

Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) Submission to the Brisbane City Council Car Parking Review

Introduction

This submission details the views of the Brisbane CBD BUG in relation to car parking in Brisbane. The members of the CBD BUG welcome the Brisbane City Council (BCC) Car Parking Review, as the current approach by Council to car parking has serious, negative impacts on people riding bikes.

The expectation of free car parking right at the door of their destination is a significant element of the pervasive culture among Brisbane residents that their cars are the default transport mode for every trip.

This has resulted in Brisbane's excessive level of private motor car use for personal transport. The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that 34.3% of Brisbane residents' usual trips to work or study destinations involve distances so short that walking and/or cycling would be viable (less than 10 km). This data shows that in Brisbane 12.5% of persons who work or study full-time travel an average distance for their usual trip to work or full-time study of less than 5 km, while another 21.8% reported they travelled between 5 km to less than 10 km. [1]

Sadly, this data also shows that the main form of transport used on the usual trip to work or full-time study by 84.9% of people is the private motor vehicle, while only 9.1% use public transport, 1.4% cycle, 3.2% walk and 1.4% used "Other" modes of transport including ferry.

This very high motor vehicle usage blights Brisbane's lifestyle and threatens its future economic sustainability and environmental credentials. It is counter to the aspirations of the city. This inordinate dependence on private motor cars is in part dependent on, and encouraged by, the wide availability of free and/or cheap car parking.

The following facts should be acknowledged by the Parking Taskforce in its report and taken into consideration in the development of all recommendations:

- Parking is never free. The cost of road space occupied by parked motor vehicles in Brisbane is met by ratepayers.
- Free/ cheap parking: promotes car use; creates unsightly and anti-social spaces; creates barriers to pedestrians and cyclists; increases the extent of paved areas; requires removal of green spaces; and reduces the viability of businesses and housing affordability. [2]
- At least one quarter of Brisbane's population does not drive a car – they are either too young, or too old. [3]
- Only about 69% actually have a driver's licence. [4]
- Estimated annual car kilometres travelled per capita peaked in Brisbane during 2006 and have since been declining. [5] This accords with the trends observable in other Australian capital cities. [6]

Importantly, free on-street parking is abundant across Brisbane. Allowing for kerb space that is not available for legal parking e.g. bus stops, driveways, loading zones, taxi ranks, no standing zones etc. a highly conservative calculation by the CBD BUG indicates that BCC's 8,500 metered parking spaces represent less than 1% of the total kerb length of Council's approximately 5,700 km of roads.

The following issues have been identified by the CBD BUG as key priorities to be addressed through the Council's Parking Review.

Ban car parking in bike lanes and Bicycle Awareness Zones

Motorists should not be allowed to park in bike lanes and Bicycle Awareness Zones (BAZ). By parking in this manner they compromise the safety of people riding bicycles.

The CBD BUG views it as critical that a safe, connected and direct network for people riding bicycles should be given higher priority than the convenience of people parking cars. This should be especially so on roads that are already designated “cycle friendly” with bike lanes and BAZ treatments. Motorists should not be permitted to park cars in bike lanes or BAZ, and these lanes should be marked and signed accordingly.

In contrast to the approach in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, and Tasmania, Queensland Road Rule 187 does not restrict stopping (parking) in bicycle lane unless prohibited by signs or road mark. [7]

Therefore, it is evident Brisbane City Council has the power to legally preclude cars being parked in bike lanes and BAZ. In response to a CBD BUG member’s letter on this issue to the State Minister for Transport he responded that “traffic engineers currently have the option to prohibit parking by other means, for example, yellow edge lines or no stopping signs.”



Taxi obstructing one of Brisbane’s few “physically segregated” on-road bike lanes, George St, CBD (June 2014)

Removing car parking from bike lanes/BAZ is not an onerous imposition on the road network

The current BCC on-road bike lane and BAZ network is about 500 km, significant proportions of which include both sides of the road (we will assume 25% for the purposes of this analysis). The current road network administered by BCC is about 5,700 km, so the on-road bike network currently accounts for about 6.3% of the road network.

When the cycle network is complete at 1,700 km [8] assuming an extra 100 km of off-road network, there will be about 1,000 km of on-road network. Assuming a similar level of double counting as occurs at the moment, (25%) there will be about 750 km of on-road network. Assuming the current road network stays at 5,700 km, this will put the on-road bicycle network at about 13.2% of the existing road network.

This 13.2% figure represents a “worst case scenario” in terms of loss of car parking, where all car parking is removed from bicycle and BAZ lanes on both sides of the road. This loss could be significantly reduced through innovative design. For example by designating one side of the road as a kerb side bicycle track with car parking on the traffic side and removing car parking from the bicycle lane in the opposite direction, as per TMR’s Separated Cycleways Guideline [9].

Most car parking spaces are currently significantly under-utilised, especially in suburban areas. There will be many streets adjacent those with bike lanes and BAZ where car parking will remain available within a very short walking distance.

Our current lifestyle is killing us

In 2011–12, almost three in 10 adults (28%) were obese compared to one in 10 (11%) in 1989. With more than one in four adults now obese, Australia ranks seventh among developed countries for rates of obesity for people aged 15 years and over. 62% of people in metropolitan Brisbane are overweight or obese. [10] Decreasing levels of physical activity are a potential contributor to the large growth in obesity worldwide over the past 33 years. [11]

Car parking policy is a choice about who gets to use our roads

The following principles should be acknowledged by the Parking Taskforce:

- the cost of parking should ultimately be recovered from the people using this resource
- where the cost is not recovered directly from the user, it is recovered from the community and as such is an implicit subsidy from the community to the user, and
- how the community subsidises the users of car parking spaces is ultimately a policy decision that should be governed by Council’s overall policy documents.

The people of Brisbane (Vision 2031) have said they want more bikeways

“Brisbane Vision 2031” [8] is the City Council’s long-term community plan for the city, detailing the aspirations for our city’s future and outlining ideas for achieving this. The document makes many references to safe, efficient, connected, integrated cycling networks. It never mentions aspirations for parking.

The following are relevant quotes from the document that should be considered when weighing the competing demands on limited carriageway space.

- Brisbane has so much to recommend it - for people who live here, do business here or who come as visitors:
 - our exceptional outdoor places for sport and recreation including parks, pools, waterways, bikeways and natural areas, such as, Mt Coot-tha
 - our accessible city, with high-quality integrated road, rail, bus, ferry and cycling networks,
- Our integrated transport system provides for efficient and safe movement of people and goods into and throughout our city, with residents and visitors adopting sustainable travel choices including walking, cycling and public transport.

More people will not ride bicycles if cars are allowed to park in bike lanes and BAZ

The *Vision 2031* aspirations regarding traffic congestion, and health and lifestyle will not be met if carriageway space is dedicated to people parking cars, in preference to people riding bicycles. Most of the current on-road bicycle network is rendered virtually useless because people are permitting to park their cars in bike lanes and BAZ. New bicycle riders will not be attracted to facilities that permit car parking.

The people of Brisbane have said they want to live more healthily

Council will contribute to the performance benchmark to increase the proportion of adults participating in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, on five or more days of the week, by 15% from baseline by 2018.

Council will contribute to the performance benchmark to return the proportion of adults at healthy weight to baseline level by 2018.

Residents, workers, students and visitors can choose to walk, cycle or use public transport as part of their everyday travel around Brisbane.

Active travel is an easier choice for more people. People enjoy being able to walk and ride via connected links to destinations such as schools, businesses, shops, libraries, parks and public transport.

The people of Brisbane have said they want to drive less and cycle more often

Brisbane residents and visitors use public transport, walking and cycling more often and reduce trips by private car, helping to reduce vehicle emissions.

Residents, businesses and visitors can choose to use public transport, walking or cycling to reduce car trips and vehicle emissions

The community wants to feel safe

The majority of Brisbane's residents agree they and their family feel safe when out and about in Brisbane.

Brisbane's infrastructure, transport services and public spaces are designed and managed to incorporate crime prevention through environmental design practices. Residents feel safe at home and when out and about.

An interconnected network of footpaths, pathways and bikeways would make it easy and safe for residents to use walking and cycling for local trips.

Brisbane's bike network

Vision 2031 says: "Brisbane's bikeway network will exceed 1700 kilometres" by 2031. [8]

Brisbane's bikeway network is currently stated as being over 1,100 kilometres. [12] Slightly less than half of this current network is off-road. There are very few opportunities in the future for greenfield expansions of the off-road bikeway network. Most of the aspirational extra 600 km of bikeway will need to be found on-road at a rate of about 35 km every year for the next 17 years out to 2031.

Brisbane is growing

The growth of Brisbane is expected to be as follows:

- Brisbane will accommodate 156,000 new dwellings to meet anticipated growth of which 138,000 will be infill dwellings, i.e. located within the existing urban area, in accordance with the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031.
- Brisbane will accommodate 443,000 new jobs in efficient locations across the city. [8]

Space is not growing. on-street car parking space will not grow

Given this, the amount of extra kerb space suitable for parking provided out to 2031 is likely to be exceedingly small. In fact, current parking space required for the existing passenger fleet would take up almost half the existing kerbside space. This does not account for any growth in vehicle numbers out to 2031.

Trips by bicycle and BCC targets

The current Transport Plan for Brisbane sets a target for cycling in 2026 to account for 5% of all trips across the city. [12] In 2011, which was some years into Council's significant increase in funding for cycling infrastructure, people riding bicycles accounted for 1.9% of all journeys to work. [13] In 1996 this figure was 1.5%. [14] Fewer than 20% of those riding bicycles to work are women. [15] At the current growth rate Council's target of having 5% of all trips made by bicycle in 2026 will not be met.

It is worth pointing out that the number of people cycling to work is almost four times the number who catch a ferry, and that bus trips account for just over five times the number of people cycling [13]. Although the absolute number of people riding bicycles has doubled at Council survey sites over the last nine years [16], this growth rate, while still ahead of the population growth rate, is still insufficient for Council to achieve its target of having 5% of all trips made by bicycle in 2026.

The target will not be met under current conditions.

For Council to achieve its target not only does the proportion of women riding bicycles need to increase significantly, many more people need to be encouraged to use bicycles for transport.

More people want to ride bicycles for transport

There is a strong desire by people to ride bicycles for transport. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) surveys show that in Queensland 13% of people had used a bicycle as an "alternate main form of transport sometimes used on usual trip to work or full-time study". [17] Almost 16% of Brisbane residents rode a bicycle in the last week. However "The cycling participation rate measured in the past week and month has not changed between 2011 and 2013, although the yearly participation rate has decreased to a statistically significant degree (Figure 7.2). This decrease is attributable to primarily to a decrease in participation in Brisbane.

This result is supported by the self-reported change in cycling participation by respondents over the past 12 months. As shown in Figure 7.3, significantly more respondents indicated they were riding less frequently than more frequently in both Brisbane and regional Queensland compared to a year ago.." [17] (CBD BUG notes that Brisbane in this survey includes a much broader peri-urban area to the west of the city. We hope it is not representative of the changes in Brisbane City. We urge BCC to contribute funding to the next survey in order to procure a sample size that will allow statistically significant conclusions to be drawn about Brisbane City's performance.)

Children would prefer to cycle to school

The last three decades have seen a significant decline in children's cycling and walking school trips, a reduction in their independent mobility and a resultant decline in their active use of and presence on the streets. [18]

The preference for cycling as a mode choice is highest for travel to school (23%), followed by local parks, shops and friends. 92% of children own bicycles. [18]

Children who are driven to school develop unhealthy travel patterns for their adult life due to parental chauffeuring which is influential in "reinforcing unsustainable transport habits in children, which are then likely to lead to car-dependent social values in adulthood". [19]

However, "cycling participation seems to drop among children aged 10 to 17 more rapidly in Brisbane than in regional Queensland (and the Australian average)." [20]

Brisbane residents want a safer road environment

ABS surveys show that the main barrier to people riding bicycles for transport other than the distance being too far, or not owning a bicycle, is "Road safety issues/hazardous". At almost 15% this is more than two and a half times the frequency of the next most cited barrier "Need to carry goods/equipment". [21]

"Substantial research exists regarding commuter cyclists' route choice. The following preferences, addressing facility and route factors, have been identified: shorter travel times; continuous bicycle facilities; smooth riding surface; flat to moderately hilly terrain; an on-road bicycle facility, rather than a separate path; lower traffic volume and the absence of parked cars". [22] "Additional research suggests that segregated off-road bicycle facilities should be considered as recreational facilities, rather than commuter facilities". [23] This is supported by the fact that 14% of Brisbane residents cycled for recreation/exercise in the last week compared with only 3.7% who cycled for transport. [20]

The built physical environment determinants found to be influential in children's cycling are traffic volume and flow along streets with related perception of safety; the availability of on- and off- road cycling infrastructure; along with a number of other factors. [18]

The most commonly recognised issues underlying the increased use of the private car for minors' travel relate to concerns over traffic safety and personal security. [24]

A safer road environment is forgiving

Roads and roadsides should be improved to reduce the risk of crashes and the severity of impacts when crashes do occur; vulnerable road users must be considered in this process.

A safe road environment should aim to minimise the number of mistakes made and the severity of their consequences. The following are quotes from some Austroads Safety Guides, that should be read considering a child as the road user in the instance of bike lanes, and a car door flung open as the road side hazard.

"A safe road environment incorporates numerous design principles", including "a roadside free of unforgiving hazards. It should serve the safety needs of all vehicles and road users."

"A well designed road should allow road users to accurately perceive the 'demands' of the road environment and perform the required road user task and prevent crashes from occurring in the first place. If there is a failure in the road user's ability to accurately perceive this demand, then the roadway should be forgiving by either allowing the road user to

recover and continue (thus changing the outcome of the event) or by minimising the severity of the accident”. [25]

Cycle lanes are one option but physical separation is more effective and likely to encourage greater cycling activity. [26]

A 2012 Canadian study shows protected bike lanes – with actual barriers separating cyclists from traffic – really make a difference. The risk of injury drops for riders there by 90 percent. [27]

There is little evidence of a steady gradation in pedestrian and cyclist fatality rates across countries. [28] Rather, there is a clustering effect with Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany and Denmark classified as the ‘top performers’ for pedestrian safety. These countries have a strong commitment to fostering high levels of safe walking and cycling, and most have implemented a comprehensive package of integrated traffic safety measures including: Speed reduction measures including environmental modification, 30 km/h speed limits, crossings with signals in most areas and very low speed limits outside schools.

The clustering effect (of countries performing well and less well) was even more marked for child cyclist safety. Most of the top performing countries implemented a comprehensive package of child cyclist safety measures (in addition to those listed above for child pedestrians) including: Providing high levels of cycling infrastructure. [29]

Cars parked in bike lanes and BAZ cannot be regarded as high levels of cycling infrastructure and are not part of a forgiving safer road environment

A significant effort in producing a safer road environment involves providing clearance from objects in the vehicle pathway. Allowing people to park vehicles within a bikeway introduces a fixed obstacle within the pathway.

The Monash Alfred Cyclists Crash Study from 2012 showed in almost 23% of crashes that involved another vehicle, that vehicle was parked. [30]



Bus obstructing kerb ramp, Albert St, CBD (June 2014)

Data from South East Queensland has shown that 5.3% of all reported bicycle crashes involve a collision with a parked vehicle. [31]

In locations where a cycle lane exists, the lateral clearance between bicycle and vehicle is reduced. This suggests current recommendations for bicycle lanes are insufficient, or a wider lane marker is required to separate bicycles from vehicles. [32]

Cycling infrastructure is better value for city businesses than car infrastructure

It is a widely held perception that businesses depend on car parking. This was a key question addressed in a case study that examined space utilisation in Lygon Street in Melbourne titled “*What is the economic value of replacing car parking with bike parking in shopping strips?*”. [33].

This study found that individual car users spend more money than cyclists in shopping strips (\$118 per trip compared to \$62 and \$1.08 per minute compared to \$0.79 per minute). However, because space occupied by cycle parking can accommodate six times as many bikes as the same amount of space for parking a car the space used by bikes generates 3.6 times more expenditure than car parking space (\$7 per m²/hr for cars versus \$31 per m²/hr for bikes).

The study also found that the types of businesses that derived the highest economic benefits from bike use were food/drink premises and clothing retailers.

These findings are not surprising, as people who regularly cycle instead of driving save money on their transport, and consequently have more disposable income to spend on food, entertainment, clothing and other discretionary purchases.

A third finding from the study, which aligns with other Australian data, is that 20% of people who drive did not have to because they travelled distances that were less than four kilometres. The most extreme examples were the 6% of people who drove less than 1.5 km: little more than a five minute ride when cycling slowly in the style of the Dutch.

The CBD BUG calls on BCC to install signs and road markings to make it illegal to park vehicles in bike lanes and BAZ and thereby obstruct people riding bicycles. Bike lanes and BAZ should be heavily monitored to ensure that illegal car parking is minimised.

BCC revenue from parking infringement penalties - a fine thing

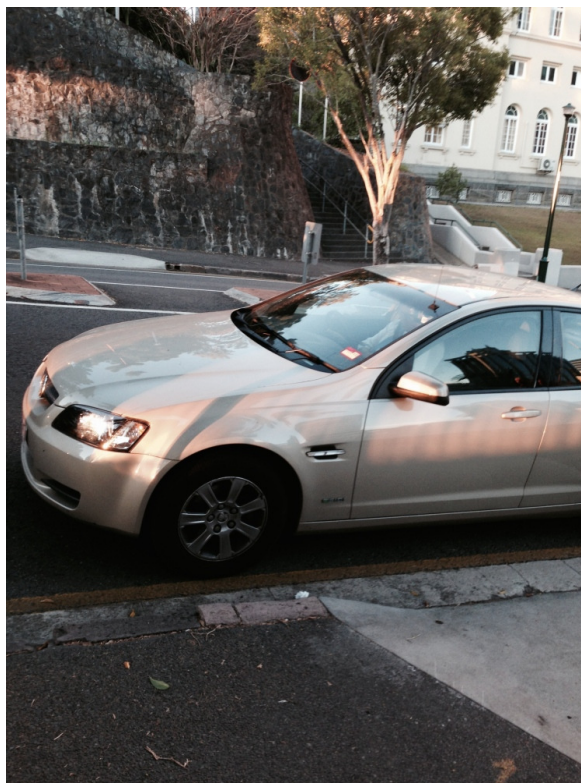
The \$29 million in revenue BCC is anticipated to receive during 2013-14 [34] from parking infringement fines equates to only 1.45% of Council's total 2013-14 budgeted revenue of \$2.0 billion.

This revenue is insignificant in the broader context of the total BCC budget and the CBD BUG is disappointed the BCC Opposition has taken an opportunistic approach to the issue of car parking infringement fines - by decrying the revenue raised from parking infringements and describing Brisbane's streets as being paved with gold, instead of showing leadership and dealing with the matter in a balanced considered manner. [35]

In having grown from \$18 million during 2012-13 it is clear this revenue has increased significantly in a short time. However, this growth can be explained by a number of factors.

The increase follows the January 2013 introduction of off-peak weekend and weeknight parking in the CBD, Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane and trials of new restrictions in some inner suburbs, which limit the amount of time vehicles may remain parked.

However, parking infringement fine revenue growth is also attributable to the 25% jump in per annum complaints from the public about illegal parking, resulting in this problem now recording the greatest number of complaints to BCC. [36]



Vehicle obstructing Albert St pedestrian /crossing point with pedestrian refuge island (June 2014)

Media stories on parking fines routinely feature protests about the absence or complexity of parking zone signage by people who have been fined for illegal parking. The CBD BUG rejects these excuses, as Council has over 350,000 parking signs throughout the city, which are typically clear about the zones and times motorists can park legally. There is also detailed information available about parking zones on BCC's website and an increasing number of apps motorists can use for advice on parking. Finally, it is at all not unusual to see illegally parked vehicles immediately adjacent to clear signage about the permitted parking arrangements.

Some parking zones do require more complex parking arrangements, as there may be a need to cater for the differing demands for available kerb space throughout the day and week. Regardless of the alleged complexity of parking signage not taking the time to identify and understand parking signage is not a genuine excuse. The onus for complying with parking rules must remain on the vehicle driver/owner or else this would enable people to park wherever they like.

A complaint commonly heard from people who have received a parking fine is that they only overstayed in their parking space for "X" minutes. BCC should not waive fines for this reason, as people who overstay parking cause others to continue cruising for a park and further exacerbate traffic congestion. This objection also ignores the need to share high-demand parking space with other motorists who have an equal entitlement to parking.

The CBD BUG calls for BCC to further roll-out paid on-street parking - as such initiatives will move Brisbane in the right direction towards reducing the undue use of private motor vehicles for personal transport.

BCC fees for resident and visitor parking permits

The CBD BUG supports Council introducing a fee for issuing residential parking permits and visitor parking permits. There are sound economic and social equity reasons for implementing such fees.

From an economic perspective the absence of a price signal for consumers is highly likely to result in excess demand. According to a statement by Cr Schrinner, annual permit numbers jumped from 41,700 in 2011-12 to 75,800 in 2013-14. [35]

This 82% increase over just two years far exceeds the growth in the resident population and is a clear indication the permit system was being abused. This inordinate growth indicates some residents may have obtained more visitor parking permits than were required for genuine, non-business visitors to their premises. These permits could then be provided to enable friends/acquaintances wanting free, untimed car parking in these traffic areas for reasons other than visiting a resident. It is also possible some residents obtained permits surplus to their genuine visitor requirements, so they could derive revenue by making permits available for use by non-visitors for a fee. Such instances would have resulted in a shift in car parking revenue, from BCC to these residents.

Cr Schrinner has also indicated a 65% decrease in the number of visitor parking permits issued per annum has followed BCC introducing a \$10 (maximum of \$25 per household) for permits in last year's Council budget. This dramatic decline in visitor parking permit numbers following the introduction of this very modest fee from 1 March 2014 confirms there was excess demand and that Council has taken the correct approach in response.

Some residents of these traffic areas have expressed the view they should not have to pay a parking permit fee as they experience the parking inconveniences caused by living near sites such as hospitals and sporting venues. However, this view ignores the amenity they also enjoy from having such facilities close at hand, which many other people would like to enjoy if they could afford the higher property prices that typically also accompany such locations. It is not surprising that such amenity is routinely mentioned in advertisements for real estate located close to these facilities. These residents always have the option of constructing their own parking space, on their own land.

Apart from these economic reasons there is also a strong social equity reason justifying the imposition of a fee on these permits. The traffic areas to which the parking permit system applies are overwhelmingly inner-city regions whose resident populations tend towards the higher end of the socio-economic spectrum. It is not equitable that rate-payers of other regions of Brisbane, the majority of whom would be of lower socio-economic status, should subsidise the provision of these parking permits.

The views expressed in opposition to the fee for these parking permits highlight the culture widely prevalent among Brisbane residents – that they own the road space in front of their home and they expect it to be reserved as their exclusive car park.

This view has now progressed beyond this point. It is now not uncommon for people who have acquired more vehicles and/or belongings than they can accommodate on their property to store their excess cars, trucks, boats, trailers, caravans and other possessions in the public domain using the road / road reserve.

The CBD BUG supports BCC charging fees for issuing residential parking permits and visitor parking permits. To avoid cross-subsidisation by other ratepayers these fees should be set to achieve the full recovery of BCC's costs of administering these permits, as well as recovering the cost of maintenance on that land, and a market rate rent.

BCC enforcement of parking signage / rules

School zone parking

The self-centred and dangerous behaviour of many people is on show every school-day by the manner in which they flout signage and rules while driving in and around their children's schools. [37]

The profound irony of the situation is not lost on the CBD BUG. The overwhelming majority of children are now driven to school because of parental concerns about children's safety, while through their inappropriate driving behaviour parents place the safety of other parents' children at risk.

Many behave as if they expect to be able to drive up to the door of their children's classroom with no delays, despite the numbers of other parents/carers who also seem to have the same agenda.

Such behaviour continues even in the face of repeated reminders in school newsletters about the expected motorist behaviour in and around areas where children will be.

It should also be pointed out motorists could easily avoid these situations if they simply park a short distance away e.g. 100 metres, which is easily walked in a couple of minutes, instead of expecting to park right at the door of their school.

BCC is to be congratulated for taking a strong stand on this motorist behavioural problem, which includes engaging with the Queensland Police to address the danger resulting when motorists think only of themselves.

The BCC's Active School Travel program, which aims to encourage a shift towards walking, riding, public transport and car-pooling as ways for children to travel between home and school, is also regarded as a positive approach. Increasing the number of children cycling to school will increase the impact of the program, as the distance that can be cycled is much greater than can be walked.

Some excellent results have also been achieved by the BCC via its Safe School Travel infrastructure program, which funds a range of measures that includes pedestrian, bicycle and bus facilities.

Widespread illegal parking comprises safety and convenience of all road users

There are sections of road in Brisbane to which BCC has applied parking restrictions at specific times e.g. no standing during the relevant peak travel period. This is typically required for the safety and amenity of transiting road users.

However, based on BCC records of illegal parking complaints and infringements issued, it is evident there is a widespread attitude among motorists that they should be able to park wherever they like regardless of the inconvenience or risk they pose to others.



Adamson Street, Woolloowin. Yes, streets really aren't wide enough through here for safe cycling infrastructure where would residents leave their storage sheds?

In view of the scale of Brisbane's illegal parking problem, BCC needs to dedicate more resources to enforcing this city's parking regulations. One suggestion for enhancing parking enforcement is that parking officers working in the CBD should be encouraged to ride bicycles for their patrols. The Queensland Police have expanded their Bike Squad after finding its members were able to respond in the CBD much more rapidly than police in cars and on foot. It is entirely likely BCC parking officers would also be similarly able to cover the same area much more easily and quickly on bikes than is possible via the current foot patrols.

The adoption of vehicles fitted with automatic number plate recognition equipment and appropriate software would also be an approach allowing quicker, more accurate and more extensive enforcement of illegal parking.

The regular obstructing of footpath users on Roma Street in the Brisbane CBD caused by motor vehicles parked illegally by local media outlets (refer image on following page) is a prime example of the current disdain for parking regulations.

Myth that BCC parking enforcement officers have targets to meet

Contrary to popular belief and the myth pedalled by the Council Opposition, the CBD BUG has it on very good authority from BCC staff that parking enforcement officers are not set targets for the number / value of parking fines they issue.

The CBD BUG supports the BCC rolling out new parking sensors as these will contribute to more regular turnover rates of parked cars and streamline enforcement of motorists who overstay their allotted parking time.

The CBD BUG also proposes that BCC increase its parking enforcement officer numbers in order to address the 25% increase between 2012-13 and 2013-14 in complaints from the community about illegal parking. [35]

The CBD BUG strongly supports Council working with police to end the anti-social driving/parking culture that is exhibited every school day at schools across Brisbane.

The CBD BUG calls for additional BCC resources to be directed towards eradicating Brisbane of the current widespread level of illegal parking. Part of Council's approach should include parking enforcement officers riding bikes.

BCC-mandated free parking at shopping centres and new developments distorts markets and increases traffic congestion by inducing car travel

BCC should cease requiring property developers and shopping centres to provide free off-street car parking. The availability of this free car parking provides yet another inducement for people to drive instead of using active and public transport.

Developers and shopping centre operators should be allowed to make commercial decisions on the amount of off-street parking they will provide.

A recent, prime example of Council's inappropriate market interference in this regard is the requirement for the developer of the former Absoe Furniture site in West End to install a public car park in the order of 450 car spaces. [38]

West End can't accommodate these vehicles, and a significant factor in the decision of people of wanting to take up central city living is to obviate the need to own/drive cars. Younger people in the "Millennial" age group are particularly attracted to this lifestyle. [39]

Such a development requirement is totally inappropriate in this case as the site is in an inner city suburb where development should be focused on minimising car utilisation and storage. On-street parking around such developments should be metered and charged at a rate comparable to the cost of providing it in a development site. This will ensure that the full cost of car parking is not externalised to the rest of the community, but is incorporated into the cost of the development.

The CBD BUG has noted that the property development industry has also raised its concerns about mandated car parking levels. [40]

Apart from the negative motor vehicle traffic impacts on the community from this approach, it also works against Council's agenda of enabling affordable housing through the new City Plan. This occurs because the BCC mandated space set aside for free public car parking (bedrooms for cars!!) reduces the space available to developers to deliver habitable space for people. In order to maintain their profit margin developers must then increase the prices of the residences they build.

If space is to be dedicated to car parking, it should be used to install car share schemes such as those in Sydney, where street parking has been turned over to share cars. These systems enable people to live without owning a car outright and promote the more efficient use of cars, which typically spend the overwhelming majority of their time parked.

The CBD BUG calls for BCC to amend its town planning requirements to remove the obligations on proponents of development applications to provide minimum mandated numbers of car parking spaces.



Media vehicles obstructing Roma St footpath beside the Brisbane Supreme and District Courts complex (October 2013)

CBD BUG background information

The Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) is a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 700 members, representing the interests of the very large number of people riding bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane city centre.

It is active in seeking policy decisions at all levels of government supporting people who want to cycle, and in particular relating to improved infrastructure, end-of-trip facilities, integration of cycling needs with other transport modes and a regulatory environment friendly towards 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.

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