



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Professor Margaret Sheil AO
Vice-Chancellor and President
Queensland University of Technology
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Via email to: vc@qut.edu.au

Dear Professor Sheil

I write to you in relation to the signs and banners recently installed on path surfaces and poles within the QUT Gardens Point Campus regarding the riding of bicycles, scooters and other wheeled devices. Figures 1 to 3 at the end of this letter are examples of these signs and banners.

As background for you, the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) is a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 800 members, representing the interests of the very large number of people riding bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane city centre.

Brisbane CBD BUG members actively seek 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. We also support walking and public transport as healthier travel modes that can substitute for many trips by private motor vehicles. CBD BUG members meet monthly to exchange information and ideas, discuss issues of relevance and determine the direction of policies to benefit CBD cyclists.

We note the phrasing of some of this signage as a request i.e. "Please dismount and walk it" (refer Figure 1), whereas other signs are directive i.e. "Walk your wheels on campus" (refer Figure 2). As Figure 2 also shows, motor vehicles are permitted to be driven in zones where people riding bikes are being told to walk, which seems incongruent. Therefore, we seek a clarification on whether these signs are a request or a direction for people traveling by bicycle or other wheeled devices to dismount and walk.

Apart from the fact these signs/banners are likely to be ignored because they have the appearance of promotional installations rather than traffic controls, this ambiguity of meaning is likely to also cause confusion. Furthermore, if these signs/banners are only a request to dismount, we are concerned that because of this ambiguity the people who continue to ride past these notifications may be perceived by people walking as scofflaws – reinforcing the negative and incorrect stereotype that all cyclists are rule breakers.

If these signs are a direction that cyclists and other wheeled travelers are to dismount, the CBD BUG views this approach as both unnecessary and hostile towards people who want to use alternative ways to travel to QUT rather than driving or using Brisbane's expensive and often inconvenient public transport.

In terms of the lack of necessity for banning people riding wheeled devices within QUT we would draw your attention to research undertaken in Brisbane by QUT academics pointing to the very low level of conflict between cyclists and pedestrians. (An observational study of conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians in the city centre Haworth, Narelle, Schramm, Amy, & Debnath, Ashim K. (2014) An observational study of conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians in the city centre. *Journal of the Australasian College of Road Safety*, 25(4), pp. 31-40. <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/79101/>)

Further to the lack of necessity for people to dismount from riding where these signs/banners have been placed is the plentiful amount of lane path available for all active travel users - thereby reducing the potential for crashes - and the fact it is evident that motor vehicles are still able to be driven along these same thoroughfares.

The recent introduction of a shared electric scooter scheme in Brisbane appears to have caused concerns for some community members about pedestrian safety. We are unaware of any similar research to the above example having been undertaken in relation to these scooters. However, the hundreds of thousands of trips made via these devices compared to the very small number of complaints received by Brisbane City Council is an indicator that most of this concern is uninformed and/or biased hysteria that ignores the data showing the actual risk to vulnerable road users is from motor vehicles.

We understand from your website that QUT provides "secure bicycle parking, storage and showers in support of staff and students using cycling as an alternative to motorised transport". We commend QUT for supporting staff and students in this manner, which not only provides an attractive workplace and learning environment but also demonstrates a genuine commitment to sustainability. In line with this approach it is suggested it is important not to then inconvenience people wanting to travel by bicycle or other wheeled device to/from QUT by requiring them to dismount and walk a considerable distance within this campus.

As a more effective and desirable alternative to the signs/banners that have been installed, we recommend their replacement with 5 km/h Shared zone signs around the perimeter of the QUT campus. A potential example of a such signage is provided in Figure 4 at the end of this letter. Importantly, such signage is more likely to be noticed and complied with by cyclists, other people traveling on wheels and pedestrians, as it draws upon the standard designs detailed in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), with which many people are already familiar with as such designs are present along roads, malls, shared paths etc. The implementation of a campus-wide 5 km/h (walking pace) Shared zone will also mean greater safety for pedestrians due to this low speed limit, give more certainty by making it clear that pedestrian have right of way, without creating inconvenience for cyclists, skaters and scooter riders by requiring them to dismount.

We look forward to your response on this proposal.

Yours faithfully



Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
8 July 2019

Cc: Bicycle Queensland
Space4Cycling Brisbane

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

