



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Ms Danielle Cronin
Editor
Brisbane Times

Via email: Danielle.Cronin@brisbanetimes.com.au

Dear Ms Cronin

Facebook Moderation & Road Traffic Collision Reporting

We are writing to express our disappointment about the recent poor moderation of the Brisbane Times Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/brisbanetimes/posts/10157928237342461>) regarding the reporting of the fatal collision between a bus and a cyclist at O'Keefe St, Woolloongabba on 27 May 2021.

(<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/cyclist-killed-after-being-hit-by-bus-in-inner-brisbane-20210527-p57vt9.html>), and
(<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/bus-passenger-who-saw-brisbane-cyclist-killed-cried-in-girlfriend-s-arms-at-home-20210528-p57w0o.html>)

On the following page are two samples of some of the insensitive comments, and even ghoulish trolling, the Brisbane Times allowed to be published by about this crash.

We find it hard to see how some these comments are in the public interest.

We remind you of your commitment to be bound by the standards of the Australian Press Council. Their *Advisory Guidelines on Letters to the editor* states “editors are not obliged to publish letters on demand (whether in print or online). It is the prerogative and responsibility of editors—guided by fairness, balance and the public interest in facilitating diverse and robust expressions of opinion—to select letters for publication”.

We encourage you to devote more resources to moderating your Facebook page, especially when you report traffic crashes.

Too often a traffic crash is referred to by the press as an “accident”, as if it were some act of God, not the result of several usually avoidable factors that lead up to a collision. Though Brisbane Times usually reports these as crashes, we have noticed you occasionally use the word “accident”.

We draw your attention to the “Road Collision Reporting Guidelines” that were released in the United Kingdom on 18 May 2021 and backed by their National Union of Journalists. You can find details of the exhaustive process by which the guidelines were developed and more explanation of the rationale here: <https://www.rc-rg.com/guidelines>. Australia is no different to the United Kingdom in this regard.



It is our understanding Associated Press changed their style guide in 2016 in a similar manner. We have not been able to find reporting guidelines or a style guide for your organisation. If you have such a guide, we strongly encourage you to incorporate the “Road Collision Reporting Guidelines” into it.

As background to this letter, the Brisbane CBD Bicycle User group (CBD BUG) is a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 800 members, representing the interests of the very large number of people riding bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane city centre. We actively seek decisions at all levels of government supporting people who want to cycle, in particular relating to improved infrastructure, end-of-trip facilities, integration of cycling needs with other transport modes and a regulatory environment friendly towards people riding bikes. While the CBD BUG focuses on issues affecting people riding bikes for transport, we also strongly support initiatives enabling people to more often walk and use public transport.

We look forward to your content on traffic crashes being more appropriately reported and moderated in the future.

Yours faithfully

Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
6 June 2021

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