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# SLAM ON THE BRAKES

## Council votes on CBD speed limit drop to fix deadly crash rate

CAIRNS Regional Council will today vote on reducing speed limits in the CBD aimed at improving our dangerous crash record.



Picture: ANNA ROGERS

### **ALARMING STATS: The Cairns city centre is the most dangerous in Queensland for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.**

A new study found there were 171 crashes causing death, injury or requiring medical attention in the city centre from 2013-2017.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has recommended to cut the speed limit from 50km/h to 40km/h on roads bounded by the Esplanade, Spence, McLeod and Florence Sts. SPEED limits are set to drop after a new study revealed Cairns had the most dangerous CBD in Queensland for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

New Department of Transport and Main Roads analysis found there were 171 crashes causing death, injury or requiring medical attention in the inner city over the five years to 2018.

Cairns dwarfed even Brisbane's Fortitude Valley (107 casualties), and the Gold Coast's Surfers Paradise (89 casualties) despite their significantly greater traffic numbers.

Cairns Regional Council will decide today whether to accept a DTMR recommendation to cut the speed limit from 50km/h to 40km/h on roads bound by the Esplanade and Spence, McLeod and Florence streets.

A report before the council reveals just how perilous it can be to cross a road or ride a bike in the middle of town.

About 34 per cent of casualties involved pedestrians and cyclists compared with the state average of 9 per cent.

Abbott and Aplin streets were exposed as Queensland's two worst 50km/h streets for fatal and serious crashes, while Spence and Abbott streets were the respective second and third most dangerous CBD streets for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Cairns city centre is also home to eight of regional Queensland's 20 worst 50km/h roads for crashes involving bike riders and people on foot.

The report found the crashes cost the community about \$60 million over five years.

The city's two streets with 30km/h limits – Lake St and the Esplanade – did not record a single fatal or serious crash over the five-year period.

"Interestingly, McLeod St only had three (fatal or serious) incidents occurring during the time period," the report says.

"This could be due to the changes made just prior to the period where the road was reduced to a single lane in each direction."

If the changes go ahead, the 30km/h and 20km/h sections on Lake St and the 30km/h stretch of the Esplanade would be retained.

Community consultation will be held early next year.

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# Speed limit cut in city heart

**CHRIS CALCINO AND  
DANAELLA WIVELL**

CAIRNS Regional Council is putting the brakes on inner-city motorists despite reservations about the true causes of soaring crash rates.

A long debate over the effectiveness of dropping the speed limit ended with a resolution at yesterday's council meeting to place a 40km/h ceiling on CBD driving.

Councillors Brett Moller and Brett Olds argued for more

consultation before the 10km/h speed reduction was enacted, and questioned whether other measures like omnidirectional "scramble" crossings may be more effective.

Division 7 councillor Max O'Halloran pointed out Cairns would be the only city in Queensland not to comply with the State Government push to lower CBD speed limits if it rejected the proposal.

"Do we look a bit of a goose if we don't get on board?" he asked.

Cairns City resident Lyndell Sellars said she was pleased to hear of the change. "There are a lot of pedestrians and a lot of tourists, and I just think it makes it safer," she said.

The change will apply to all roads bound by the Esplanade and Spence, McLeod and Florence streets, except those with existing 30km/h and 20km/h zones.

A new study found Cairns had the worst CBD in Queensland for crashes resulting in death or injury.