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**Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle Users Group –  
CBD BUG**  
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The Honourable Andrew Fraser MP  
Treasurer of Queensland  
GPO Box 611  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Treasurer

On behalf of Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle Users Group (CBD BUG) members I write to you to request the abolition of the Queensland Fuel Subsidy Scheme (QFSS), and the redirection of this scheme's funding to improving Queensland's cycling, walking and public transport infrastructure in order to reduce excessive car dependency and use.

The CBD BUG is an organisation of some 400 cyclists representing the interests of the thousands of Brisbane residents who ride bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane city centre. It pursues policy decisions at all levels of government relating to cycling, and in particular relating to improved cycling infrastructure, end-of-trip facilities and awareness of cycling as an important mode of active and sustainable transport.

The background to this letter is this state's over-dependency on cars, which is particularly evident in South East Queensland. This dependency has led to a range of negative outcomes such as chronic traffic congestion, excessive pollution, over-reliance on oil and soaring levels of obesity and Type 2 diabetes. An exceptional opportunity exists to address these problems by encouraging more Queenslanders to get out of their cars and ride bicycles.

Cycling levels are increasing across Australia such that cycling is now the fourth most popular active recreational activity. However, Queensland is lagging behind other jurisdictions. Sadly, this is chiefly attributable to the woeful under-provision of cycling infrastructure, resulting in people viewing cycling as too dangerous to take up.

The principal current Queensland Government funding for cycling infrastructure is the \$556 million (provided over 20 years) for the Cycle Network Program, established in 2006 for developing cycling facilities throughout southeast Queensland. Sixty per cent of these funds require matching by local governments as capital grants for cycling projects, which local governments apply as grants. The remaining forty per cent funds cycling works associated with state-owned assets.

The CBD BUG views this funding and timeframe as woefully inadequate. It equates on an annual basis to marginally over 1.1% of the total Main Roads capital works budget, and not surprisingly, the roll out of the cycle network in the state's south east corner is progressing at a snails' space.

At the same time, and despite all reputable theoretical and research-based evidence that it is inefficient and not fully passed on to consumers, the Queensland Government continues to spend over \$500 million per year on the QFSS, which as the report from the Queensland Fuel Subsidy Commission of Inquiry found ends up as profit for fuel retailers. Additionally, taxpayers are footing the bill for the scheme's significant administrative costs.

To turn around this waste and misdirection of taxpayer money the CBD BUG is calling for the QFSS to be abolished. The resulting annual savings of over \$500 million then to be directed to accelerating the SEQ Cycle network rollout and the expansion of regional cycling infrastructure projects such as rail trails, along with improving walking infrastructure and public transport infrastructure and services across the state.

This additional level of funding for cycling over three years would on an annualised per capita basis bring the State Government's cycling expenditure up to the same level currently being spent by the Brisbane City Council.

The following are some of the benefits to be derived from reducing car utilisation.

- Improving population health and reduced demand for ambulance and hospital systems, along with improved economic productivity from reduced sick leave.
- Reducing the rate of road crashes and associated human trauma and societal costs.
- Improved economic efficiency via reduced traffic congestion.
- Improved the physical environment via reducing green house gas emissions.
- Improved economic stability by reducing oil dependency.
- Re-uniting communities due to people being able to cycle and walk safely on the streets again as a result of reduced vehicular flows.

There is no other single policy change that would simultaneously deliver as many benefits as promoting cycling as an effective method of achieving significant progress on issues coming under the health, environment, transport and tourism portfolios.

Importantly, this change would serve as an important economic stimulus for the Queensland economy as it would generate construction industry jobs and encourage tourism.

An opportunity to meet with you and discuss these issues would be very welcome. We can be contacted via the postal address above, via email to [convenors@cdbdbug.org.au](mailto:convenors@cdbdbug.org.au), or I can be reached by phone on 0423 974 825.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



Paul French  
Co-convenor  
Central Business District Bicycle Users Group

28 April 2009