

Effective Date: 18/05/98 (Revision Date: May 1999)

Provision of Roadside Amenities

1 CONTEXT

The Department of Main Roads (DMR) controls approximately 20% of the total road network in Queensland. This portion however carries 80% of the traffic and a much greater proportion of the traffic that is involved in long-distance travel. Therefore, road safety is recognised as a key issue.

As part of an integrated approach to road safety management, this policy addresses the provision of roadside amenities.

Roadside amenities are established primarily to meet the needs of the long distance traveller and are aimed at reducing fatigue related accidents whilst enhancing their total travel experience. DMR recognises that setting in place and promoting roadside amenities must be coordinated and integrated, and involve a number of key initiatives:

- strategic location of rest areas in identified fatigue zones;
- location of rest areas to support and integrate with other road safety initiatives e.g. *Driver Reviver Program*;
- developing and setting in place a comprehensive signage system to identify and direct road users to roadside amenities;
- provision of maps/brochures to the travelling public indicating the locations and facilities provided;
- promoting, informing and "marketing" the benefits of using roadside amenities as part of the total DMR/Queensland Transport Fatigue Management package.

These initiatives together, are expected to increase community awareness of the adverse effects of driver fatigue and encourage motorists to stop and rest between driving spells.

Currently in Queensland, the total number of rest areas, heavy vehicle stopping places and points of interest is approximately 530 of which DMR controls 27% and maintains 15%. The rest of the sites are controlled by Local Governments, Service Clubs and other Government Authorities (e.g. National Parks, Wild Life Service and Department of Natural Resources).

Roadside amenities can be subdivided into three categories viz. rest areas, commercial/civic

establishments and stopping places. These categories consist of the following:

1.1 REST AREAS

1.1.1 REST AREA FOR MOTORISTS

A rest area for motorists is an attractive, park-like area separated from, but within general sight of, the through pavement with parking suitable for cars, and cars with caravans or trailers.

Minimum facilities required in a rest area for motorists are shade, picnic tables, benches and rubbish bins.

The provision of toilets, water, barbecue facilities with fuel, and lighting will depend on local conditions, the quality of maintenance able to be secured and the amount of use. However, every attempt should be made to ensure that the standard of facilities is consistent over a route.

In isolated locations which attract overnight use, showers may be provided in rest areas, where practical.

1.1.2 HEAVY VEHICLE REST AREA

A heavy vehicle rest area is a sealed or paved area, with safe entrance and exit for heavy vehicles, with adequate space to accommodate at least 2 heavy vehicles, but with sufficient separation from the through pavement to provide a reasonably quiet and restful environment.

The parking area should be screened from headlights on the through pavement. The area should have trees for shade, otherwise an area of artificial shade should be provided.

Minimum facilities required in a heavy vehicle rest area are shade (artificial or natural), a table, benches and a rubbish bin.

In addition, water and barbecue facilities with fuel may be provided where feasible and appropriate.

It is reiterated that additional facilities made available at the above rest areas are variable and are dependent on :

- the amount of usage;
- expectation of the level of service (e.g. from advertising campaign etc. and

the practicality of maintaining the facilities to a safe and consistent standard.

1.2 COMMERCIAL/CIVIC ESTABLISHMENTS

1.2.1 SERVICE CENTRE

A service centre is a commercial roadside development, providing essential services for the safety, comfort and convenience of all users of an access-limited road, which is adjacent to or in close proximity to, and has direct or indirect access to the access-limited road.

1.2.2 TRUCK STOP (Commercial)

A truck stop is a commercial establishment which caters specifically for the needs of heavy vehicles and their drivers.

1.2.3 HIGHWAY SERVICE TOWN

A highway service town is any settlement which has coordinated its commercial establishments and civic facilities to provide a service to travellers on a route which traverses the settlement.

All potential highway service towns will be assessed annually and given a rating by a standing committee consisting of representatives of appropriate State government, Local government, tourism, transport and road user organisations. This rating will be depicted on the "*Guide to Queensland Roads*".

1.3 STOPPING PLACES

1.3.1 HEAVY VEHICLE STOPPING PLACE

A heavy vehicle stopping place is a sealed or paved area, with safe entrance and exit for heavy vehicles, with adequate space to accommodate at least 2 heavy vehicles, with sufficient clearance from the through pavement to allow loads to be inspected and adjusted safely.

(Definitions of "clear" and "sufficient clearance" are contained in the Main Roads Road Design Standards).

1.3.2 POINT OF INTEREST

A point of interest is a stopping place provided to allow travellers to inspect, enjoy scenic areas and be informed about, or have interpreted, interesting local features.

1.3.3 STOPPING PLACE ("Pull-up" area)

A stopping place is a sealed or paved or otherwise all-weather area, clear of the through pavement, with safe entrance and egress, available for stopping. *Whilst each of these categories of roadside amenities is vitally important to a safe and effective road network, this policy deals mainly with the provision of rest areas.*

Though commercial/civic establishments are largely out of the DMR control, sometimes, DMR can influence their provision, e.g. in granting access or encouraging their provision. These instances are covered in DMR policies listed as references.

2 POLICY OBJECTIVE

To ensure the provision of roadside amenities such that:

fatigue related accidents are minimised;

the total travelling experience of long distance travellers is enhanced by providing:

- sufficient opportunities to stop and rest;
- sufficient opportunities for drivers to check their vehicle;
- adequate information to encourage stopping to avoid fatigue (e.g. signage, maps and advertising);
- opportunities to enjoy the special character of the regions through which they are travelling.

the most cost effective solutions are adopted;

involvement of industry and local community groups are maximised

3 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MAIN ROADS

Roadside amenities will be provided where these facilities are not made available by other organisations, both commercial or civic, along the major routes used by long distance travellers, on the State-controlled road network in Queensland.

Thus, DMR will ensure the appropriate provision of roadside amenities is in keeping with its obligations under the Transport Infrastructure Act (1994) and Transport Planning and Coordination Act (1994).

At the same time, DMR will encourage other State government Departments, Local governments and private organisations to

provide and maintain these amenities in order to achieve maximum cost effectiveness.

3.2 STRATEGIES FOR ROADSIDE AMENITIES

Strategies for roadside amenities (*Strategies*) will be developed for the provision of roadside amenities. *The Strategies* will, for each route, be developed by the Regions with overall co-ordination by Roads Strategy Branch. They will include guidelines and procedures to address the following:

- a review of existing amenities as to their relevance or need for upgrading;
- identify locations where extra amenities are required guided primarily by the location of fatigue related accidents;
- the standards required for roadside amenities ;
- prioritisation of new locations and upgrading facilities;
- enforcement, in particular, oversteaying the prescribed maximum time limits;
- monitoring the performance of all roadside amenities including feedback from the users (motorists and truck drivers);
- coordination with other Main Roads and Queensland Transport (QT) fatigue management initiatives;
- interaction with other service providers;
- setting in place promotional, information, advertising and education programs;
- provision of appropriate signing.

The "*Guide to Queensland Roads*" provides a road map and lists the facilities at each rest area. This publication will be regularly reviewed and revised as appropriate and will be widely distributed to ensure that the public is informed regarding the location and facilities available at rest areas, heavy vehicle stopping places and points of interest (scenic stops).

3.3 FUNDING

Provision will be made as part of the Roads Implementation Program (RIP) to allocate appropriate funds for the provision and management of roadside amenities.

3.4 CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING LOCATIONS

The provision of roadside amenities will be guided by the *Strategies* which will identify:

fatigue "black spots";

focus routes where the majority of long distance travel in Queensland occurs;

deficiencies in the availability of roadside amenities along those routes; and,

zones where road and traffic conditions are sufficiently uniform to warrant a uniform spacing of roadside amenities.

In Queensland, two zones have been delineated as follows:

Zone 1 - an eastern zone which is characterised by high traffic volumes;

Zone 2 - a western zone which is characterised by low traffic volumes, where flat straight stretches are a common occurrence.

The current focus routes for long distance travel and the Zones 1 & 2, are identified in the guidelines associated with the *Strategies*.

There is however, the potential for new routes to increase their volume of long distance travel as they become more developed e.g. Cairns - Uluru "Reef to Rock", road. As these routes emerge, and as traffic volumes on them increase, there will be a need to ensure roadside amenities are provided to a standard consistent with other similar routes. *Strategies* will contain criteria for the inclusion of these routes into a priority list.

3.5 CRITERIA FOR SPACING

In keeping with national benchmarks and best practice, the recommended spacing of roadside amenities in these zones is listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Amenity Spacing

Amenity	Spacing in kms	
	Zone 1	Zone 2
Rest Area	50	100
Heavy Vehicle Rest Area	60	80
Heavy Vehicle Stopping Place	20	40
Truck Stops (Commercial)	<400	<400
Stopping Place	2	2

Note: While the spacings in Table 1 are the overall targets for the long distance routes, individual spacings may vary by up to 25%.

Where commercial or civic facilities (e.g. Service Centres, Highway Service Towns) fulfill the needs for which the respective amenities are required, additional amenities need not be provided by DMR. *The provision of "dedicated" stopping places is only necessary where the road pavement configuration precludes safe stopping.*

3.6 UPGRADING OR DIVESTMENT OF EXISTING FACILITIES

In addition to identifying and rectifying the deficiencies along the long distance routes, all the existing roadside amenities controlled by DMR should be critically examined and evaluated consistently to ascertain whether they meet the standards outlined in section 1.1 above. The mechanism for determining which amenities are upgraded or divested is contained in the *Strategies*.

3.7 NEED TO SEPARATE HEAVY VEHICLE REST AREA FROM OTHER REST AREAS

Because of the different needs of transport industry drivers and other motorists and issues relating to noise and access, heavy vehicle rest areas should be separated from rest areas. Normal vehicles including those towing caravans should be discouraged from stopping in heavy vehicle rest areas in order to ensure sufficient access to these areas is available for heavy vehicles.

3.8 LENGTH OF STAY

Rest areas and heavy vehicle rest areas are not provided as long term camping areas. In order to maximise the usage by travellers who need a place to stop and rest, the maximum length of stay permitted in any rest area or heavy vehicle rest area is 48 hours during a continuous 4 week period, except where the rest area/heavy vehicle rest area is within 25 kms of a commercial accommodation facility. In this case, a maximum stay of 20 hours is permitted. At each rest area/heavy vehicle rest area, the Department will erect conspicuous signage outlining the length of stay permitted and the penalty for non-compliance.

In stopping places, the maximum limit of stay will be one hour, except in emergency situations. Departmental officers, both DMR and QT, should be encouraged to enforce these conditions. Actual enforcement should be by uniformed officers and restricted to daylight hours.

It must be reiterated that, it is an offence to stay for longer than the stated period at a rest area where a conspicuous sign limiting stays to a stated period has been erected (*Under Section 4 of the*

Transport Infrastructure (State-controlled Roads) Regulation (1994)). It is important for this regulation to be enforced at all rest areas to minimise misuse of the facilities. There may be some instances when lack of enforcement could lead to overcrowding of popular rest areas resulting in travellers being discouraged from stopping there. Care must also be taken to ensure that the expectation of the public is not one of non-enforcement as this would defeat the intent of this policy

3.9 **CRITERIA FOR SIGNAGE**

Each roadside amenity should be signposted to allow the driver to make informed decisions about where to stop. As a minimum:

at the approach to the amenity;

at the location of the rest area, (a sign indicating what the rest area is for and outlining the maximum stay permitted and penalty for non-compliance).

at the exit to the rest area, indicating the distance to the next rest area along that route.

The signage must be integrated and consistent along all routes. DMR's Policy on Road Direction Signage will form a basis for signage of roadside amenities. Tourism signs (refer Tourism Signage Policy) will also play a significant role in encouraging travellers to stop by highlighting tourist attractions. *Strategies* will include signage requirements, their location and content regarding road side amenities.

4 **RATIONALE**

The Transport Infrastructure Act (1994) (Sect. 9(b)), is interpreted by the DMR as imposing an obligation to ensure the cost effective provision of a safe road network.

As such, roadside amenities are seen as an integral part of a modern road network. *The Main Roads Strategic Plan 1997-2001 sets a vision of "A road system that Queenslanders value"*.

To achieve this vision, it is necessary to plan, provide, operate and manage a road network which takes into consideration:

cost effectiveness;

safety initiatives of DMR and other Government Departments (e.g. QT, Federal Office of Road Safety, Police);

requirements of the Federal Department of Transport and Regional Development (e.g. with respect to National Highways);

tourism initiatives; and

local /regional issues.

Therefore, roadside amenities will be provided to meet the needs of long distance travellers where such needs have not been catered for by commercial or civic establishments. Local governments, Service Clubs and private operators should be encouraged to enter into such an agreement with DMR, thus complementing DMR endeavours while providing mutual benefits to all concerned.

In determining the priority for providing new roadside amenities, the locations of fatigue "black spots" and other road safety issues will receive primary consideration.

The standardisation of facilities and signage along routes and across Regional and District boundaries will assist in meeting the expectations of road users.

5 REFERENCES

1. Transport Infrastructure Act (1994)
2. Transport Planning and Coordination Act (1994)
3. Strategies for the Provision of Roadside Amenities - Main Roads (to be developed pursuant to this policy)
4. Main Roads Strategic Plan 1997-2001
5. Guide to Queensland Roads - map
6. Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
7. Main Roads Traffic Control Sign Design Manual
8. Service Centre Policy
9. Roadside Advertising Policy
10. Tourism Road Signage Policy
11. Road Signage Policy
12. Access Policy for Roadside Service Centre Facilities on Access-Limited Roads

13. Main Roads/Queensland Transport Fatigue Management Initiatives.

Version: 1.0 **Active From:** 18/05/98

Active To:

Ó The State of Queensland, Department of Main Roads.