



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Mr Miles Vass
Deputy Director-General (Infrastructure Management and Delivery)
Department of Transport and Main Roads
Via email: qldcyclingstrategy@tmr.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Vass

The Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) appreciates the opportunity through this submission on the new *Queensland Cycling Strategy* to let the Department know what needs to be done to get more people riding bikes.

We recommend that:

- (a) resources be committed to providing protected infrastructure, as in your Department's *Technical Note 128 Selection and Design of Cycle Tracks*, and obliging local governments to follow Technical Note 128 and other similar specifications; and
- (b) the Department of Transport and Main Roads implement the recommendations of the Queensland Inquiry into Cycling Issues of 2013.

Current strategy

We note the current strategy covers the years 2011 to 2021 seems to have been effectively shelved by the previous government. We trust this new Cycle Strategy will see a longer and more productive life.

It is recognised that some actions have been implemented. For example, some changes to road rules beneficial to the safety and convenience of people riding bikes have been made. However, many of the short and medium term actions of the current strategy have failed to be implemented. It is our sincere hope that this new strategy will make progress on the many outstanding actions, and put in place structures and mechanisms that make it more resilient than the previous strategy.

We refer you to the National Cycling Strategy to which Queensland was a signatory. It aimed to double the number people cycling. The most recent Cycling Participation Survey of 2015 confirms that the National Strategy has failed completely. The new state cycling strategy needs to fully acknowledge this, and address the failure mechanisms.

International experience

International experience in cities where cycling has been increasing shows the following.

- The number one barrier to more people cycling is concerns over safety – to achieve an increase in the number of people cycling, interventions need to target the “interested but concerned”, with the aim of making a network that is safe, direct, coherent, comfortable,

and attractive, for everyone aged 8 to 80. The people riding bikes should be reflective of the community's composition.

- What makes females feel safe cycling is different to males. Women require greater separation from motor vehicles to feel safe.
- Riding on separated bicycle paths reduces crash probability almost ten-fold.
- Improving the quantity and quality of cycling infrastructure while at the same time decreasing the attractiveness of car use e.g. by increasing parking tariffs and extending the area of paid on-street car parking is essential. To coin a phrase - there is no point offering only carrots, without a stick. The last forty years of stagnant cycling mode share in Queensland (based on census Method of Travel to Work data) are testament to this.
- Improving the organisation and implementation of cycling policies positively impacts on the effectiveness of cycling policy, specifically: formulating and implementing interventions that can be measured and monitored, having a high degree of adaptability of policy, allowing opportunities for experimental measures, having high levels of citizen participation and the presence of strong leaders (like mayors or other public figures).
- There seems to be no evidence of a positive impact of education and information dissemination tools on the effectiveness of cycling policy. The one exception is education for children. This is especially so in the absence of a cycling network that is safe, direct, coherent, comfortable and attractive.

Failure to incorporate these international lessons into the future strategy will lead to failure of the strategy.

We note that most of the increase in cycling the new strategy aims to deliver will occur on local roads administered by local governments. These local governments operate entirely as delegates of the Queensland Government. As such, the Queensland Government needs to bring more influence to the table than it has in the past. A key avenue for this approach would be though tying the provision of road funding to local governments to their delivery of high quality, segregated cyclist infrastructure.

Specific requests

Specifically we want from the Queensland Government:

- Full implementation of the 2013 Cycling Issues Inquiry recommendations
- Road Rules revised:
 - rule 72 Give Way to treat cyclists as the rule currently treats pedestrians
 - ensure other road rules are no longer silent on cycling
 - no parking in bike lanes – Recommendation 25
 - introduction of a “rolling stop” through stop signs – Recommendation 18
 - helmet law exemption for footpaths and bike paths, and for bike hire schemes – Recommendations 15 and 16
 - repeal “equalisation of fines” measures. For example, the fine for not having a helmet or bell is grossly disproportionate to any possible harm caused. The helmet fine was set at \$30 in 1993 at the price of cycle helmet. It has since increased to \$117 while the cycle helmet is \$8. This is now, absurdly, more than the price of a new department store bike (\$99).
- Require Queensland local governments to develop and implement strategic cycle network plans that show the steps they will be taking towards support of the statewide targets, how they will be funded, and the time period in which any infrastructure will be constructed, what success looks like, and how it will be measured, and systems in place for monitoring and review.

Actions from current strategy

Additionally, we view the following actions from the current strategy as warranting high priority.

Develop good practice guidance and supporting traffic regulations for the design and implementation of protected cycleways and veloways; pursue a nationally consistent approach, where possible.

We recognise and appreciate the significant effort TMR has directed to producing *Technical Note 128 Selection and Design of Cycle Tracks*. However, more needs to be done in disseminating this and other best practice approaches, as it is apparent the intransigent Brisbane City Council (BCC) (for instance) is willfully ignoring the adoption of these and other protocols.

Cycle network plans should also prioritise delivery to ensure greatest benefits are quickly achieved.

Local government active transport networks should complement principal cycle network routes. Measures need to be implemented to ensure this is the case. The \$120 million of BCC spending on bikeways during 2012-2016 has not accorded with this.

Review and update Principal Cycle Network Plans on a regular basis:

a. major review every five years

We note that Brisbane's plan exists only as a City Plan overlay that has not been packaged and publicly released. Nor was there any public engagement during the development of the plan. We also note that the South East Queensland Principal Cycle Network Plan is dated 2007.

b. mapping updates coordinated with local government access audits.

We note there has been no publicly released audit of Brisbane's network.

Publish recommended standards for cycle facilities as a companion document to Principal Cycle Network Plans and integrate these standards into national and state road design standards.

Develop a Bicycle Riding Skills Manual for senior primary and high school teachers.

We note it is all well and good having a manual, but without support structures, time in the curriculum, and appropriate cycling infrastructure the manual will remain "on the shelf".

Encourage business leaders and executives to support cycling by:

a. cycling to work themselves

b. installing bicycle parking, showers and lockers for staff

c. paying a cycling allowance for work journeys

This part of the strategy would be much more effective if government leaders were to take these actions.

Continuously improve effective policing services to support bicycle use.

Steps need to be taken to ensure the Queensland Police Service (QPS) does not actively discourage cycling. Perhaps police should be issued with a supply of bicycle bells to give away to cyclists who do not have them, rather than conducting blitzes and issuing fines for trivial infringements, while failing to act on clear evidence of motorist infringements threatening cyclist safety.

Measurable and verifiable goals

In a 2016 paper¹ “Cycling as transport” Fishman commented

*Harms, Bertolini, and Brömmelstroet (2016) document the policy interventions responsible for high levels of Dutch cycling. The authors use data from Statistics Netherlands, as well as the Dutch Cyclists’ Union, in combination with the results of a survey of local policy-makers. The findings from this analysis suggest that some of the most important factors leading to successful bicycle participation outcomes include setting **measurable and verifiable goals** and implementing the policy interventions proposed in strategic plans.*

The strategy’s current target is to double cycling trips by 2021, and triple them by 2031. Unfortunately, the measurement seems to depend on census Method of Travel To Work or travel survey data. The 2016 census was until recently under threat and it is not at all certain that it will be carried out in the future. Additionally, the results depend on the weather on the day in August when the census is carried out. In South East Queensland, the last complete travel survey was carried out in 2009 with an incomplete survey in 2011-12. This is far too infrequent to assess whether progress is on track for the goals. In other words, the targets are not “measurable and verifiable”.

Travel surveys must be carried out much more regularly as reliance on “trips to work” is unreliable. These trips do not reflect trips for other reasons, e.g. trips to friend’s places, shopping trips, trips to school or university and general “cycling as transport”.

Minimum passing distance laws

These are a useful educational tool. Like proposed laws for Vulnerable Road Users, it is better to have these than not in the current road and legal environment. However, they will not lead to mass cycling participation – only protected infrastructure will do that.

The 2013 Cycling Inquiry called for statistics on injuries and deaths to be collected; it is clear that “near miss” event data, as recorded from passing distance complaints to QPS, should be collected too.

For example, if a location (such as Sandgate Road near Boondall station) attracts many “close pass” reports to QPS then there is clearly a deficiency in infrastructure combined with a place where many people need or want to ride. Progressive organisations such as the University of Queensland collect this data, but others such as Brisbane City Council do not.

Nothing like this is happening systematically – government action is purely “reactive” in response to deaths (e.g. coronial inquires) not “proactive” in response to complaints or “near miss” events.

In the further development of this strategy, we look forward to the sort of public engagement envisioned by the previous one.

Yours faithfully

Paul French
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23 April 2016

¹ <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01441647.2015.1114271>