every Queenslander has a safe, affordable and accessible place to call home. Incorporated in 1993, Q Shelter is a membership-based organisation that works to strengthen housing system capacity and influence policy and investment settings to support effective housing solutions. We work collaboratively with all levels of government, the community housing and homelessness sector, industry partners and the wider community to help deliver practical responses to housing need and homelessness. Through this work, we regularly engage with policies that intersect with housing access, homelessness and the management of public spaces.

While the Transport Infrastructure (State-controlled Roads) Regulation 2017 is primarily concerned with road safety and the efficient operation of Queensland's transport network, some provisions, particularly those relating to camping, intersect with the reality that people experiencing homelessness may occupy public spaces, including transport corridors, when no alternative accommodation is available.

Q Shelter is not proposing amendments to the compliance powers themselves but rather recommending that TMR develop operational guidelines and interagency protocols so that, where homelessness is a factor, engagement and referral precede enforcement wherever safe and reasonable.

Drawing on our engagement with the housing and homelessness sector across Queensland, we offer the following observations and suggestions for consideration as part of the review process.

Unintended impacts of public space regulation

- Q Shelter acknowledges the recent Queensland Supreme Court decision regarding enforcement action taken in the City of Moreton Bay. The decision highlights the broader challenge facing the housing system, where insufficient housing supply forces some people into improvised living arrangements and occupying public space.
- The primary purpose of the Regulation is transport safety and corridor management. However, some provisions may interact with situations where individuals are sleeping rough in road reserves, underpasses or other transport corridors.
- Research indicates that compliance-based responses to homelessness in public spaces can have unintended impacts¹. Enforcement actions such as move-on orders, fines or removal from

¹ Chien, J., et al. (2026). Criminalizing homelessness: Longitudinal associations of police encounters and encampment sweeps with health outcomes among unhoused people. Social Science & Medicine. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953626001085>

public areas may displace people rather than resolve homelessness. Individuals may move between locations without addressing their underlying housing needs.

- Our members also regularly inform us that some enforcement actions may create barriers to engagement with support services. Fines or repeated enforcement can lead to financial hardship or disrupt connections with outreach workers and health services². This can make it even more difficult for individuals to stabilise their situation and access suitable housing pathways.

Emerging practice in Australia

Consistent with emerging practice across Australian jurisdictions, this means operational responses must prioritise engagement and access to support before any compliance action is taken. Several Australian jurisdictions have developed protocols to guide interactions with people experiencing homelessness in public spaces. These approaches seek to balance public safety with engagement, service coordination and housing pathways.

Reflecting this approach, several Australian jurisdictions have developed protocols to guide interactions with people experiencing homelessness in public spaces.

- One example is the [New South Wales Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places](#), first introduced ahead of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and later expanded statewide. The protocol promotes respectful engagement and encourages referral to support services before enforcement action, where possible.
- In Victoria, the City of Melbourne has implemented [strategies](#) that combine public space management with outreach and housing responses. These initiatives focus on coordinated service engagement and on improving access to safe, secure housing.

These examples reflect a broader policy trend. Responses to homelessness in public spaces increasingly combine infrastructure management with coordinated outreach and housing pathways.

Opportunities for further consideration

The current Sunset Review provides an opportunity to consider whether the Regulation could better recognise these evolving policy settings. Significant changes to the Regulation's core intent may not be required. However, practical measures could strengthen its effectiveness while minimising unintended impacts. These approaches could also support safer and more coordinated management of road corridors where people experiencing homelessness are present.

Accordingly, we recommend that the review take into account the following considerations:

1. **Support-first operational guidance:** Where camping prohibitions intersect with homelessness, operational responses could prioritise engagement with outreach services and referral pathways before enforcement, where safe and appropriate. Compliance measures may still be necessary in some circumstances. However, early engagement with support services can help resolve situations more effectively and reduce the need for enforcement.
2. **Trauma-informed and housing-oriented responses:** Many people sleeping rough have experienced trauma, complex health conditions or long-term housing insecurity. Trauma-informed approaches can help ensure interactions are respectful, proportionate and connected to support services.

Herring, C., Yarbrough, D., & Alatorre, L. (2020). Pervasive penalty: How the criminalization of poverty perpetuates homelessness. *Social Problems*, 67(1), 131–149. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spz004>

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2019). Housing not handcuffs: Ending the criminalization of homelessness in U.S. cities. <https://homelesslaw.org/resource/housing-not-handcuffs-2019/>

² Barocas, J. A., et al. (2023). *Population-level health effects of involuntary displacement of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness*. <https://academic.oup.com/socpro/advance-article/doi/10.1093/socpro/spaf003/7965917?login=false>

3. **Cultural appropriateness:** Given the significant over-representation of First Nations Peoples in Queensland's homelessness data, it is important that any operational guidance includes culturally safe and community-informed approaches to engagement
4. **Interagency coordination:** Responses to homelessness in road corridors often involve multiple agencies, including transport authorities, local governments and homelessness services. Local councils or specialist homelessness services are often the first responders in public space management. Clear coordination arrangements can support both infrastructure management and appropriate responses for vulnerable individuals.
5. **Clear operational guidance:** Providing clear operational guidance for officers interacting with people experiencing homelessness in road corridors may support consistent, proportionate and coordinated responses. Similar approaches are reflected in frameworks such as the New South Wales Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places
6. **Consideration of escalation pathways:** Best-practice protocols specify: Engagement -- Referral -- Coordinated response -- Enforcement (only where safety risks require it). TMR could seek to embed this within SOPs. This gives officers clarity and supports people experiencing homelessness.
7. **Data collection and evidence:** Where interactions occur with people experiencing homelessness in road corridors, collecting de-identified data may assist in understanding the scale and nature of these situations. Improved evidence can inform future policy and operational responses.

A support-first approach in TMR corridors would align with established protocols in NSW and Victoria and promote greater cross-agency consistency across Queensland's public-space responses, including those led by local governments.

Conclusion

The *Transport Infrastructure (State-controlled Roads) Regulation 2017* plays an important role in maintaining the safety and efficient operation of Queensland's road network. Some provisions regarding camping and directions for leaving campsites may intersect with the broader issue of homelessness in public spaces. As housing pressures increase, these intersections may become more visible and challenging to navigate.

The sunset review provides an opportunity to ensure the Regulation continues to meet its transport objectives while recognising the importance of coordinated, housing-oriented responses when homelessness is involved. Targeted adjustments to operational guidance, coordination and data collection may help reduce unintended impacts while supporting both infrastructure management and broader social policy objectives.

Further contact

Q Shelter appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the review process. For further questions or contact regarding our submission, please liaise with our Policy & Strategic Engagement Lead, Maya Glassman, at Maya.Glassman@qshelter.asn.au, in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



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