



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

GPO Box 2104, Brisbane 4001

convenors@cbdbug.org.au

0423 974 825

www.cbdbug.org.au

Research Director
Health and Ambulance Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

As background for you to this submission, the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) is a grass roots volunteer organisation of almost 800 members, representing the interests of the very large number of Brisbane residents who ride bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane CBD. It is active in vigorously seeking policy decisions at all levels of government supporting cycling, and in particular relating to improved infrastructure, end-of-trip facilities, integration of cycling with other transport modes and a cyclist-friendly regulatory environment. CBD BUG members meet monthly to exchange information and ideas, discuss issues of relevance and determine the direction of policies to benefit CBD cyclists.

The CBD Bicycle User Group strongly supports strategies to improve health and wellbeing in terms of active transport.

Underpinning this support is our observation that while the Queensland Department of Health continues to require ever increasing budget growth in order to try to respond to the rising levels of lifestyle-related ill health and chronic disease afflicting the community, multiple other Queensland Government agencies are pursuing their own agendas without any regard to the negative health consequences arising that continue to drive up demand for publicly funded health services.

Prime examples of this silo mentality can be seen in the behaviour of the following agencies:

- Department of Transport and Main Roads – continues to apply its 1960's approach to urban transport in focusing on moving motor vehicles rather than people, and applies "safety" concerns only as a means to suppress rather than to expand the wider use of cycling as a viable, alternative mode of transport to the motor vehicle e.g. prefers banning cyclists from roads to instead making the road safe for cyclists to use.
- Queensland Rail - makes little to no provision for commuters to integrate rail transport with cycling on a day to day basis, and has frustrated the installation of connected bikeways because of its absolute rejection of any new cycling infrastructure being installed along, under or over its rail corridors
- Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning – appears ignorant of the impact of the built environment on human health and is fostering urban sprawl on greenfield land e.g. Ripley Valley Priority Development Area that will lead to high levels of private car use.
- Brisbane City Council – were it to actually be enforced Council's *City Plan 2014* would still allow property developers untrammelled freedom and is resulting in a poorly

designed urban environment with no requirement for the provision of corresponding improvements in public / active transport services or public open green space (for recreation). Council's current \$120M/four year commitment for increasing cycling infrastructure, which on average is less than 2.5% of its annual budget over this period, has been spent in such a desultory manner that it has led to only the most marginal growth in cycling.

A Queensland Health Promotion Commission should be established that would have a cross-agency focus to preclude policy decisions that negatively impact on the health of Queenslanders by restricting or preventing their use of the active travel models of cycling and walking.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census figures reveal that residents in some locations (for example those in inner Brisbane) travel via active transport at much greater rates and are disproportionately young and male. Also the population groups of women, children and the elderly are often effectively excluded from being able to choose active transport, particularly cycling, as a result of infrastructure design and high speed limits.

Instead of having a strategy directed at particular populations per se the Queensland Government could devote more effort to encourage protected infrastructure building and enable these excluded population groups to choose active transport.

Thus the CBD BUG supports policies which enable residents of Queensland to choose active transport rather than the current approach of merely encouraging them to choose it.

This would involve "designing communities for health" (as promoted by public health, planning and transportation consultant Mark Fenton), possible financial incentives to choose active transport, removing financial incentives to choose inactive transport, and laws to protect vulnerable road users.

Australia has a terrible record regarding the proportion of people who either walk or cycle to work: one in 20. In Britain it's close to one in six; in Germany and France one in three; and in China almost one in two people either walk or cycle to work.

"We've created communities and cities that are dominated by cars. We need to change this and design communities that promote walking and cycling" says [Professor Fiona Bull of UWA]. But she is optimistic about the future. "Good things are beginning to happen as federal state and local governments realise the cities and communities we have created are unsustainable."

The Australian, 21 July 2012

According to Australian federal government research, each 20 minute bike commute saves Australia \$21.

The paper "Are Cars The New Tobacco?"¹ (Douglas et al, Journal of Public Health, 2011) is an excellent reference for health promotion in this area and explains the "elephant in the room" that current Queensland government approaches fail to deal with – car-centric policies at every government level and in every government department which encourage and subsidise private motor-vehicle use to the exclusion

¹ <http://jpubhealth.oxfordjournals.org/content/33/2/160.abstract>

of all other forms of transport. Active transport targets have been set at every government level since at least 1995 and have been consistently missed by large margins. Policies over decades have led to this poor outcome and now new policies are required to reverse these outcomes.

The route to high levels of safer cycling is well developed, clearly signposted, and not particularly difficult, it's simply that it can feel a little alien to a nation whose personal mobility is so all pervasively car oriented.

Dr Jan Garrard, Senior Lecturer in Public Health, Deakin University

In the 2013 Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Cycling the Department of Health submission² summary stated

Accordingly, the recommendations from this inquiry should minimise disincentives to cycle and, wherever possible, create incentives to cycle.

The recommendations were made by the Committee and then the 2014 Government Response³ cherry-picked them. The “easy” recommendations were supported and the politically difficult recommendations (with one exception – minimum distance passing laws, in exchange for the quid pro quo of “fine equalisation” for cyclists) were set aside.

The response referred to a “whole-of-government response” but then failed to mention Health among the stakeholders, when the greatest effect of supporting the recommendations would have been to improve Queenslanders’ health.

Transport and Main Roads will work closely with relevant stakeholders, particularly the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Queensland Police Service, local governments and industry partners, to progress these matters.

For the future sustainability of Queensland’s public hospital and health system and this state’s economy the CBD BUG calls for the health effect of policy changes to be the major factor in Queensland Government decisions, rather than merely choosing “politically popular” or “easy” ideas.

² https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/committees/THLGC/2013/INQ-CYC/submissions/060_Queensland%20Department%20of%20Health.pdf

³ <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/committees/THLGC/2014/INQ-CYC/gr-28May2014.pdf>