

**Submission  
No 3**

## **RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS FOR THE WEARING OF HELMETS**

**Organisation:** QLD Department of Transport and Main Roads

**Date Received:** 9 October 2024



**Queensland  
Government**

Office of the  
**Director-General**

Department of  
**Transport and Main Roads**

Our ref: DG46943

9 October 2024

Mr Greg Warren MP  
Committee Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)  
Parliament of New South Wales  
staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Warren

Thank you for your email of 19 September 2024 and the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety's inquiry into religious exemptions for helmet use.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is committed to improving road safety outcomes for all Queenslanders. However, it is also important that cultural and religious diversity within our community is recognised.

In 2013, the Queensland Government introduced an exemption to mandatory bicycle helmet laws for people whose religious beliefs require them to wear headwear that makes it impractical to wear a helmet, such as a Sikh turban. The exemption does not apply to other religious headwear such as head scarves, which still allow a helmet to be worn.

These changes to the laws for helmet use in Queensland were introduced in response to a court case at the time, where a fine that was issued for a cyclist wearing a turban and not a helmet was challenged and overturned. This case brought significant attention to the issue and prompted greater consideration of the needs of religious groups within our community. Since then, the changes appear to have been generally accepted by the public. TMR is not aware of any complaints or documented evidence of negative impacts resulting from this type of exemption.

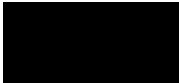
For all other cyclists, wearing a properly fitted bicycle helmet remains compulsory. The exemption only applies to bicycle riders, and not to motorcycle or moped riders. This is because bicycles are human powered vehicles. E-bikes, which only offer electric power assistance, are still primarily powered by pedals. As motorcycles and mopeds are solely powered by an engine or electric motor, these vehicles have an increased safety risk compared to bicycles and are subject to more stringent helmet requirements.

TMR continually reviews road safety measures and aims to prioritise changes that will achieve the greatest reductions in road trauma, however, there is currently no evidence to support any changes to the existing bicycle helmet exemptions in Queensland. In consideration of this, TMR remains supportive of bicycle riders being exempt from wearing a helmet if they wear a headdress customarily worn by their religious group that makes it impractical for them to wear a helmet.

If you require further information, please contact TMR's Licensing, Automated Vehicles and Registration team by email at [LAVR@tmr.qld.gov.au](mailto:LAVR@tmr.qld.gov.au).

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Sally Stannard.

Sally Stannard  
**Director-General**  
**Department of Transport and Main Roads**