



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group
CBD BUG
GPO Box 2104
Brisbane Qld 4001

brisbanecbdbug@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/cbdbug/

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
Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Consultation Roadmap

This submission provides the views of the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) on the *Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Consultation Roadmap* (the “*Consultation Roadmap*”).

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

This submission can be made public and published.

Brisbane CBD BUG information

The Brisbane CBD BUG is a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 800 members, representing the interests 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 supporting 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 cyclists.

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 environment that foster car driving and deter people from using active travel modes include:

- most of the width of road corridors is dedicated to motorists and car parking, while people riding bicycles/personal mobility devices (PMDs) and people walking are left to share sub-standard footpaths
- state and territory governments are directly subsidising electric vehicle purchases while also providing indirect subsidies for drivers through spending far more on roads each year than the revenue derived from motorists via road tolls and registration fees, plus the national tax system subsidises driving cars for private travel, and
- the host of anti-cyclist road rules – such as the ban on riding bicycles on the footpath applied in several states and the unsafe 50km/h default urban area speed limit.

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 from being isolated from others while driving a car (unlike cycling and walking during which people can engage with others directly), and the environmental damage due to vehicle emissions.

Comments on Consultation Roadmap

Overall, the CBD BUG very much welcomes the *Consultation Roadmap* for recognising the need to reform Australia's transport and transport infrastructure sectors - and that this will require a substantial increase in the use of active and public transport.

We strongly support the views articulated in section 2.1 of the *Consultation Roadmap* regarding the potential for active transport to significantly reduce road transport emissions while also easing congestion and household transport costs, increasing physical activity levels and reducing harmful pollution, heat and noise.

However, our comments refer primarily to Road – light vehicles (Chapter 3.1), and Transport infrastructure (Chapter 4.1)

A key issue is that critical mineral constraints appear to not have been addressed e.g.: electric motor vehicles will require between two and three times the amount of copper and twice the manganese compared to a current internal combustion engine vehicle. The critical minerals required for the charging network are not considered either). A search of the *Consultation Roadmap* for the word “copper” returned zero results.

There is little acknowledgement of the opportunity for encouraging electric bicycles – instead of electric cars. Australian state and territory governments are subsidising electric cars and ignoring the potential for electric bicycles (and PMDs) to enable the population's personal mobility at far less cost than cars while also reducing emissions and traffic congestion.

The *Consultation Roadmap* acknowledges that “bigger and heavier cars such as SUVs” are the fastest growing segment of the vehicle market, yet no actions are proposed to discourage this worrying trend. These larger vehicles have negative consequences for road and parking infrastructure and also increase the impact of collisions on vulnerable road users. Accordingly, we call for changes to the taxation and vehicular regulatory systems to disincentivise purchases of such vehicles.

The extent of the opportunity to encourage a mode shift to active transport is missing. Given running costs for electric cars will be less than internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, extensive and urgent action is required to discourage their use for urban trips over short distances.

Citing Brisbane City as an example, half of all motor vehicle trips are 5km or less, a distance easily covered with a person riding and electric bicycle or scooter.

The Brisbane CBD BUG was already aware of, and welcomes, the Australian Government establishing the \$100 million Active Transport Fund via the 2024-25 Budget.

However, this funding is spread over four years, and is for both walking and cycling infrastructure across the entire country. As a comparison, even the Brisbane City Council's very modest 2024-25 budgeted spending for cycling infrastructure is equivalent to this.

Therefore, the Australian Government's Active Transport Fund is little more than a token effort compared to the budgeting required to make up for the decades of neglect towards active travel by governments at all levels across Australia. Hence, significantly more Australian Government funding is required to develop appropriate (safe and direct) infrastructure for cycling and other active travel modes.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the *Consultation Roadmap*.

Yours faithfully

Paul French

Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
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