



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group – CBD BUG

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By email: Scott.Evans@brisbane.qld.gov.au

Dear Scott,

Re : Cyclepods

I refer to your email of 21 September 2007, in which you sought feedback in regard to Council's installation and use of cyclepods. You subsequently provided CBD BUG with indicative costs of cyclepods, as well as several alternate bike parking options, to assist in our provision of the requested feedback.

As you are well aware, the CBD BUG is an organisation of city cyclists, representing and articulating the interests of the very large number of Brisbane residents who commute or ride bicycles to, from and within the Central Business District. The group has in excess of 300 members, potentially represents several thousand regular cyclists and meets monthly to discuss issues of concern and interest to CBD cyclists. Facilities for cyclists, and safe, direct cycling routes in and out of the CBD are issues of major interest and concern to our members.

In summary, the CBD BUG is of the view that the cyclepods do not represent good 'value for money'; the current locations at ferry-stops are problematic; usage is extremely low; the requirement to lift bikes makes it difficult (for some) to use; and we do not favor any further installation of cyclepods.

The CBD BUG's biggest concern is the cost, and the cost/benefit ratio. Whilst crude comparisons can be problematic, each cyclepod 'spot' costs almost one thousand dollars per bike, as opposed to just over one hundred dollars per bike for a Sheffield rack or a few hundred dollars per bike for a Cora rack. And the relative cost differences are likely to widen if actual rather than potential occupancy rates were calculated.

Two specific advantages have been ascribed to the cyclepods – shelter, and security. Some comments were fairly disparaging about the need to provide shelter at all, but we believe it is a moderately compelling benefit, albeit likely not worth the cost. How much would it cost to construct a similar umbrella over a cheaper bike rack? In many circumstances it's also possible to

position racks to take advantage of existing shelter. There are anecdotal reports of seeing a bike that had apparently been saturated whilst on the cyclepod.

We have similar reservations in relation to reports of improved security. It appears to be quite difficult to use a D lock to lock a frame to these structures, or to remove the front wheel in order to lock it with the rear wheel. A Sheffield rack is far more flexible in this regard. It is the CBD BUG's view that security is a more compelling issue than shelter.

The positioning of the racks at ferry terminals implies that an intention for them to be used for medium to long stays (a few hours or all day), but these structures don't offer sufficient security for that, at least not for any bike worth locking up or caring whether it's exposed to the sun or rain. Austroads Part 14 and AS 2890.3 designate these as class 3 (lowest security) facilities suitable only for short term parking, with the Orleigh Park lock-up shelter in class 2 (suitable for environments such as a school or office) and situations such as the ferry terminals requiring class 1 facilities (individual lock-up facilities, like the Citytrain lockers). Whilst these guidelines are not universally accepted, it does provide an explanation for why people might not be using them as much as was anticipated. Another factor contributing to low usage is probably the ease with which people can take their bikes with them on the ferries.

In the event that the existing cyclepods were to be relocated, or additional pods installed, CBD BUG would suggest a range of alternate locations and would appreciate involvement in developing criteria for determining appropriate locations. There are a number of public locations (trip generators) where inadequate or no bike parking facilities exist, including Suncorp Stadium, the Gabba, the RNA, various hospitals, QPAC and various museums, libraries and galleries.

We also discussed the claimed space advantage of the cyclepod. The argument does seem to hold water but is fairly marginal, and does not take into account the increased flexibility in positioning of smaller racks. In many or most of the current locations space is not a critical factor, anyway.

A concern identified is the required physical ability of users, with even one fit young male member reporting some difficulty in manoeuvring his bike on and off the rack. A further concern raised was the restricted variety of bikes that can use a cyclepod. Anything a little exotic (folder, tandem, etc) might have trouble. As may children's bikes. Again, it's hard to beat a Sheffield rack for flexibility in this regard.

Finally, a common opinion was that the cyclepods are ugly. Big, garish, plastic toadstools.

I hope this feedback is of assistance in your evaluation of the cyclepod project. Should you have any queries in regard to this matter, or wish to discuss the matter, please ring me on 0419 663329 (mobile) or by email on cbdbug@yahoo.com.au.

Yours sincerely



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Brisbane CBD BUG
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