



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

GPO Box 2104, Brisbane 4001

brisbanecbdbug@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/cbdbug/

The Honourable Mark Bailey MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads
GPO Box 2644
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Via email to: transportandmainroads@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister

I write to you to request a review of the Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) minimum air draft requirements for bridge spanning the Bulimba Reach of the Brisbane River.

The background to this request is the 22 July 2016 Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) *Bulimba to Teneriffe Active Transport Bridge Summary Planning Report*. This report states a constraint on delivering a Bulimba to Teneriffe active transport bridge is the MSQ Harbour Master requires a fixed bridge at this location to have 30 metres vertical clearance above Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT) "to accommodate tall vessels".

This report also notes this requirement means a fixed bridge "would not be achievable in this region due to the significant visual impact and ramp structure length". Furthermore, the required alternative of an opening bridge would mean additional construction and ongoing operating / maintenance costs, along with the negative impacts on bridge user travel times each time the bridge is opened.

We view these MSQ vertical height above ATM requirements as redundant, and a major, unnecessary barrier to the long overdue delivery of this much-needed new river crossing for active travel users.

According to TMR's *Beacon to Beacon Guide: Brisbane River and Bremer River*¹ the Brisbane River's "Ship navigation area" only extends to just upstream from the former Portside Cruise Terminal in the Hamilton Reach, so it is extremely unlikely cruise ships or other similarly large vessels will travel upstream beyond that point.

In relation to sailing "tall ships" we've found their visits to Brisbane are very infrequent, and typically today these vessels only travel up the river as far as Hamilton, with some not venturing into the river at all and instead docking at Manly or the Gold Coast.

¹https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/tmr_site_msq/_/media/tmronline/msqinternet/msqfiles/home/boatingmaps/brisbaneandbremeriversbeacon.pdf?sc_lang=en&hash=ED32A3DC9E0D347B1ADB174A011858F4

The *Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2018-2028*² incorporates Brisbane's maintenance and refit facilities for these vessels. However, the Austal Brisbane Slipway and Service Centre is the furthest upriver of the Brisbane businesses mentioned in this document, but is still well downstream of all the potential locations of a Bulimba to Teneriffe bridge.

There continues to be a minor level of navigation of the Brisbane River upstream of the Bulimba Reach by smaller, private yachts. However, following Brisbane City Council's 2021 closure of its 31 moorings at the City Botanic Gardens for construction of the Kangaroo Point Green Bridge, of which only 19 were occupied at the time, this limited river traffic would now be even more reduced. Additionally, reducing the current air draft requirement for the Bulimba reach will not impact Council's 42 moorings at Breakfast Creek.

Our position also is that the travel needs of the thousands of people who would regularly use a Bulimba to Teneriffe active transport bridge far outweigh the desires of the small number of yacht owners who infrequently want to sail along the Brisbane River's Bulimba Reach.

The world's largest capacity tower crane is currently operating on the Brisbane River constructing the active travel bridge between Kangaroo Point and the City Botanical Gardens. However, this crane was delivered to the site disassembled and none of its components required a clearance anywhere near 30 metres.

The importance of the Bulimba to Teneriffe active transport bridge being delivered within the next couple of years cannot be overstated. The abovementioned TMR report points out that "there is significant existing demand for travel from Bulimba to the Brisbane CBD (and the reverse in our view) via the cross river link to Teneriffe, and also along existing bus routes along Wynnum Rd.

Bicycle (and scooter) riders travelling between the Brisbane CBD and the eastern suburbs along Wynnum Road have to use a narrow footpath that is also quite dangerous due to the many hidden driveways. Their journeys would be shortened and made significantly safer by being able to cross the river via this new bridge. While the Oxford St ferry allows riders more direct access to/from the CBD it: 1) does not operate 24/7, 2) is expensive, and 3) is very slow (when a commuter just misses a ferry their travel time to cross the river can increase by up to 15 minutes).

We would also draw attention to an August 2023 Transurban report indicating Brisbane (56%) has overtaken Sydney (50%) and Melbourne (51%) in having the 2023 highest actual daily usage of private vehicles – leading to the worst road congestion in Australia³. More Brisbane residents are driving to work in 2023 compared to last year, choosing to battle crippling congestion 3.9 days of the week. We know from countless surveys that Brisbane residents are sick of being stuck in traffic congestion and want safe travel alternatives.

Finally, the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games provide another major impetus to delivering this bridge. With several games venues planned for Herston and Albion, travelling to/from events via a Bulimba to Teneriffe active transport bridge would be made so much easier. Games venues slightly further afield e.g. Lang Park would also be well within bicycle/scooter range from the southside after this bridge is installed.

² <https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/industry/critical-industry-support/qld-superyacht-strategy#:~:text=The%20strategy%20envisions%20that%20by,in%20the%20Asia-Pacific%20region%20.>

³ <https://www.transurban.com/content/dam/transurban-pdfs/03/Urban-Mobility-Trends-Report-FY23.pdf>

In view of this array of evidence MSQ's 30 metre air draft requirement for a bridge spanning the Bulimba Reach of the Brisbane River can be seen to be obsolete, and therefore must be reduced to meet contemporary circumstances.

Yours sincerely



Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
6 September 2023

Cc: EaST BUG
Bicycle Queensland
Space for Cycling Brisbane
Queensland Walks
Hon Di Farmer MP, Member for Bulimba
Hon Grace Grace MP, Member for McConnel