cassowaryrecoveryteam
Coordinating conservation of Australia's endangered Southern Cassowaries (*Casuarius casuarius johnsonii*)

20 May 2026

The Hon Brent Mickelberg MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads
Queensland Government
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Subject: Request for Funding to Support Real-World Trials of LAARMA in the Mission Beach Cassowary Road-strike Hotspot

Dear Minister Mickelberg,

On behalf of the Cassowary Recovery Team, I am writing to congratulate you and your Department on the innovative trialling of new technology in Far North Queensland to reduce cassowary mortality on roads. The Large Animal Activated Roadside Monitoring and Alert System (LAARMAS) has recently successfully passed its first set of trials with good results.

This joint initiative of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the University of Sydney and the Queensland University of Technology, has demonstrated that the LAARMAS system represents a world-first, low-cost, adaptive, AI-powered solution to reduce animal–vehicle collisions. Trials in Far North Queensland have already shown LAARMAS effectiveness in detecting cassowaries with high accuracy and in reducing driver speeds when real-time warning signs are activated. Importantly, the technology is self-learning and scalable, offering long-term improvements in performance with ongoing use.

We commend the leadership shown by the Department of Transport and Main Roads, in response to the highest known cause of death for cassowaries, vehicle strike, which poses a danger to the cassowary population and to road safety. Currently over 20 individual cassowaries are confirmed killed by vehicles yearly on Far North Queensland roads. The Mission Beach area consistently records the highest incidences of cassowary vehicle strike mortality in Far North Queensland. The southern cassowary *(Casuarius casuarius johnsonii)* is listed as endangered under both Queensland and Commonwealth legislation.

The southern cassowary is an iconic species in the north, it is a local identity, a tourism icon found on many brochures, promotional videos and social media channels. There are at least half a dozen community conservation groups that have the cassowary front and centre in their advocacy work with more than half of these based in the Mission Beach area.

The field trials of the LAARMAS project were successful and we congratulate the Project Team for their success however the funding is now expended. We strongly encourage that this successful trial project be converted into long-term real-world application. Mission Beach provides the ideal location for the next stage of field trials, given the following characteristics:

- Mission Beach supports the highest density and readily seen cassowary populations in Australia
- Roads in this region are well known (decades of data) hotspots for cassowary vehicle strikes.
- The local community is highly engaged and supportive of measures to protect cassowaries.

We therefore respectfully request that you encourage the Department of Transport and Main Roads to implement and monitor real-world trials (minimum three) of LAARMAS in cassowary road mortality hotspots across Mission Beach. This investment would enhance the safety of both people and wildlife, reduce road trauma for motorists, and directly contribute to Queensland's commitments to biodiversity conservation strategies.

The Cassowary Recovery Team stands ready to collaborate with you, the department, local government, and research partners to ensure the success of this project. We are confident that a Mission Beach trial would not only safeguard cassowaries in this critical region but also position Queensland as a global leader in innovative road safety and wildlife protection solutions.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent and important matter. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your department representatives to discuss this proposal further.

Please contact Terry Carmichael terry.carmichael@wtma.qld.gov.au secretariat of the Cassowary Recovery Team if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Scott Buchanan
Chair
Cassowary Recovery Team