

Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Mr Dave Stewart
Director-General
Department of Transport and Main Roads
GPO Box 1412
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Mr Stewart

This letter seeks your urgent action to address another inconsistency between the policies of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) relating to encouraging cycling, and its "on-the-ground" actions.

This particular instance involves DTMR recently erecting signs banning south bound cyclists from riding over the Sandgate Road overpass at Virginia. This ban on cyclists was brought to the attention of the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) via a Twitter message, subsequent to which a site inspection was conducted by one of the CBD BUG's leadership group.

Firstly, it needs to be pointed out that this removal of cyclist amenity occurred without any prior notice to users and without any signage to indicate the alternative route for cyclists.

Apart from this lack of information either prior to or after the cyclist ban, the CBD BUG is highly concerned by the alternative route for cyclists outlined by a DTMR spokesperson in an article on this matter in the 15 February 2012 edition of *The Northside Chronicle* (photocopy attached).

This alternative route is viewed as significantly more dangerous in comparison to cyclists continuing to use the overpass because it will require them to:

- traverse the construction works around old Sandgate Road, where the path is partially blocked by temporary fencing and has a loose surface,
- negotiate the heavy traffic on the multi-lane roundabout before exiting onto Toombul Road,
- avoid motor vehicles turning east (left) into Wellington Road,
- at the same time cross right across two lanes of fast moving traffic,
- then U-turn across three lanes of fast moving traffic in order to head back north along Toombul Road, or dismount and cross at the pedestrian lights and then,
- re-merge onto Sandgate Road at the highest point of the overpass, where motorists' attention is focused on traffic approaching from their right.

The CBD BUG has serious reservations about the methodology of the risk assessment completed prior to the banning of cyclists from this section of the road network if it indicated the alternative route is safer than the overpass. For a start the alternative route adds approximately 230 metres to the road distance to be travelled by cyclists, creating additional risk to cyclists of being hit from behind by a passing motor vehicle. Added to this are the multiple additional intersections that now have to be negotiated by cyclists.

The CBD BUG understands the height of the concrete barrier along the outside edge of the overpass may have been the reason for the ban, due to the risk of a cyclist falling off this overpass. However, the CBD BUG has only been able to identify one previous instance of such an event occurring anywhere, in this case the coroner was not able to determine whether the cyclist was killed by the vehicle that hit cyclist from behind or the fall from the bridge. Therefore, while there is a risk of such an event, its probability is insignificant.

More importantly, the decision to ban cyclists from a section of the road network clearly contradicts the broader policy intent of DTMR to increase cycling's share of trips. On top of the additional risk to cyclists from using the alternative route, it is much more indirect than the overpass, and hence is another obstacle to getting more people on bikes. It is also unacceptable that cyclists have to again pay a price for the lack of safety due to motorists. On this basis the CBD BUG wants to also see a change in decision making processes so that in future any cyclist ban proposals must be assessed from a policy perspective.

Given the affected roadway is nine metres wide and marked only as two southbound lanes in a 60km/h zone, and your Department's policies supporting safe, direct and connected cycle networks the CBD BUG sees no reason why bike riders cannot continue to use the bike lane to ride along this short section of road.

The previously mentioned article in *The Northside Chronicle* also reported that DTMR installed the signs in response to complaints from cyclists. The CBD BUG would like advice on the number and nature of the complaints received from cyclists about this overpass, and specifically, if any of these included a suggestion that cyclists should be banned from riding over the overpass.

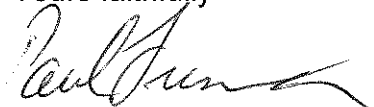
In view of the preceding information DTMR's banning of cyclists from riding southbound over the overpass is seen as inappropriate and unwarranted. Accordingly, the CBD BUG calls for the immediate removal of the signs banning cyclists from riding southbound over the Sandgate Road overpass.

Finally, to prevent a reoccurrence of similar inappropriate outcomes for cyclists the CBD BUG also calls for meaningful consultation to be conducted by DTMR prior to any further changes of this nature being implemented.

Should you wish to discuss this matter directly, please do not hesitate to call me directly on 0423 974 825.

I look forward to your response on this issue.

Yours faithfully



Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG

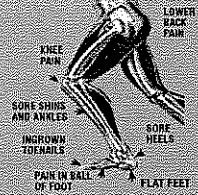
24 February 2012

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CHERMESIDE	3359 8836	Level 2, Chermeside Medical Complex, 956 Gympie Rd



NEWS 12

BROWN MEETS FANS

Bald Hills youngsters Asha and Kalani Bates were among hundreds of Brisbane Lions fans at the club's family fun day. They met captain Jonathan Brown. The day included jumper presentations to the 2012 team.



Cyclist safety concern

THE safety of cyclists is being investigated on the Downfall Creek overpass following complaints from riders.

The 860mm high concrete barrier is the cause of cyclist concerns. Department of Transport and Main Roads last week installed signs discouraging cyclists and pedestrians from using the southbound side of the overpass on Sandgate Rd, Virginia.

"As the height of cyclists on their bikes can vary significantly, investigations are currently under way to assess the standard of the crossing and we're liaising with bicycle user groups as part of the process," a department spokeswoman said.

A recommendation is



DANGEROUS LOCATION: Department of Transport and Main Roads has installed signage at Downfall Creek overpass.

expected by June 30.

In the meantime, riders should use the bike lane, continue down Whitfield Rd

to the Wellington St-Toombul Rd lights to access the on-ramp back on to Sandgate Rd south of the overpass.

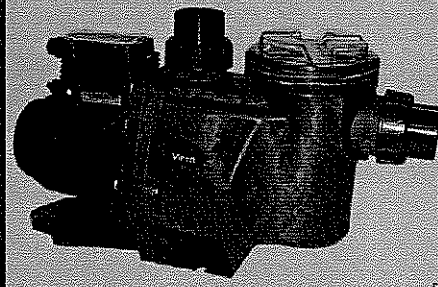
Boomgate 'malfunction' remains a mystery

REPORTS of a malfunction between the boomgates and traffic lights at the Geebung level crossing last Tuesday have not been confirmed by Queensland Rail.

A Newman Rd business owner said the boomgates came down while the traffic lights were green on Tuesday morning, causing gridlock for 10 minutes.

However, a QR spokeswoman said investigations showed the infrastructure was functional and there were no issues with the boomgates on that day.

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