

Greens easily finish ahead of Liberals and Labor on cycling policy

The Greens' election commitments to encourage more cycling in Brisbane have left both the Liberals and Labor gasping in their wake according to analysis conducted by the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG).

The Greens provided an early breakaway from the bunch with their \$40 million per year commitment to accelerate the current snail's pace rollout of Brisbane's planned cycling network. This funding injection was backed up by a significant level of detail regarding how and where the money should be spent.

The Liberals then tried to bridge the gap to the frontrunner, with a pledge to spend \$100 million to "build up to 15 years and 100 kilometres worth of planned bike path projects in the next four years". Some limited indications were provided as to how the money would be spent, but generally their commitment is largely devoid of detail, suggesting this was policy "on the run".

Labor made a desperate lunge for the line in the last week of the campaign, equalling the four year \$100 million financial commitment of the Liberals. With the benefit of the later release of their policy Labor were able to provide extensive detail on their proposed network expansion.

There can be little doubting the Green's dedication to reducing Brisbane's over-dependence on the car via the implementation of policies supporting increased usage of cleaner, cheaper and more healthy alternate transport modes such as cycling. This was again confirmed by the Greens' responses to CBD BUG proposals regarding reducing CBD speed limits for safety reasons and actively increasing the availability of end of trip facilities for cyclists in the CBD.

With the 2008 election drawing near the Liberals realised they needed to be seen to be doing something for cyclists and hence their \$100 million commitment. However, their record of achievement on encouraging cycling over the last four years is at best very ordinary. The expansion of the planned network has all but ground to a halt since the Liberals won the mayoralty. Additionally, the recent media statements about the North South Bypass Tunnel (NSBT) being nine and half months ahead of plan have rung hollow for many cyclists whose bikeways will be detoured on both sides of the river for months because of the tunnel digging. The Liberals would not provide any commitment towards proposals from the CBD BUG to reduce the CBD's speed limit or actively increasing the availability of end of trip facilities for cyclists in the CBD.

As the original proponents of the NSBT Labor does not have an impeccable history on addressing Brisbane's traffic congestion, although their record on cycling friendly infrastructure when they previously held the mayoralty e.g. initiating the Eleanor Schonell Bridge easily exceeds that achieved by the Liberals over the last four years. To their credit Labor's commitment includes also working with several major suburban shopping centres to install cycle centres. However, they would not commit to reducing the CBD's speed limit or actively working to increase cyclist end of trip facilities in the CBD. Notwithstanding this the CBD BUG acknowledges the role of Cr Helen Abrahams (Dutton Park Ward) as Chairperson of Council's Environment and Sustainability Committee. Cr Abrahams is a genuine cyclist and a consistently strong advocate for improving conditions for Brisbane cyclists.

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