



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group
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Mr Jim Betts
Secretary
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Betts

Brisbane CBD BUG submission on draft National Urban Policy

This submission provides the views of the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) on the draft National Urban Policy.

As a matter of policy, the comments in this submission are limited to issues impacting bicycle riders and other active travel users.

Brisbane CBD BUG information

The Brisbane 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 are active in seeking policy decisions at all levels of government supporting people who want to cycle, and focus on calling for improved infrastructure, end-of-trip facilities, integration of cycling needs with other transport modes and a regulatory environment supportive of people riding bikes. CBD BUG members meet monthly to exchange information and ideas, discuss issues of relevance and determine the direction of policies to benefit CBD bicycle riders.

Background

After decades of prioritising private motor vehicle travel, much of Australia's urban environment is overtly hostile towards people walking and people riding bikes and micro-mobility devices.

Key features of the current policy and urban environments that foster driving cars and deter people from using active travel modes include:

- most of the width of road corridors is dedicated to motorists and parking cars (storing private chattels in the public domain), while people riding bicycles/PMDs and people walking are left to share narrow and sub-standard footpaths, and
- the host of anti-cyclist road rules – such as the ban on riding bicycles on the footpath applied in several states and the 50km/h default urban area speed limit that is unsafe for vulnerable road users.

This car-centric transport planning has locked the majority of the population into incurring the high financial costs of owning and operating motor vehicles, the costs to individual health from sedentary lifestyles, along with the personal cost of time lost due to driving and sitting in traffic congestion. Other community-wide costs are the social impact from people losing a sense of community while being isolated from each other while driving their car (unlike walking and riding where people can engage with each other directly), and the environmental damage due to vehicle emissions.

Comments on draft policy

Overall, the CBD BUG very much welcomes the draft National Urban Policy for its intent to enable greater use of active and public transport.

However, a key omission from the policy is that it does not give any indication about when implementation will occur.

With the previous decades of government neglect of alternative transport modes while preferencing travel by private motor vehicle there is no time to lose, and we call for changes to funding to occur via the 2025-26 Budget.

In relation to transport funding we call for the cessation of new Australian Government funding for road upgrades in the urban environment - and the redirection all such programme budgets towards the delivery of improved active and public transport infrastructure.

We would point out the poor record of such programmes, such as the Australian Government's Black Spot Programme, which has been misused in Queensland through car-centric projects that have simultaneously removed black spots for motorists replaced them with black spots for bicycle riders and pedestrians.

Another key omission from the policy is that car ownership/driving has been, and continues to be, subsidised via the Australian taxation system (Fringe Benefits Tax and tax concessions on new vehicle purchases). These tax system subsidies need to be removed. If not removed, at least equivalent subsidies for personal electric vehicles i.e. e-bikes should be introduced.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the draft National Urban Policy.

Yours faithfully

Paul French

Paul French
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Brisbane CBD BUG
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