



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Mr Paul Eagles
Chief Executive Officer
Urban Land Development Authority
GPO Box 2202
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Dear Mr Eagles

This letter is convey the CBD BUG's concerns about the potential alignments of a section of the North Brisbane Cycleway (NBC) currently being planned by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) between O'Connell Terrace and the largely disused pedestrian underpass below Bowen Bridge road. One possible alignment option involves using the western perimeter of the RNA show grounds in the vicinity of the redeveloped Side Show Alley.

The CBD BUG is a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 600 members, representing the interests of the very large number of Brisbane residents who ride bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane city centre. It is active in vigorously seeking policy decisions at all levels of government supporting cycling, and in particular relating to improved infrastructure, end-of-trip facilities, integration of cycling with other transport modes and a cyclist-friendly regulatory environment. CBD BUG members meet monthly to exchange information and ideas, discuss issues of relevance and determine the direction of policies to benefit CBD cyclists.

Information recently obtained by the CBD BUG via a Right to Information application indicates the RNA opposes the use of its land for the NBC. The other alternative apparently available to TMR for this section of the NBC will mean the cycleway will pass through Bowen Park via its eastern boundary.

The importance of this cycleway cannot be overstated. Brisbane's chronic traffic congestion is largely attributable to government under-investment in cycling as a viable transport mode alternative to the private motor vehicle. In this context Brisbane's northern suburbs are particularly lacking in quality, connected cycleways, a fact reflected in TMR data showing that cycle commuting levels between the northern suburbs and the CBD are stagnant in comparison to other suburbs where some investment has been made. This situation has been compounded by the RNA Showgrounds being closed to the public for the majority of the year, thereby creating a major barrier to cyclists accessing the CBD from Brisbane's northern suburbs over many decades.

Part of the RNA's opposition to a very small part of its land being used for the cycleway is a claim this option would threaten the Royal Queensland Show's viability. However, on the basis this section of path requires only 1,500m² of the RNA's space, which is only 0.68% of the Association's current property area of 220,000m² (22 hectares), the CBD BUG suggests this is a gross overstatement of the path's impact. This perception is reinforced in light of the RNA's development application to the ULDA proposing the major expansion of the property so that it includes "360,000m² of commercial, residential and retail space".

Furthermore, the RNA's objection to this alignment appears to conflict with the Association's statement of 13 May 2009, when as part of the announcement about the RNA Showgrounds Regeneration Project it was stated that "bicycle and pedestrian pathways will provide easy access through the RNA showgrounds and onto the CBD".

Additionally the NBC could positively impact on traffic congestion in and around the RNA's grounds during event periods, providing an active transport alternative for patrons in line with State and local governments' aims to reduce traffic disruptions for major events.

In comparison, while Bowen Park is also a heritage listed place, being of only some 17,500m² it is a much smaller area and the impacts on this park as one of the few open public green spaces in this area of the CBD would be much more significant.

Another advantage of using the RNA's grounds for the cycleway would be that the associated works could be incorporated into the RNA's Regeneration Project. However, as a stand alone project the Bowen Park alignment would likely firstly be highly disruptive to park users, as well as likely being a more expensive option - an additional and unwarranted imposition on an already over-stretched Queensland Government cycling infrastructure budget.

It is also worthwhile mentioning the fact that the ULDA's approval of the RNA's development plans for the showgrounds will enable the conversion of a significant proportion of this property, previously classified by the Brisbane City Council as "Special Purpose Centre" for the public's benefit, to private use. In tandem with the considerable concessions understood to have been made for the RNA through this process, such as the apparent conversion of the temporary carpark into a permanent arrangement, there needs to a greater emphasis on the public benefit arising from this project.

There is a no small element of historical irony to the RNA's suggestion that the cycleway alignment should be though Bowen Park instead of the RNA's property. According to the Queensland Heritage Register, the showgrounds were expanded in 1932 through the excision of 2 acres and 23 perches from Bowen Park. Prior to the establishment of the Exhibition Grounds in 1876, the site the showgrounds now occupy was owned by the Queensland Acclimatisation Society (QAS), an organisation formed to "promote the introduction, acclimatization, propagation and distribution in Queensland of economically useful plants and animals". The QAS created Bowen Park as a public exhibition garden. This park is now the last vestige in Brisbane of the QAS, on whose generosity the RNA originally depended for use of their grounds. The Queensland Historical Atlas states the QAS progressively conceded land to the then National Association. A drawn-out dispute between the Society, the National Association and the Queensland Government resulted in it selling the remains of Bowen Park to the Brisbane City Council and moving to Lawnton.

Perhaps prevailing over all these considerations is the advice received from the Office of the Minister for Transport in a letter dated 24 October 2010 (copy attached) advising that "an 'in principle' agreement with the Royal National Association (RNA) has been reached regarding use of RNA land for a section of the cycleway that links the Victoria Park Bikeway and O'Connell Terrace and uses an existing underpass of Bowen Bridge Road".

On the basis of this information the CBD BUG's position is clear. In comparing the respective costs to the Queensland Government of the two potential cycleway alignments; the comparative heritage values of the two properties after the RNA's regeneration project; the need to balance the public and private benefits arising from the regeneration; and the previous commitment from the RNA towards this project; the cycleway should clearly be aligned through the RNA's property.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Paul French'.

Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG

24 January 2012



Queensland
Government

Hon Rachel Nolan MP
Member for Ipswich

Our ref: MC46515

Office of the
Minister for Transport

24 FEB 2010

Mr Paul French
Co-convenor
Central Business District Bicycle Users Group
GPO Box 2104
Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Mr French

Thank you for your letter of 15 December 2009 to the Honourable Rachel Nolan MP, Minister for Transport, about connecting the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital (RBWH) Cycle Centre to existing cycling infrastructure. The Minister has asked that I respond on her behalf and I apologise for the delay of my response.

The RBWH Cycle Centre was constructed due to an opportunity that presented itself late in the development of the Northern Busway project. The Department of Transport and Main Roads saw the economic advantages of delivering this iconic bikeway project as part of the Northern Busway development and making use of the land offered by Queensland Health, which had identified a high level of demand for an end of trip facility in the RBWH precinct.

While funding was not available to deliver the entire network surrounding the cycle centre at the same time, the department recognised that additional cycle infrastructure was needed as a matter of priority.

As previously mentioned in a letter to you of 11 November 2009, on-road cycle facilities are planned along Butterfield Street at Herston and at the Bowen Bridge Road/O'Connell Terrace intersection to assist cyclists entering and leaving the RBWH Cycle Centre. These will be completed by the end of this financial year.

The development scheme for the Bowen Hills Urban Development Area (released by the ULDA in July 2009) identifies cycle infrastructure that will improve access to the RBWH Cycle Centre (ref. page 17, Bowen Hills Development Scheme) including:

- cycle lanes on O'Connell Terrace, Brookes Street, Hamilton Place, Bowen Bridge Road and Gregory Terrace (these are consistent with proposed facilities shown in the South East Queensland Principal Cycle Network Plan)
- three active transport corridors through the 'Ekka' precinct from Gregory Terrace to O'Connell Terrace, from Bowen Park to O'Connell Terrace and from O'Connell Terrace to Bowen Bridge Road.

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An 'in principle' agreement with the Royal National Association (RNA) has been reached regarding use of RNA land for a section of the cycleway that links the Victoria Park Bikeway and O'Connell Terrace and uses an existing underpass of Bowen Bridge Road. The above facilities are subject to further investigation and funding approval prior to implementation.

Works associated with the Airport Link project will deliver an off-road pedestrian and cycle facility between Addison and Campbell Streets including a crossing of Enoggera Creek allowing access to the RBWH Cycle Centre from the north-east. This will be constructed by 2012.

Bike lanterns have not been requested at the intersections you suggested on Bowen Bridge Road because bike lanterns are traditionally used only on intersections that provide a through connection either within or to a bikeway network. However, the cycle lanes planned for O'Connell Terrace will facilitate an on-road option for cyclists turning right to enter the RBWH Cycle Centre.

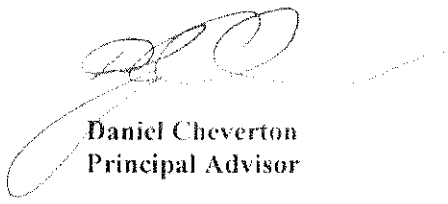
The department has also been working with the council to improve cycling facilities on Butterfield Street to improve connections from the Enoggera Creek bikeway and RBWH Cycle Centre. An agreement was established to provide on-road cycling facilities in this road reserve where space is restricted.

The majority of the roads surrounding the RBWH Cycle Centre are within the jurisdiction of the council and for that reason we encourage the council to incorporate additional cycling facilities on any future road upgrades.

The Noble Street Bridge is an example of a project that we have supported through the provision of funding to council to progressively establish better connections for cyclists travelling to the Brisbane CBD from the northern suburbs.

If you require further information, please call Ms Rhonda Clelland, Manager (Cycle Network Program) of the Smart Travel Centre-Queensland Branch on 3145 1834. Ms Clelland will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



Daniel Cheverton
Principal Advisor