

ARA20CW/73

25 June 2020

Mr John Robertson
Council Chair
Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council
GPO Box 2360
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Mr Robertson,

QUEENSLAND SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL: PENALTIES FOR ASSAULTS ON PUBLIC OFFICERS

In addition to our previous submission and engagement with members of your team, I write to formally submit the rail industry's support for question 6a of your issues paper:

6. Who should be captured within the definition of a 'public officer' and how should this be defined?
 - a. Should the definition of 'public officer' in section 240 of the *criminal Code* be expanded to expressly recognise other occupations, including public transport drivers (e.g. bus drivers and train drivers) and public transport workers?

As per our previous correspondence, the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) submits that penalties for those who assault public transport staff should be elevated to align with penalties for those who assault Police and Emergency Services Personnel. As a result, we offer our full support for 6a, that the definition of 'public officer' is indeed expanded to include public transport drivers AND public transport workers.

COVID-19 has demonstrated the essential service that public transport provides. Public transport staff continued to work throughout COVID-19 to ensure the ongoing operation of transport networks to support the movement of essential workers. These individuals deserve to go to work and return home safely. Heightened penalties for those who assault public transport staff, supported with a public awareness campaign of the change will help provide a deterrent to individuals who may otherwise mis-treat public transport staff.

In addition, I note the absence of public transport data in section two of the issues paper. I understand Queensland Rail is also providing a submission and will be able to assist the Advisory Council with the provision of data to form the evidence base for assaults on public transport staff.

Should you wish to discuss this further, please contact [REDACTED] for additional information.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Caroline Wilkie
CEO

CC: Nick Easy, CEO, QR; Neil Scales, Director-General, Transport and Main Roads Queensland and Phil Mumford, CEO, GoldLinQ.